

December 4th, 2024

**Notice Of Meeting**

You are requested to attend the meeting to be held on **Tuesday, 10th December 2024 at 7:00 pm** in **Hybrid Meeting - Church Street, Newtownards & Zoom.**

# Agenda

## Agenda

 *Agenda CS 10.12.2024.pdf*

*Page 1*

### 1. Apologies

### 2. Declarations of Interest

### Reports for Approval

### 3. Change of Fees for Registration Services

Report attached

 *Item 3 - Change of Fees for Registration Services.pdf*

*Page 4*

### 4. Information Access Policy

Report attached

 *Item 4 - Info Access Policy Report.pdf*

*Page 7*

 *Item 4 - Appendix 1 - Info. Access Policy v1.7 Nov24 with updates in red v2.pdf*

*Page 8*

### 5. Request for Civic Reception - Comber Recreation Football Club

Report attached

 *Item 5 - Request for Civic Reception - Comber Recreation Football Club v2.dotx.pdf*

*Page 37*

### 6. Request for a mural at Redburn Community Centre

Report attached

 *Item 6 - Request for a mural at Redburn Community Centre.pdf*

*Page 39*

 *Item 6 - Appendix 1 - map.pdf*

*Page 42*

 *Item 6 Appendix II.pdf*

*Page 43*

 *Item 6 Appendix III.pdf*

*Page 44*

## 7. Bangor Entrance Signage

Report attached

📎 *Item 7 - Bangor Entrance Signage - Dec 24.pdf*

*Page 45*

📎 *Item 7 - Appendix 1 - Signage Options (1) (1).pdf*

*Page 47*

## Reports for Noting

## 8 Response to Notice of Motion

### 8a. a) NOM 623 Update: VE Day - 80th Anniversary

Report attached

📎 *Item 8a - NOM 623 Update-VE Day - 80th Anniversary2.dotx.pdf*

*Page 49*

## 9. Performance Reports

~~a) Community Planning (Report attached)~~

b) Corporate Communications (Report attached)

c) Finance (Report attached)

d) Strategic Transformation and Performance (Report attached)

e) Administration (Report attached)

f) Human Resources (Report attached)

📎 *Item 9a - Community Planning Performance Report 2024-25.pdf*

*Page 52*

📎 *Item 9b - Comms and Marketing H2 Performance Report.pdf*


*Page 59*

📎 *Item 9c - Finance Performance Report v2.pdf*

*Page 65*


 *Item 9d - Strategic performance and Improvement report.pdf* *Page 70*

 *Item 9e - Administration Performance Report Dec24.pdf* *Page 76*

 *Item 9f - HR performance report quarter 1 and 2 2024.pdf* *Page 81*

## **10. Update on delivery of 2024/25 Performance Improvement Plan**

Report attached


 *Item 10 - Update on delivery of 202425 Performance Improvement Plan.pdf* *Page 85*

 *Item 10 - Appendix 1 - Update on delivery of 202425 PIP.pdf* *Page 88*

## **11. STEP Board Report**

Report attached


 *Item 11 - STEP Board Report Update.pdf* *Page 99*

 *Item 11 - Appendix 1 - STEP Board Report.pdf* *Page 103*

## **12. Roadmap to Sustainability**

Report attached

 *Item 12 - Roadmap to Sustainability Dec 2024.pdf* *Page 123*

 *Item 12 - Appendix 1 - Roadmap actions - Dec 2024 v1.pdf* *Page 125*

## **13. Notice of Motion**

- i. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor W Irvine and Councillor S Irvine

That this Council expresses its concern at the decision of the post office to propose to close its branches in Main Street, Bangor and Frances Street, Newtownards as part of a widened UK overhaul. We would call on the Post office to reverse this decision and meet with Council at the earliest opportunity to discuss the proposal and the impact it will have on staff and customers. This Council notes how important post office services are to our



communities and the huge role it plays in serving constituents.

## 14. Any Other Notified Business

### ITEMS 15 TO 21 \*\*\*IN CONFIDENCE\*\*\*

## 15. Extension of the Legal Services Contract

Report attached

 *Item 15 - Extension of Legal services contract.pdf*

*Not included*

## 16. Tender for the Provision of Corporate Uniform, Casual Uniform, Leisure Uniform and Protective Workwear

Report attached


 *Item 16 - Tender for the Provision of Corporate Uniform, Casual Uniform, Leisure Uniform & Protective Workwear.pdf*

*Not included*

## Reports for Approval

## 17. Request from QMAC Construction Limited to use part of Hibernia Street South Carpark

Report attached

 *Item 17 - Request from QMAC Construction Limited to use part of Hibernia Street South Carpark.pdf*

*Not included*

 *Item 17 - Appendix 1- site layout plan - request from QMAC Construction Limited.pdf*


*Not included*

 *Item 17 - Appendix 2 - revised site plan - QMAC request.pdf*

*Not included*

## 18. Request for a licence for a site compound at The Square, Ballywalter

Report attached

 *Item 18 - Request for a licence for a site compound at the The Square, Ballywalter.pdf*

*Not included*

 *Item 18 - Appendix 1 - Council land at The Square, Ballywalter.pdf*

*Not included*

 *Item 18 - Appendix 2 - site compound.png*

*Not included*

## **19. Request for a lease at Cook Street Boat Yard - Portaferry Coastal Rowing Club**

Report attached

 *Item 19 - Request for a lease at Cook Street Boat Yard - Portaferry Coastal Rowing Club.pdf*

*Not included*

 *Item 19 - Appendix 1 - Lease Map - request for a lease at Cook Street (1).pdf*

*Not included*

 *Item 19 - Appendix 2 - Site plan - Request for a lease at Cook Street.pdf*

*Not included*

## **20. Bangor Castle Options Appraisal Process**

Report attached

 *Item 20 - Bangor Castle Options Appraisal Process v2.pdf*

*Not included*

 *Item 20 Appendix I.pdf*

*Not included*

## **Reports for Noting**

## **21. Estimates Update**

Report attached

 *Item 21 - Estimates Update.pdf*

*Not included*

**ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

4 December 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

You are hereby invited to attend a hybrid meeting (in person and via Zoom) of the Corporate Services Committee of Ards and North Down Borough in the Council Chamber, 2 Church Street, Newtownards on **Tuesday 10 December 2024 commencing at 7pm.**

Yours faithfully

Susie McCullough  
Chief Executive  
Ards and North Down Borough Council

**A G E N D A**

- 1. Apologies
- 2. Declarations of Interest

**Report for Approval:**

- 3. Change of Fees for Registration Services (Report attached)
- 4. Information Access Policy (Report attached)
- 5. Request for Civic Reception - Comber Recreation Football Club (Report attached)
- 6. Request for a mural at Redburn Community Centre (Report attached)
- 7. Bangor Entrance Signage (Report attached)

**Reports for Noting:**

- 8. Response to Notice of Motion:
  - a) NOM 623 Update: VE Day - 80th Anniversary (Report attached)
- 9. Performance Reports:
  - a) Community Planning (Report attached)
  - b) Corporate Communications (Report attached)
  - c) Finance (Report attached)
  - d) Strategic Transformation and Performance (Report attached)
  - e) Administration (Report attached)
  - f) Human Resources (Report attached)

10. Update on delivery of 2024/25 Performance Improvement Plan (Report attached)
11. STEP Board Update (Report attached)
12. Roadmap to Sustainability (Report attached)
13. Notice of Motion:

- i. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor W Irvine and Councillor S Irvine

That this Council expresses its concern at the decision of the post office to propose to close its branches in Main Street, Bangor and Frances Street, Newtownards as part of a widened UK overhaul. We would call on the Post office to reverse this decision and meet with Council at the earliest opportunity to discuss the proposal and the impact it will have on staff and customers. This Council notes how important post office services are to our communities and the huge role it plays in serving constituents.

14. Any other notified business

#### **ITEMS 15 – 21 \*\*\*IN CONFIDENCE\*\*\***

##### **Reports Delegated to Committee:**

15. Extension of the Legal services Contract (Report attached)
16. Tender for the Provision of Corporate Uniform, Casual Uniform, Leisure Uniform and Protective Workwear (Report attached)

##### **Reports for Approval:**

17. Request from QMAC Construction Limited to use part of Hibernia Street South Carpark (Report attached)
18. Request for a licence for a site compound at the The Square, Ballywalter (Report attached)
19. Request for a lease at Cook Street Boat Yard - Portaferry Coastal Rowing Club (Report attached)
20. Bangor Castle Options Appraisal Process (Report attached)

##### **Reports for Noting:**

21. Estimates Update (Report attached)

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

Unclassified

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## ITEM 3

### Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Corporate Services Committee
Date of Meeting	10 December 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Corporate Services
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Administration
Date of Report	18 November 2024
File Reference	'-
Legislation	Births and Deaths Registration (Northern Ireland) Order 1976; Marriage (Northern Ireland) Order 2003; Marriage and Civil Partnership (NI) Regulations 2020
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Change of Fees for Registration Services
Attachments	

#### Background

The fees charged for marriages & civil partnerships in Northern Ireland are calculated in two distinct parts. The first being the fees set by the General Register Office (GRO), that predominantly cover all the legal paperwork. The second are the fees set by each individual District Council that cover the costs of the Registrar, the room hire, time taken, travel costs etc – the inherent costs associated with organising and hosting the ceremony itself.

The Council have no control over the fees set by the General Register Office, and these are exactly the same throughout Northern Ireland. Their fees have not changed in nearly ten years so it is likely, although not confirmed, that there will be an increase from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025.

The Council last set the fees in 2015 at the time of Local Government Reform. The fees were amended slightly in 2018.

Not Applicable

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In the past ten years there have been significant changes in energy costs, wages, building maintenance etc.

Other Councils are also looking at increasing their prices, at the very least, in line with inflation. Belfast City Council have recently changed their fees and their basic price for a Monday to Friday, City Hall, ceremony is now 130% higher than marrying in Bangor Castle.

The Council take provisional bookings for up to two years in advance and have already seen an increase in bookings and enquiries from people who live outside of the Borough.

Below is a table showing the Council's statistics for 2023. These figures are only what the Council recouped and exclude GRO fees.

Table 1

	2023 No.	2023 Income
City Hall – Monday to Friday	125	£13,375
City Hall – Saturday	10	£1,550
Approved Venue -Monday to Friday	27	£3,240
Approved Venue – Saturday	18	£4,140
	180	£22,305

It is recommended that charges are increased to be 50% of the level in Belfast City Council in 2025/26 financial year and 66% in the 2026/27 year. Indicative fees are set out in table 2 and indicative income in table 3 below. This will support the recouping of costs as well as managing the demand, particularly from non-residents which has significantly increase in recent years.

Table 2

	Current	25/26	26/27	BCC
City Hall - Monday to Friday	£107	£170	£230	£350
City Hall - Saturday	£155	£245	£330	£500
Approved Venue - Monday to Friday	£120	£185	£250	£383
Approved Venue - Saturday	£230	£315	£400	£600

Table 3

	2023 No.	2023 Income	Indicative 2025/26	Indicative 2026/27
City Hall - Monday to Friday	125	£13, 375	£20,910	£28,290
City Hall - Saturday	10	£1,550	£2,450	£3,300
Approved Venue - Monday to Friday	27	£3,240	£4,995	£6,750

Not Applicable

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Approved Venue - Saturday	18	£4,140	£5,670	£7,200
Total	180	£22,305	£34,025	£45,540

### Additional Service Proposal

As a new offering and following requests that have been made previously where Couples are legally marrying in advance of a ceremony at another date, officers propose that couples could have the option of having a 'basic ceremony'. The Couple and their two witnesses can get married in a small, private accessible office in the City Hall.

This option will increase bookable opportunities, could take place in office hours and only require one member of the registration team. Officers suggest a fee of £120, which is £50 cheaper than the current most basic option and would again support the covering of costs and generate additional income.

	Current	25/26	26/27
City Hall - Monday to Friday	Not Offered	£120	£120

### Review

It is proposed that the fees are reviewed after 1 year to ensure that the Council remain competitive in the market and cover the costs of provision of this service.

### RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that with effect for all ceremonies on or after 1 April 2025 that:

- A - Council increases the charges in respect of marriages & civil partnerships as detailed in this report
- B - Council introduces a 'basic ceremony' option at charges detailed in this report



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	10 December 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Corporate Services
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Administration
Date of Report	19 November 2024
File Reference	
Legislation	UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA).
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Information Access Policy
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Information Access Policy V1.7 Appendix 2 - Information Access Policy V1.3 Appendix 3 - Comparison of version of IAP

The attached Information Access Policy determines the practices, principles and processes by which the Council will fulfill its responsibilities to make information publicly available and promote best practice information governance procedures throughout the organisation. It provides guidance on response times for FOI, EIR and Data Subject Access requests.

The version for approval in V1.7 (appendix 1). For ease of reference the previous version 1.3 and the comparison of the 2 policies are attached in Appendix 2 and 3.

### RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council approve this policy.

Document Control

Policy Title	Information Access Policy
Document Reference	IAP VERSION 1.7
Policy Summary	The policy determines the practices, principles and processes by which the Council will fulfill its responsibilities to make information publicly available and promote best practice information governance procedures throughout the organisation.
Review Requirements	Every 2 years
Document Owner/Job title	Data Protection Officer
Document Owner is responsible for ensuring that it is reviewed in line with the requirements of the Council's Policy Review Procedure and is kept up to date.	
Approval Date	25/11/24

Version Control Record

Version Number	Version Date		Comments
1.0	23/05/2017	Policy created	
1.1	31/08/2017	Costings moved to Appendix	HOST feedback
1.2	03/11/2017	Review process amended	SUM feedback
1.3	12/01/2021	Review of Policy	DPO
1.4	08/08/2022	Review of Policy	DPO/Compliance Officer (information) review
1.5	02/02/2024	Review of Policy	HOST/SUMS/SCC review
1.6	14/10/24	Post Trade Union	Changes following Trade Union Consultation
1.7	25/11/24	Review	Full review for approval

Consultation

	CLT	HOST	SCC	Unions
Date completed	Feb 2024	Feb 2024	August 2024	October 2024

Screening

Reference No	134
EQIA Required?	No

The current version of this document is available to all individuals accessing the Council's information and other associated assets and is published on the Council's intranet.

## Information Access Policy

<b>Requirement for Policy</b>	<p>This policy is required to ensure that the Council meets its statutory obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Environmental Information Regulations 2004, the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.</p> <p><b>The Council must also comply with the Information Commissioner's Section 45 Code of Practice under Section 45 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.</b></p>
<b>Relevant Legislation</b>	<p>The Council must comply with all relevant United Kingdom and Northern Ireland statutory and legislative instruments that have links to the aforementioned legislation.</p>
<b>Linkage with other Council Policies and Procedures</b>	<p>This policy supports, and is supported by, other Council policies, standards and procedures. These include, but are not limited to, those listed in Appendix 1.</p>
<b>Who does this policy apply to?</b>	<p>The practices, principles and processes contained in this Policy apply equally to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All Council employees,</li> <li>- Elected members, whilst working on Council business;</li> <li>- Partners and other third parties, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o contractors;</li> <li>o volunteers;</li> <li>o agency and/ or temporary staff; and</li> <li>o any other organisations operating on behalf of the Council.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>The objectives of this policy are to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Promote greater openness and increased transparency of Council processes and decision-making;</li> <li>b) Build the trust and confidence of the public and stakeholders;</li> <li>c) Provide clarity on how the Council will meet its duties under the information access statutes and follow applicable regulatory guidance; and</li> <li>d) Promote best practice information governance procedures throughout the organisation.</li> </ol>

## Definitions

### (a) Freedom of Information Act 2000

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) provides public access to information held by the Council.

It does this in two ways:-

- Public authorities are obliged to publish certain information about their activities (via a Publication Scheme).
- Members of the public are entitled to request information from public authorities (via an Fol request).

When information is requested the Act gives two qualified rights:-

- The right to be told whether the information is held;
- The right to receive the information, subject to exemptions.

The right of access applies regardless of the purpose of the application.

Any information in the possession of, or held on behalf of, the Council is potentially disclosable. This can be information created by the Council, received by the Council from another body or person or held by another body on behalf of the Council. This includes information printed documents, computer files, letters, emails, handwritten notes, sound or video recordings held on any digital or recording system (including backup systems and off-site storage archives) and mobile devices including Council allocated mobile phones.

The FOIA does not give people access to their own personal data (information about themselves). Individuals wishing to see information about themselves need to make a Data Subject Access Request (DSAR) under the Data Protection Act 2018 (see Page 9 Data Protection Act 2018/GDPR below)

If the Council does not hold the information, it should not be created to answer an Fol request. Checks should be made to ensure that we do not hold the information requested. If we hold other similar information this can be released in the spirit of the legislation.

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### (b) Data Protection Act 2018/ General Data Protection Regulation

The Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA)/ GDPR allows individuals to request details and copies of personal information the Council holds about them through a Data Subject Access Request (DSAR). This covers personal data/ information held electronically and in manual filing systems.

Personal data is information relating to natural persons who can be identified or who are identifiable, directly from the information in question; or who can be indirectly identified from that information in combination with other information.

The DPA/ GDPR applies to personal data that is processed, or intended to be processed, wholly or partly by automatic means (that is, information in electronic form); and information processed in a non-automated manner which forms part of, or is intended to

form part of, a 'filing system' (that is, manual information in a filing system).

**Please Note:** This policy should be read in conjunction with the **Data Protection Policy** for further clarification.

**(c) Environmental Information Regulations 2004**

The Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR) gives individuals the right to access environmental information held by the Council.

Environmental information is any information relating to:

- the state of the elements of the environment and the interaction among these elements;
- factors affecting or likely to affect those elements;
- measures or activities affecting or likely to affect those factors or elements, or designed to protect those elements;
- reports on the implementation of environmental legislation;
- cost-benefit and other economic analyses and assumptions used within the framework of those measures and activities; and
- the state of human health and safety, conditions of human life, cultural sites and built structures in as much as they are or may be affected by those elements.

EIR covers both old and new information, and applies to information recorded in any form, including written, visual and electronic.

The Council has an obligation to disclose environmental information in its possession which has been produced or received by it, or if it is stored elsewhere, by another person, on its behalf.

**(d) Re-Use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2005**

The Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2005 (RPSI Regulations) encourages the re-use of public sector information. This is defined as information which public authorities, listed in the regulations, hold the copyright.

For the purposes of this policy, copyright is defined as a right to prevent copying of original material. It can be infringed by making copies, publishing and issuing copies of copyright material to the public, or to any other person, without permission

**(e) Section 102 of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012**

**The 2012 Act adds a new provision to section 11 of the FoI Act in relation to datasets and how information is released as opposed to what information is released. It is about the re-use datasets that the public authority provides in a response to a request under a publication scheme. There is no new duty to provide any information in response to an FOI request that was not previously accessible, and there are no new exemptions.**

## Part 1: Information Request Management

### Training and Guidance

The Council is committed to responding to all requests for information in line with the obligations placed upon it by the respective information access statutes and, as such, training and guidance will be provided regularly and at induction sessions to:

- All Council employees;
- Elected members;
- Partners and other third parties, including
  - o volunteers;
  - o agency and/ or temporary staff and
  - o any other organisations operating on behalf of the Council.

### General Enquiries

The Council receives general enquiries on a daily basis. These will be treated as 'business as usual' requests and responded to accordingly by each relevant section.

A request for information which is not currently within the public domain, regularly published or contained on a public register or references an information access statute will be processed under the appropriate legislation.

### Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2005

Matters under this legislative instrument will be addressed in Part 5.

## Environmental Information Regulations 2004

Requests for information which fall within the definition of environmental information will be processed under the requirements of the EIR.

An information request under this legislation can be made both in writing and verbally.

Both formats require the requestor's name and address to be provided prior to processing by the Council.

The Council will not process requests which are made anonymously or using an obvious pseudonym.

### Verbal

If a verbal request for environmental information is received, then the receiver must:

- Record the name of the requestor and contact details, which may include an email or postal address;
- Details of the information which is being sought; and
- Forward those details to the Compliance Officer (Information) (CO(I)) as soon as practicably possible, but no later than two working days from receipt of request.

### Writing

While a written request for information can be submitted to any of the parties detailed in the **Who does this policy apply to?** Section, to ensure the expeditious processing of your request, Council would ask that you submit your request by:

- Email: [FOI@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:FOI@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk); or
- Letter: Compliance Officer (Information), Ards and North Down Borough Council, City Hall, The Castle, Bangor, Co. Down, BT20 4BT

## Freedom of Information Act 2000

To be a valid request under the FOIA, an information request must be made in writing by an individual or organisation, must clearly describe the information being sought, can be made by letter or email, must be legible and contain a contact name and address for the requestor (an email address is acceptable) and return address.

A request does not need to be in a special form, need to mention the FOIA or refer to 'Freedom of Information'.

While a written request for information can be submitted to any of the parties detailed in the **Who does this policy apply to?** Section, to ensure the efficient processing of your request, Council would ask that you submit your request by:

- Email: [FOI@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:FOI@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk); or
- Letter: Compliance Officer (Information), Ards and North Down Borough Council, City Hall, The Castle, Bangor, Co. Down, BT20 4BT

**Data Protection Act 2018/ GDPR**

Data Subject Access Requests (DSAR) and Data Subject Erasure Requests (DSER) made under the DPA/ GDPR will be processed in line with Appendix 2 of the Data Protection Policy.

While a verbal request is acceptable, it is preferable to have a written request for recording purposes.

The request should:

- contain a contact name and email or postal address for the requestor; and
- accompanying photographic identification of the requestor if requested by the DPO.

While a request for information under the DPA/ GDPR can be submitted to any of the parties detailed in the **Who does this policy apply to?** Section, to ensure the efficient processing of your request, Council would ask that you submit your request directly to the Data Protection Officer by:

- Email: [dataprotection@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:dataprotection@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk); or
- Letter: Data Protection Officer, Ards and North Down Borough Council, City Hall, The Castle, Bangor, Co. Down, BT20 4BT

**Response Times**

The Council will endeavour to respond to information requests within the following time frames:

\* Please note, the distinction between working day response times under the FOIA, EIR and RPSI Regulations and calendar days under the DPA/ GDPR.

Type of Request	Response Time	Extension available
General Enquiry	As soon as possible	N/A
Request under RPSI Regulations	As soon as possible, but no later than 20 working days* from date of request	Yes – reasonable extension if the information is extensive or the request raises complex issues
Request under FOIA	As soon as possible, but no later than 20 working days* from date of request	Yes – up to 20 working days to consider the public interest test
Request under EIR	As soon as possible, but no later than 20 working days* from date of request	Yes – 20 working days if voluminous or complex
Request under DPA/ GDPR	Without undue delay and within one month from date of request	Yes – a further two months if the request is complex or the Council has received a number of requests from the individual (The individual must be notified within one month explaining why.)



## Exemptions

Information access legislation contains exemptions and exceptions to the disclosure provisions.

The Council reserves the right to employ their use, in line with legislation and guidance provided by the Information Commissioner's Office, of any applicable exemption or exceptions.

## Information Request Processing

All information requests processed under the information access legislation must be recorded and logged by the Compliance Officer (Information) CO(I) and Data Protection Officer (DPO).

In all circumstances, upon receipt of an information request, the CO(I)/DPO will issue an acknowledgement email or letter to the requestor and advise of the target date for a response.

All FOI/EIR/DSAR/DSER requests should be treated as a reasonable and lawful work instruction.

All and any decisions made about the releasing of requested personal data to the requestor will only be at the absolute discretion of the DPO/ CO(I)/ the Head of Service for Administration/ the Director of Corporate Services and ultimately the Chief Executive of the Council.

### FOIA/EIR Requests

Requests falling within the scope of the FOIA and/or EIR will be sent to the relevant Head of Service (HoS) or Director (if appropriate). Where applicable, the relevant Service Unit Manager(s) (SUM) will be copied into the request. Responses are generally required within 10 working days, however deadlines for responses will be specified on each request for information.

The HoS should review each request and notify the CO(I) if they require additional information or clarification from the requestor in order to respond to the request. The HoS should allocate the request to the relevant SUM or manager for processing. The CO(I) should be advised within two (2) working days of receipt if they require additional information or clarification.

Where information is sought from the requester the clock will stop on the date of the request and commence again once the information has been received. Timescales will be managed by the CO(I).

HoS/SUM should supply the requested information to the CO(I) within the specified timeframe.

HoS/SUM must also advise the CO(I) if the information requested is publicly available and provide links to this information.

If a response has not been received within the allocated timeframe a reminder will be sent by the CO(I) and Line Manager(s) will be copied in.

**DPA Data Subject Access Requests (DSARs)**

DSARs will be sent to relevant CLT, HOS, SUM for processing.

CLT, HOS, SUMs should review each request and notify the Data Protection Officer (DPO)/ CO(I) if they require additional information or clarification from the requestor in order to respond to the request. CLT, HOS, SUMs should notify the DPO/ CO(I) within two (2) calendar days, or the next working day thereafter, of receiving the request if they require additional information or clarification. If clarification is required from the requestor, the clock will stop until the clarification is received.

CLT, HOS, SUMs should supply relevant information to the DPO/ CO(I) no later than the seventh (7) calendar day, or the next working day thereafter, from receipt of the request by the Council. All data must be shared securely either by password protecting the email attachment or using SharePoint. Hard copies can also be provided. If this is the case arrangements must be made with the DPO regarding the secure delivery/transport of the information.

All DSARs for an individuals' personal data must be returned to the DPO/ CO(I) as outlined above and all and any such requests from the DPO/ CO(I) should be treated as a reasonable and lawful work instruction. All and any decisions made about the releasing of requested personal data to the requestor will only be at the absolute discretion of the DPO/ CO(I)/ the Head of Service for Administration/ the Director of Corporate Services and ultimately the Chief Executive of the Council. This escalation is only necessary in the absence of the DPO. It should be noted that under s.173 of the Data Protection Act 2018, it is an offence to alter, deface, block, erase, destroy or conceal information with the intention of preventing disclosure of all or part of the information that the person making the request would have been entitled to receive. In some cases it may be preferable to request the Digital Services team to carry out a search, such as for an internal request where an internal DSAR request would be insensitive.

**DPA Data Subject Erasure Requests (DSERs)**

On receipt of a DSER, the DPO will acknowledge the request and include a form for further information. This will narrow down the request if they can confirm which Council Service they had been dealing with. If the requester does not reply to the clarification request within one month, another email should be sent to remind them that clarification is needed. They should be given 2 weeks to supply the clarification, indicating that if no response is received within 2 weeks, the request will be closed. If there is no response within 2 weeks, the request should be closed.

On receipt of clarification, the Data Subject Erasure Requests will then be sent to relevant CLT, HOST, SUM for processing.

CLT, HOS, SUMs should review each request and notify the Data Protection Officer (DPO)/ CO(I) if they require additional information or clarification from the requestor in order to respond to the request. CLT, HOS, SUMs should notify the DPO/ CO(I) within two (2) calendar days, or the next working day thereafter, of receiving the request if they require additional information or clarification. If clarification is required from the requestor, the clock will stop until the clarification is received.

CLT, HOS, SUMs should supply relevant information to the DPO/ CO(I) no later than the seventh (7) calendar day, or the next working day thereafter, from receipt of the request by the Council.

All DSERs for an individuals' personal data must be returned to the DPO/ CO(I) as outlined above and all and any such requests from the DPO/ CO(I) should be treated as a reasonable and lawful work instruction. All and any decisions made about the erasure of requested personal will only be at the absolute discretion of the DPO/ CO(I)/ the Head of Service for Administration/ the Director of Corporate Services and ultimately the Chief Executive of the Council. It should be noted that under s.173 of the Data Protection Act 2018, it is an offence to block or conceal information with the intention of preventing erasure of all or part of the information that the person making the request would have been entitled to remove.

In some cases it may be preferable to request the Digital Services team to carry out a search, such as for an internal request where an internal DSER request would be insensitive.

The right to erasure does not apply if processing is necessary for one of the following reasons:

- to exercise the right of freedom of expression and information;
- to comply with a legal obligation;
- for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority;
- for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific research, historical research or statistical purposes where erasure is likely to render impossible or seriously impair the achievement of that processing; or
- for the establishment, exercise or defence of legal claims.

If you are required by law to process individuals' personal data, then the right to erasure will not apply.

It should also be noted that occasionally a data subject may believe their data in the public domain, has not been deleted as requested. The data subject should be advised to clear their cached data.

## **Audits**

The DPO and the CO(I) will carry out audits on an ad hoc basis to ensure confidence in data being supplied. This audit may involve searches carried out by other teams for example the Digital Services team on all Microsoft Office packages, the Customer Services Manager on Te-Care, and other officers carrying out searches on bespoke software used within services.

## **Repeat Requests**

Where a repeated request is received that is identical or substantially similar to a previous request from the same person, the Council will consider this as a repeated request.

The Information Commissioner's Office advises that a request is substantially similar if it meets either of the following criteria:-

- the wording is different but the scope of the request is the same as for a previous request: or
- the scope of the request does not differ significantly from that of the previous request (regardless of how the request is phrased).

The Council is not obliged to comply with repeat requests from the same requester/organisation or consortium for information under the FOIA, unless a reasonable interval has elapsed between compliance with the previous request and making of the current request.

The Council considers a 'reasonable interval' to be a minimum of 6 months. Depending on the nature of the request, Council may provide the repeat information within this timeframe if the requester provides a justification or if new information has been generated since the previous request.

### **Combining Requests**

The Council reserves the right to combine multiple FoI requests in certain circumstances when determining if the cost limit will be exceeded. The following are examples of circumstances when this may happen:-

- The requests are made by the same person or people who appear to be working together
- The requests are for similar or the same information
- The requests are received within 60 consecutive working days

If the estimated cost of complying with a request exceeds the cost limit, the request or elements of the request, will be refused. We will advise if this is the situation.

### **Vexatious Requests**

The Council is not obliged to comply with vexatious requests under section 14(1) of the FOIA. A Tribunal defines 'vexatious' as 'manifestly unjustified, inappropriate or improper use of a formal procedure.'

The ICO advises that a public authority must consider whether the request is likely to cause a disproportionate or unjustified level of disruption, irritation or distress.

In considering whether a request should be refused because it is vexatious, the Council will consider the ICO advice on vexatious requests and all the circumstances of the request, including:-

- The context and history of requests submitted by an applicant;
- Whether the request is likely to cause unjustified distress, disruption or irritation;
- Whether the request could fairly be seen as obsessive;
- Whether complying with the request imposes a significant burden on Council staff;

- Whether an applicant is habitually and persistently submitting requests where there appears to be no reasonable grounds for them to do so;
- Whether there is a strong likelihood that such requests are being made to intentionally cause harassment, cause distress to staff, divert resources or to disrupt the proper workings of the Council.

#### **Advice and Assistance**

Requestors, Elected Members and all Council employees/staff can seek advice and assistance on the above matters from the Data Protection Officer/ Compliance Officer (Information).

FOIA/EIR requests:-

Email: [FOI@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:FOI@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk); or

Letter: Compliance Officer (Information), Ards and North Down Borough Council, City Hall, The Castle, Bangor, Co. Down, BT20 4BT

DPA/DSAR/DSER requests:

Email: [dataprotection@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:dataprotection@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk); or

Letter: Data Protection Officer, Ards and North Down Borough Council, City Hall, The Castle, Bangor, Co. Down, BT20 4BT

#### **Information held by other bodies**

If the requested information is not held by the Council but is known to be held by another public body, the Council will confirm that it does not hold this information and will provide, where practicable, the requestor with contact details for that body if known.

#### **Transfer of Data**

- All data being shared both internally and externally, must be encrypted or shared using OneDrive
- Data being provided to the data subject, must be provided in pdf format. Any third-party data must be redacted using a pdf editor.
- Where data is being provided in paper format, the redaction must be done online or else photocopied.
- Where data is being withheld this must be relayed to the requestor with the reasons clearly explained.
- New ICO guidance issued in September 2023, recommends that all spreadsheets are converted to .csv format before being shared, to reduce the risk of formulae or macros being attached to the data. See Appendix 3..

## Part 2: Publication Scheme

Publication Scheme	<p>Information access legislation places an obligation on the Council to proactively publish a variety of information through a <a href="#">Publication Scheme</a>.</p> <p>The Council’s Scheme is based on the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) Definition Document for Local Authorities in Northern Ireland, which details the information that it will routinely and proactively make available.</p> <p>The <a href="#">Council Publication Scheme</a> will be reviewed annually by the CO(I) and is available to view from the Council’s website.</p>
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## Part 3: Charging for Information

### Legislative Framework for Charging

The FOIA, EIR and DPA detail specific conditions when a charge may be applied.

#### **Freedom of Information Act 2000**

Under Section 12 of the FOIA a public authority is not obliged to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the 'appropriate limit' of £450.

#### **Data Protection Act 2018**

Section 24(5) of the Data Protection Act 2018 makes similar provision in respect of subject access requests for 'unstructured' personal information (i.e. manual records which are not held in a 'structured' filing system).

In some cases a reasonable fee can be charged for a DSAR for the administrative costs of complying with a DSAR if it is manifestly unfounded or excessive.

#### **Environmental Information Regulations 2004**

Regulation 8 of the EIR enables public authorities to apply a reasonable charge for making information available.

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### When does this section not apply?

This section does not apply to information which is available:

- Under a statutory provision, other than those listed in this document;
- Through the Council's Publication Scheme;
- Information which is required to be produced by the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2005, section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 or similar legislative provisions; or
- A charge cannot be made for environmental information where Council makes it available for inspection at its premises, however, the EIR do allow Council to apply a reasonable charge to recover the costs of locating the information and collating it in order to make it available for inspection.

## Part 3a: FOIA and DPA

### Appropriate Limit Defined

Regulation 4 of the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 (hereafter referred to as the FOIA Fee Regulations) set the 'appropriate limit' applicable to public authorities. Also so see the Data Protection (Charges and Information) Regulations 2018. The Council is not required to process a FOIA request if the cost of doing so would exceed £450.

This limit is calculated at a standard rate of £25 per person per hour regardless of who does the work, based on estimating how long it takes to:

- determine if the requested information is held;
- locate the information or a document which may contain the information;
- retrieve the information, or a document, which may contain the information; and
- edit or extract the releasable information contained within a document.

This calculation does not take into account the time spent/costs of:

- checking that a request for information meets the requirements of the legislation;
- locating information due to poor records management practice;
- considering the application of exemptions; prejudice and/or public interest tests;
- obtaining internal or external legal advice;
- considering whether a request is vexatious or repetitive;
- obtaining authorisation to send out information;
- redacting exempt or excepted information;
- calculating any fee to be charged; or
- providing advice and assistance

Based on the above, the reasonable limit for the processing of an information request free of charge is, therefore, 18 hours.

The Council is not obliged therefore to respond to a request where it has estimated the cost of complying exceeds £450 or 18 hours work and is entitled to:

- decline requests exceeding this amount and time, while providing advice and assistance, where practicable, to the requestor to refine the request so that it can be dealt with under the appropriate limit; or
- answer them and to charge a permitted fee.



## Part 3b: EIR

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### **EIR Reasonable Charge Defined**

In the interests of consistency, and to remove doubt over the occasions when it is reasonable for the Council to charge for information under EIR, the Council will not charge for environmental information unless the cost of providing that information:

- exceeds the £450 appropriate limit specified in the FOIA Fees Regulations; or
- is included in the Council's published schedule of charges.

Following the process detailed previously, if the appropriate limit is exceeded, the reasonable charge will be based on a standard rate of £25 per hour per person.

## Part 3c: Assistance and Fees Notice

### Assistance and a Fees Notice

If it is estimated that the time required to process a request is less than 18 hours to complete, and there is no other basis for withholding the information, the request will be dealt with free of charge (disbursements incurred by Council in processing the request, including the cost of retrieving information from storage, postage and photocopying costs and charges set by individual service units may, however, still be applicable).

Whenever the appropriate limit is exceeded, the Council will offer advice and assistance, where practicable, to a requestor to ensure that the requestor has the option of submitting a fresh, modified request capable of being dealt with free of charge.

If it is estimated that a request will take more than 18 hours, and the requestor is not prepared to bring their request within the appropriate limit, the Council will:

- Issue a Fees Notice, advising the requestor that a cost is applicable for each hour of work at a standard rate of £25 per hour per officer processing the request and;
- provide details of the total cost broken down by activity.

Requestors have three calendar months from the issuing of the fees notice to pay the applicable charge or a request will be considered to have been withdrawn. Only when payment has been received, and has cleared, will work begin on collating the requested information.

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### Aggregating Requests

The FOIA Fee Regulations provide for the costs of answering more than one request to be added together or aggregated for the purposes of estimating whether the appropriate limit would be exceeded in relation to any one of the requests.

The Regulations state that requests can only be aggregated in the following circumstances:

- two or more requests for information must have been made to the same public authority;
- they must be either from the same person, or from different persons who appear to the Council to be acting together or in pursuance of a campaign (section 12(4)(b) of FOIA);
- the requests must relate to the same or similar information; and
- they must have been received within a space of 60 consecutive working days.

This provision is designed to prevent individuals or organisations undermining the appropriate limit by splitting a request into smaller parts. Before applying these provisions, the Council will carefully consider the reasons for believing that requests have been framed to frustrate the cost limit.

The Council will apply the same principles for the purpose of applying reasonable charges to requests for environmental information.

## **Disbursement Costs**

Irrespective of whether the request is below or above the appropriate limit, disbursements will normally be charged where the estimated total cost exceeds £5.00 (if the cost of providing information is, for example, £10.50, then applicants will be charged £5.50).

The Council has a duty to take account of the applicants preferred format for receiving information.

This may include:

- providing the applicant with a copy (i.e. photocopied or printed);
- producing material in an applicant's preferred format (for example by putting it onto a CD); or

No disbursement charges will be applied by the Council where the requestor has identified a specific need and the costs arise from meeting the Council's obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 or the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

The Council will advise the requestor in advance if providing information in the requested format incurs a disbursement charge, along with a breakdown of the charge and advice, if possible, as to how the information can be provided free of charge.

Cost details can be located in Appendix 2 - Cost Information

## **Over and under charging**

If the actual cost of answering the request turns out to be greater than the estimated amount charged, the additional cost will be borne by the Council. The Council will not issue more than one Fee Notice per request.

If the actual cost is lower than the amount charged, the Council will refund the excess amount.

Care will be taken to ensure that estimated fees are as accurate as possible to prevent over or under charging.

## Part 4: Complaint & Review Processes

### Complaint & Review Processes

The Council is committed to the delivery of excellent service provision and, as such, is committed to resolving, in so far as possible, issues that arise from that service delivery.

To meet this objective, issues relating to information management can be resolved using two processes:

- Requests to access information Internal Review process; and/or
- Corporate Complaints Process.

### Request to access information Internal Review Process

The Council has an internal review process in place to resolve issues relating to its duties to proactively publish information and respond to information requests under the FOIA, EIR and DPA/ GDPR.

#### FOIA, EIR and DPA/ GDPR

A requestor can ask the Council to review a response made under the FOIA, EIR and DPA/ GDPR within two calendar months of the date it was issued, if they are dissatisfied with, for example:

- how an information request has been processed;
- the response itself, including the use of exemptions/exceptions;
- the application of charges; or
- any other substantive matter relating to an information request.

### Eligibility of review

A complaint or request for an internal review must be in writing either via email or by letter within 2 months as follows:-

#### FOIA/EIR:-

Email: [FOI@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:FOI@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk); or

Letter: Compliance Officer (Information), Ards and North Down Borough Council, City Hall, The Castle, Bangor, Co. Down, BT20 4BT

#### DPA/DSAR:

Email: [dataprotection@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:dataprotection@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk); or

Letter: Data Protection Officer, Ards and North Down Borough Council, City Hall, The Castle, Bangor, Co. Down, BT20 4BT

## Review Process

The DPO/CO(I) will acknowledge receipt of the Internal Review and provide a target date for a response, which should be within 20 working days.

Where exceptionally, more time is required to conduct the internal review in order to address complex issues, consult third parties or consider substantial amounts of information, Council will advise the requester that more time is required and will provide a reasonable target date which will be no more than an additional 20 working days, unless there are legitimate reasons why a longer extension is necessary.

If clarification is required from the requester, the timescale will be adjusted to take account of the timescale between the clarification request being sought and the date sufficient clarification was received.

Reviews will be carried out by a panel of at least two officers not already involved in the request.

Panels will be chaired by the Director of Corporate Services or by another Officer nominated by the Director in the event of their unavailability. The Panel will include a Head of Service and another officer of at least Service Unit Manager grade or above or the Data Protection Officer and the Compliance Officer (Information).

If a review relates to the use of section 36 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, then the Chief Executive will, as the designated Qualified Person, chair the review panel.

to the Internal reviews should consider how the request was handled and the initial response, whether relevant information was identified, whether the original exemptions should be upheld and/or new ones should be applied.

A note of the meeting will be taken and the outcome recorded. Changes in practice will be noted to help improve future response processing.

A response must provide the outcome of the Internal Review Panel and if information previously withheld is to be released this must also be provided with the response.

The response must also provide information about how to appeal the Review Panel decision Information Commissioner.

### **Taking your review further**

If the requestor is unhappy with the internal review response received from the Council, then they may ask the Information Commissioner's Office to investigate the matter further:

The Information Commissioner's Office - Northern Ireland,

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

Telephone helpline (Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm): 0303 123 1113

[Live Chat line](#)

Advice on making a complaint if you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment can be found on the [Advice services page of the ICO website](#).

Please note that the ICO generally expects internal reviews to be completed prior to reviewing the decision of public bodies.

### **Corporate Complaints Process**

The Corporate Complaints procedure can be utilised if, for example:

- the Council has failed to do something;
- it has done something wrong; or
- has treated a member of the public unfairly or discourteously.

If anyone is dissatisfied with the outcome of this process they can raise the matter to the Northern Ireland Ombudsman.

Details on this process can be found at:

<http://www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/about-the-council/complaints-to-the-council>

### **Corporate Complaints and Internal Review Process**

Any correspondence from the requester that expresses dissatisfaction with the initial response for a data request, will be treated as a request for an internal review. If a complaint is made simultaneously, clarification should be sought to verify if they are both regarding the same issue. The issue should then be treated as an internal review.

## Part 5: Re-use of Information

<b>Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2005</b>	<p>The Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2005 (RPSI Regulations) encourages the re-use of public sector information. This is defined as information for which public authorities listed in the regulations hold the copyright.</p> <p>Copyright is a right to prevent copying of original material. It can be infringed by making copies, publishing and issuing copies of copyright material to the public, or to any other person, without permission</p>
<b>Information Released by the Council</b>	<p>Information that the Council publishes or provides in response to requests may be subject to copyright protection. In most cases the copyright will be owned by the Council but it may be owned by another person or organisation, as indicated in the information itself.</p> <p>Information provided under the RPSI Regulations is supplied and released under the terms of the <a href="#">Open Government Licence (OGL) v3.0</a> for public sector information.</p>
<b>What is meant by re-use?</b>	<p>Re-use means using public sector information for a purpose other than the initial public task it was produced for.</p> <p>For information where the copyright is owned by the Council, or another person or organisation, individuals must apply to the relevant copyright owner to obtain permission for re-use.</p> <p>Without the necessary permission individuals may breach copyright laws.</p>
<b>Obligations under the Regulations</b>	<p>The Council is not obliged under the RPSI Regulations to make public sector information available for re-use, but if it does, it must be done in accordance with those Regulations.</p> <p>In these circumstances, the RPSI Regulations place the following obligations on the Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Council has 20 working days in which to respond to a request for re-use. This period may be extended where the request is extensive or the request raises complex issues;</li> <li>- A licence fee can be issued in line with regulation 15 of the RPSI Regulations;</li> <li>- A licence must not restrict competition;</li> <li>- Exclusive licensing arrangements will not be allowed, except for the provision of a service in the public interest. Such arrangements will, however, be published;</li> <li>- The Council should make available to the public conditions for re-use and any standard charges for re-use;</li> <li>- Information for re-use should be made available electronically where possible and appropriate; and</li> </ul>

- The Council must not discriminate between applicants making requests for re-use for comparable purposes.

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### **Copyright and Use of Logos**

The RPSI Regulations do not affect the Council's copyright.

The supply of documents and information by the Council (for example under FOIA and on its website) does not give individuals the right to re-use it in a way that would infringe copyright.

Brief extracts of material may be reproduced without explicit permission, under the "fair dealing" provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988; for the purposes of research for non-commercial purposes; private study; criticism; review and news reporting - all subject to an acknowledgement of the Council as the copyright owner.

Wider re-use requires Council permission. This applies equally to any of the Council's logos. The Council may choose to allow re-use under a licence, imposing conditions on the re-use of the information to ensure it is not used in a manner inconsistent with its copyright; and a re-use fee may be required.

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### **Request for Re-use**

Queries relating to copyright and re-use must be made in writing and submitted by:

- Email: [FOI@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:FOI@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk); or
- Letter: Compliance Officer (Information), Ards and North Down Borough Council, City Hall, The Castle, Bangor, Co. Down, BT20 4BT

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### **Review of response to re-use request**

A requestor may ask the Council to review its response to a re-use request.

In these circumstances, the Council will follow the process described in Part 4.



## Part 6: Alternative Formats

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### Alternative formats

Copies of this document, or any documents referenced within it, are available, on request, in alternative formats from:

Ards and North Down Borough Council,  
 City Hall, The Castle  
 Bangor  
 Co. Down  
 BT20 4BT  
 Tel: 0300 013 3333  
 Email: [FOI@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:FOI@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk)  
 Or : [dataprotection@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:dataprotection@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk)

# Appendix 1 – Legislation, related policies and procedures

Relevant Legislation	<p>The Council must comply with all relevant statutory UK legislation that has links to the Data Protection Act 2018, the UK General Data Protection Regulation, Freedom of Information Act 2000, Environmental Information Regulations 2004, the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2005 and Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Charges and Information) Regulations 2018.</p> <p>These include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Public Records Act (Northern Ireland) 1923</li><li>- Human Rights Act 1998</li><li>- Common law duty of confidence</li></ul>
Related Policies and procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Data Protection Policy</li><li>- Digital by Default Policy</li><li>- Information, Communication and Technology Policy</li><li>- CCTV Policy</li><li>- Complaint Handling Procedure</li></ul>

## Appendix 2 – Cost Information

### Photocopying Costs

Page Size	Cost (per page)
A4	20p
A3	30p
A2	£2
A1 & A0	£5

### Postage Costs

Postage costs will be calculated based on the size, weight, destination and service required for delivery of documentation.

Costs will be based on those within the Council's postal service contract and be communicated to the requestor before an item is sent.

### Retrieval of Planning files from external storage

Cost per file	Cost for delivery
£1 per file	£5.50 per delivery

### CCTV Footage

Cost for the extraction of footage is £30 per hour of work carried out.

Additional costs may be required for the anonymisation of third-party information within footage, including the blurring (redaction) of faces or other distinguishing features that would constitute the personal data of third parties

Quotations for this work will be sought by Council as and when required. Requestors will be advised of the cost before work proceeds.

This fee may not apply in circumstances when an individual, or an authorised third party, is requesting personal data/information under the Data Protection Act 2018.

## Appendix 3 – ICO Guidance on formats for provision of information

### Information Commissioner's Office - Advisory note to public authorities

Recent high profile and serious data breaches in the UK have shown the impact of personal information within original source spreadsheets being disclosed inadvertently in response to FOIA requests. Public Authorities (Pas) should have robust measures in place to ensure that personal information is kept safe, and the risk of human error is reduced, including when in response to freedom of information requests.

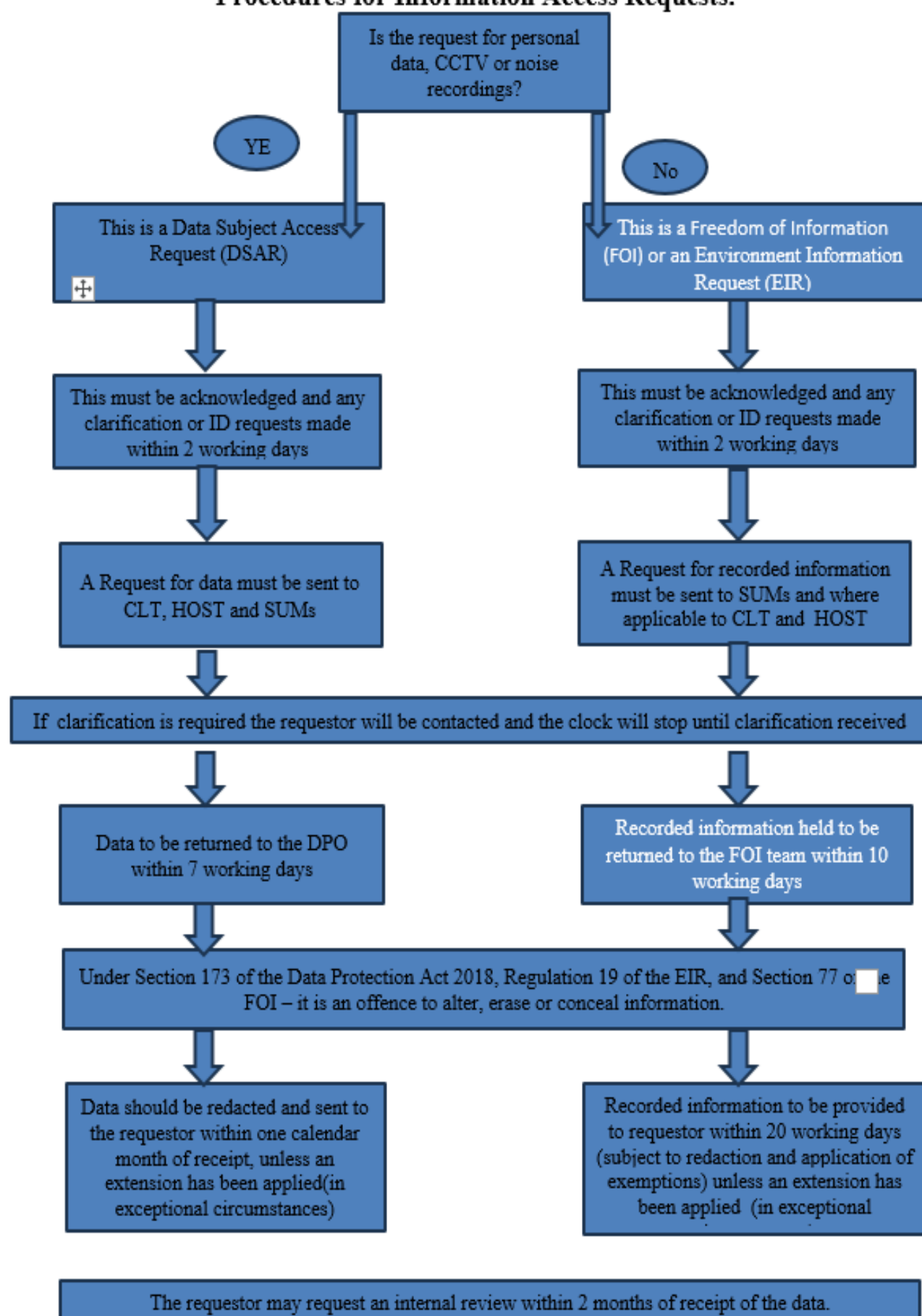
The ICO recognises that the use of online platforms to submit and receive responses to FOI requests can be efficient and help promote transparency and are within the scope of legislation. We also recognise that spreadsheets are widely used in public authorities, ourselves included.

However, they can also present practical challenges and risks of the inadvertent disclosure of personal information which may not be evident from a cursory look at the spreadsheet.

The ICO is advising, as a matter of urgency, that all Pas should:

- Implement a moratorium on the disclosure of original source spreadsheets to online platforms in response to FOI requests.
- Convert spreadsheets and sensitive metadata into open reusable formats such as Comma-Separated Value (csv) files.
- Avoid using spreadsheets with hundreds or thousands of rows. Invest in data management systems which support data integrity.
- Continually train staff who use common data software and are involved in disclosing information.
- Familiarise themselves with, and incorporate into policies and procedures, guidance from the ICO to mitigate risks of pivot tables which may summarise a large set of data but can create an automatic summary of the underlying data.

## Procedures for Information Access Requests.





Unclassified

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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	10 December 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Corporate Services
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Administration
Date of Report	18 November 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	Request for Civic Reception - Comber Recreation Football Club
Attachments	

**Background**

A letter has been received from Councillor Rachel Ashe, Councillor Vicky Moore and Councillor Patricia Morgan requesting that Comber Recreation Football Club (Comber Rec) be considered for a civic reception to acknowledge its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

The Club qualifies for a Civic Reception based on the criteria of exceptional service to the local community (including sporting success) and a significant anniversary. The Club was first formed in 1950, playing under the name 'Comber Youth Club'. The football season of September 2025 – June 2026 marks the Club's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, a significant milestone which will be a major celebration.

Over the past 75 years, the Club has grown from a small, single-team Club to the modern-day Comber Rec which boasts four senior men's teams, senior women's team and multiple youth teams. The 2nd XI currently plays in the Amateur League

Not Applicable

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Division 3A while the 3rd XI are in Division 1 of the Down Area Winter Football League.

The Club also has many junior teams and encourages participation in football, but also good physical and mental health and the importance of teamwork. In last year's football season, Comber Rec won the Steel and Son's Cup and were runners-up in the Border Cup. This season, Comber Rec are again in the final of the Border Cup, hoping to lift the trophy in December. The success of the Club has been a boost for Comber, with the whole community getting behind them.

### **Council Policy on Civic Receptions**

The Council's Policy for Civic Receptions requires requests to be submitted in writing to the Chief Executive and signed by at least three Elected Members. The request, once received, is assessed against set criteria and an officer's report, with an appropriate recommendation, is prepared for consideration by the Corporate Services Committee.

### **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.

This request has been submitted in line with the agreed procedures and meets criteria 1 of the policy - Exceptional Service to the Borough/Local Community and a Significant Anniversary. The Club will celebrate its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2025 and has enjoyed exceptional sporting success since its formation. The cost can be met from the 2025-26 civic budget.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Council proceeds to offer Comber Rec a Civic Reception to acknowledge 75 years since the formation of the Cub and should the offer be accepted, proceeds to arrange same on a date to be agreed by relevant parties.



Unclassified

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## ITEM 6

### Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Corporate Services Committee
Date of Meeting	10 December 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Corporate Services
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Administration
Date of Report	19 November 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	Request for a mural at Redburn Community Centre
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Map Appendix 2 - Mock-up of the mural Appendix 3 - Photo of the wall

The Council has received a request from Hollywood Community Network, a local community group, seeking Council approval for an anti-drug mural on a wall at the Redburn Community Centre (Appendix 1). They are currently working on an initiative aimed at engaging the children in the Hollywood area and they hope to implement a six-week anti-drug programme early in 2025. They have received funding for the programme from Woven Housing Association.

They have provided the following information in support of their request:

*“We believe this location is ideal for the mural, as it has frequently been subjected to vandalism and graffiti, particularly on the wall we wish to enhance. We are confident that the approval of this community mural could deter further vandalism while simultaneously conveying a powerful message about the impact of drugs on individuals and their families. As a collective, the Hollywood Community Network is*

Not Applicable

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*eager to propose the creation of a community mural. We plan to collaborate with various age groups within the community to develop this mural, which will address significant themes that the group wishes to highlight, including drug awareness and mental health. This initiative will empower young people in the community to express their perspectives on the consequences of drug misuse. The project will commence with design workshops in partnership with BLAZE FX, where participants will engage in design sessions. During these sessions, they will explore themes and imagery to convey their vision for the mural and the message it will communicate. We have already conducted a preliminary workshop to draft an initial design with the artist. The artist has incorporated all the images and themes discussed during the design sessions into a draft mural design. This project is planned as a six-week course to be held at the Redburn Community Centre. We have submitted a funding application to support this initiative.”*

They provided the attached mock-up of the mural and photo of the wall (Appendices 2 & 3). Details are:

- The dimensions of the mural are a height of four feet and a length of thirty-two feet. They plan to utilize acrylic exterior paint for this project.
- The painting process can be executed directly onto the wall, or alternatively, they could paint on boards that would be affixed to the wall surface.
- It is anticipated that the commencement of the project would be sometime in the new year 2025, with a projected duration of six weeks.

Council officers have been consulted and have no objections but have made the following comments:

- Council officers must review and sign off on the final design before it goes on the wall as there was a query over whether Holywood Community Network’s logo could be used on a Council building.
- From a building maintenance, the preferred option would be for the mural to be affixed to the wall on a board, as it would be easier to remove and replace should there have to be works undertaken on the building.
- The boards should be affixed into the mortar between the bricks, rather than drilling into brickwork.
- This would require a planning application, and the group may be able to avail of an application fee exemption if they meet certain conditions (Holywood Community Network has been directed to the Planning service for further information).

Therefore, approval should be subject to the following terms and conditions:

- I. Providing a risk assessment.
- II. Display appropriate notices to inform the public of the works and notices must be removed immediately on completion of the work.
- III. Provide evidence of relevant insurances and fully indemnifying Council against all risks or claims associated with the use of land or property.

Not Applicable

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- IV. Hollywood Community Network agreeing to a lifespan of 3 years being placed on the mural, at which point the Council will review the mural and determine it should be refreshed or removed.
- V. The mural must be affixed to the wall on a board, and the board(s) should be affixed to the mortar between the bricks and not by drilling into the brickwork.
- VI. Council officers must review and sign off the final design before the project commences.
- VII. The Council reserves the right to withdraw consent, and / or to ask Hollywood Community to remove the mural at any point in the process.
- VIII. Make good any damage caused during the use to the satisfaction of Council officers. Should the Council have to undertake remedial works the costs will be recoverable.
- IX. Put in place protective measures for areas where important natural heritage is present.
- X. Arrange for the collection and subsequent removal of all debris arising from the use of the land. Should the Council have to do any additional cleaning, the costs will be recoverable.
- XI. Organiser to put in place plans for recycling waste and / or disposing of waste correctly.
- XII. Arrange for the prompt removal of any items used in connection with the work.
- XIII. Put in place plans to limit any negative impact on the public using the path at the same time as the work.
- XIV. Obtain and provide evidence of permits/licences/registrations and approvals.
- XV. Ensure that adequate staff are placed throughout the area to ensure that members of the public are not endangered by the work.
- XVI. No petrol generators are to be used.

## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council accedes to the request from Hollywood Community Network for a mural on the wall at Redburn Community Centre, subject to agreement to the terms and conditions outlined in this report.

# Redburn Community Centre



## Council Lands Dataset

- Active
- Leased In
- Leased Out
- Other
- Sold
- Sold - With Registered Charge



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This Map is ONLY for use within Ards and North Down Borough Council

	Scale: 1:500
	Date: 20/11/2024
	Author:









Unclassified

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## ITEM 7

## Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Corporate Services Committee
Date of Meeting	10 December 2024
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Communications and Marketing
Date of Report	25 November 2024
File Reference	NOM 181
Legislation	N/A
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Bangor Entrance Signs
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Signage Options

Bangor was awarded City Status as part of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee celebrations in May 2022.

At the Council meeting September 2022, Members agreed the following Notice of Motion in respect of this honour:

***That this Council, in recognition of Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee and her conferment of City Status upon Bangor, agrees to name an appropriate place or building within Bangor in her honour and that future Council Bangor entrance signs make reference to Bangor being a Platinum Jubilee City.***

In relation to signage, a report was brought to Council in January 2024 advising:

- Bangor has five current entrance signs, which are in keeping with all other town gateways signs in the Borough and were funded by DfC. Planning permission had to be secured for the erection of these signs and if the design were to

Not Applicable

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change significantly (primarily in terms of dimensions) this process might have to be completed again.

- To remove the requirement for a further planning application and to keep the signs complimentary to those in the other towns it is recommended that an update to the current design, rather than a complete redesign, is undertaken. This would allow the existing steel brackets and supporting structures to be reused with just a replacement of the polycarbonate panels – reducing the overall replacement costs.
- The new signage design includes the updated City of Bangor logo and reference to the platinum jubilee (official logo and the wording ‘A Platinum Jubilee City’). The overall height of the sign has been increased to better accommodate these additional elements from the Notice of Motion, but this change does not impact the support structure or require any further planning review.
- Members were asked to consider whether the design should also include the strapline ‘by the Sea’, which was agreed with the Bangor stakeholder group as part of the town and City branding exercise. Please see Appendix 1- Option A without ‘by the Sea’ and Option B with ‘by the Sea’.
- At the meeting Members had mixed views and asked that further engagement was undertaken with the City Advisory Group to garner opinions.
- The signage has been discussed twice by the Bangor CAG with agreement reached at the November CAG meeting that ‘by the Sea’ should be included on the new entrance signage.

Members are asked to consider the views of the CAG and confirm their choice of Signage Option A or B.

The costs of the manufacturing and installing the new signs will be £7,600 – budget is available in the 2024-25 financial year for this.

## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council agree to Signage Option A or B.



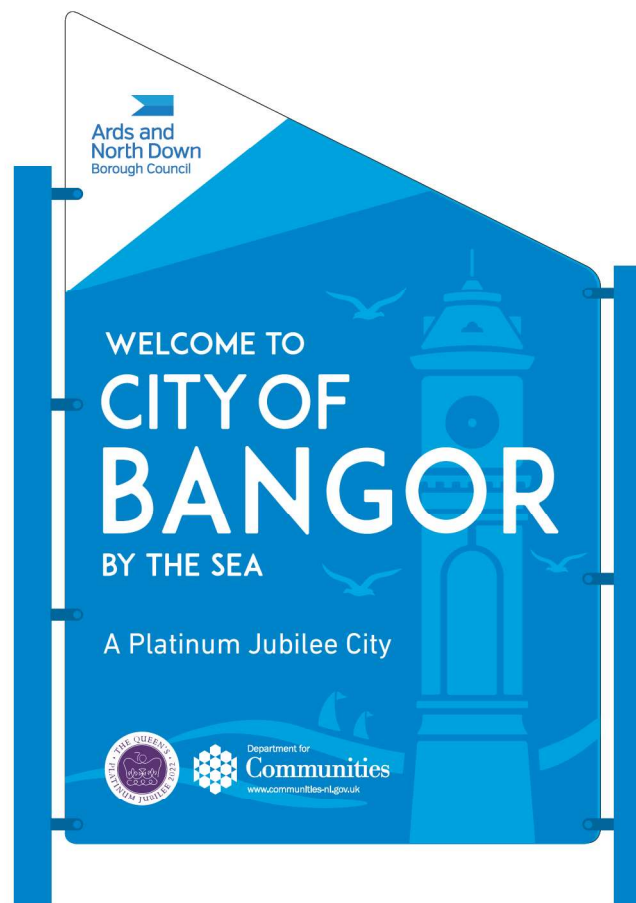
# Option B

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## Existing sign type - to be replaced

2 perspex panels with coloured vinyl and clear sections



## Proposed replacement sign type

Solid opaque panel - no transparen sections

New city title moves up and all logos increase in size

Repaint fixing locators and posts



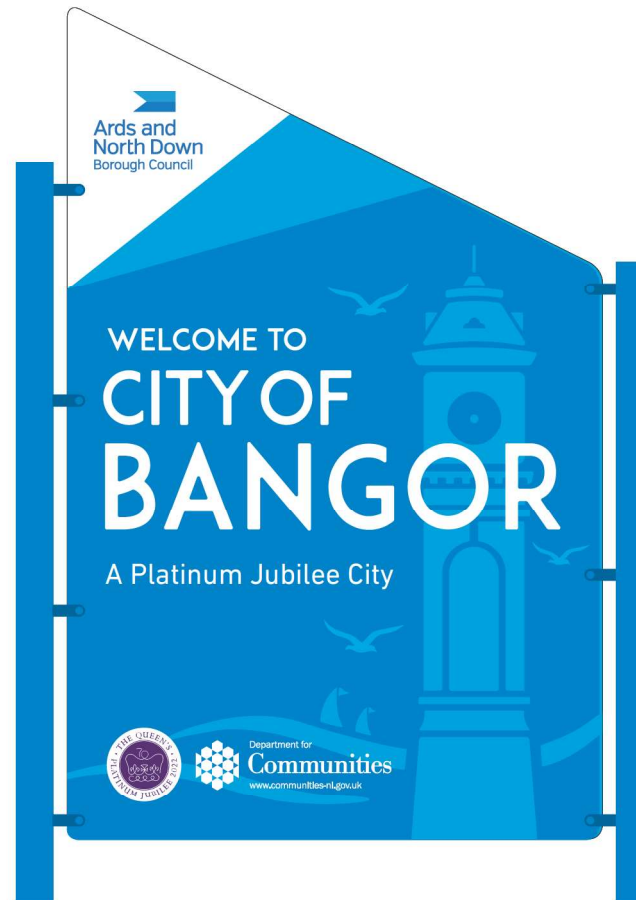
# Option A

48



## Existing sign type - to be replaced

2 perspex panels with coloured vinyl and clear sections



## Proposed replacement sign type

Solid opaque panel - no transparen sections

New city title moves up and all logos increase in size

Repaint fixing locators and posts



Unclassified

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**ITEM 8a****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Corporate Services Committee
Date of Meeting	10 December 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Corporate Services
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Administration
Date of Report	01 November 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	NOM 623 Update: VE Day - 80th Anniversary
Attachments	

**Background**

At May Council meeting the following Notice of Motion was heard.

*8th May 2025 will be 80 years since VE Day- the official end of the Second World War in Europe. This council recognises the significance of this occasion and tasks officers to bring forward a report outlining potential ways this historic anniversary can be commemorated. Including any national plans for beacon lighting and with the council working with local people and local community groups to look at holding fitting events to mark this occasion so that a budget can be included in the next rate setting process.*

It was agreed that officers would bring back a report to Committee which detailed the proposed programme for consideration.

**Update**

**Correspondence from Bruno Peek, Pageantmaster**

Not Applicable

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The Council has received correspondence from Bruno Peek, Pageantmaster, to participate in VE Day 80 on 8 May 2025 in celebration of the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the war in Europe and WWII as a whole. Communities are encouraged to take part in this important occasion, remembering those who gave so much to ensure the freedom we all share today.

Officers have discussed how best to celebrate VE 80 ensuring civic and community involvement and the proposed programme is detailed below:

### **Civic Programme**

#### **VE Day Flag**

The Council has been asked to raise the unique VE Day 80 flag on Thursday, 8 May at 9am to unite the nation and remember the sacrifice made by so many. The flag will be flown at The Castle, Bangor and Conway Square, Newtownards.

#### **Beacon Lighting**

The Council has been invited to participate in the beacon lighting initiative. The beacons will symbolise the light of hope that emerged from the darkness of war. It is proposed that beacons will be lit at 9.30pm on Thursday, 8 May at The Castle, Bangor, Conway Square, Newtownards and Burr Point, Ballyhalbert for the International Tribute. The costs associated with lighting the beacons is approximately £1,500 to include pipers, choirs and staff costs.

#### **VE Day 80 Concert**

As agreed at the Council meeting in October 2024, the Council will host a concert in Castle Park, Bangor on Friday, 9 May 2025 featuring the Band of the Royal Irish. Discussions have taken place with the Royal British Legion and relevant Military personnel and the military band has been secured. The costs associated with the concert are likely to be in the region of £2,500.

### **Local Community**

**Grant Scheme** - A simplified grant scheme can be developed for small grants of up to £500. The grants can be used to fund up to 60 events for constituted community and voluntary groups. By limiting the budget to £500 per grant 100% of the award can be released to groups upon approval.

**Celebration Packs** - Packs will be made available to all non-constituted community and voluntary groups on a first come first served basis.

The costs are based on circa £50 per party pack for 100 non-constituted groups.

### **Local People Engagement**

- Schools Education Pack – produced in-house by Museum Team
- Historical Talk
- Living History event at North Down Museum with Valhalla Street Theatre
- Community Recollection Project - Call out and article in the paper looking for photos and recollections of the day from local people and work with the Heritage Cluster groups. The focus will be on the importance and legacy of VE Day on the generation that were young children at the end of the war.

Not Applicable

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Detail	Budget Required
Civic Programme	£4,000
Community Grant	£30,000
Celebration Pack	£5,000
Local Engagement Packs	£1,000
Museum Programme	£2,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£42,000</b>

### RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council agrees to the programme outlined above subject to budget setting process.

Unclassified

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**ITEM 9a****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Corporate Services Committee
Date of Meeting	10 December 2024
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	Community Planning Manager
Date of Report	15 November 2024
File Reference	
Legislation	Local Government (NI) Act 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below: Performance Update Report
Subject	Community Planning Service Half Year Performance Update Report 2024-25
Attachments	

**Context**

Members will be aware that Council is required, under the Local Government Act 2014, to have in place arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions. To fulfil this requirement Council has in place a Performance Management Policy and Handbook. The Performance Management Handbook outlines the approach to Performance Planning and Management process as:

- Community Plan – published every 10-15 years
- Corporate Plan – published every 4 years (Corporate Plan 2024-2028)
- Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) – published annually in September
- Service Plan – developed annually (approved annually in March)

The Council's 18 Service Plans outline how each respective Service will contribute to the achievement of the Corporate objectives including, but not limited to, any relevant actions identified in the PIP.

Unclassified

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## Reporting Approach

The Service Plans will be reported to relevant Committees on a half-yearly basis as undernoted:

Reference	Period	Reporting Month
Quarter 2 (Q2)	April – September	December
Quarter 4 (Q4)	October – March	June

The report for April – September 2024 is attached.

## Corporate Plan 2024-2028

In line with the Corporate Plan 2024-2028, our service has contributed to seven outcomes as follows:

### Outcome 1

*An engaged Borough with citizens and businesses who have opportunities to influence the delivery of services, plans and investment*

#### Key achievements:

- Priority 1 of the Big Plan is to encourage Participation. This is achieved through the Over 50s Council (associated with the Age Friendly Workstream), Youth Voice and the Third Sector Community Planning HUB.
- We are working with Corporate Communications and Marketing on a Council engagement framework embracing the principles of community planning.

### Outcome 2

*An environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough meeting our net zero carbon targets*

#### Key achievements:

- Priority 2 of the Big Plan focuses on infrastructure. In September, a special meeting of the Public Estate and Land Group was convened to talk specifically about actions that need to be taken across the public sector to move towards lower carbon public sector fleet.
- The Community Planning Service created a Scope 1 and Scope 2 Council carbon dashboard to help monitor, and report, on Council's net zero obligations. This dashboard is currently in draft and is currently focused on buildings and fleet data. A small internal working group is working with Community Planning to progress this project.
- Priority 9 of the Big Plan focuses on sustainability. We have contributed to work with a consortium led by Queen's University Belfast to develop a 'sushealth' food index that considers both the carbon and nutritional value of food.

### **Outcome 3**

*A thriving and sustainable economy*

#### **Key achievements:**

- Priority 7 of the Big Plan is to focus on better jobs and skills. This is delivered via the Labour Market Partnership Action Plan.
- Priority 8 of the Big Plan is focused on economic inequalities. The Community Planning Service finalised a research study into poverty and hardship across Ards and North Down. Data was collected from Food Banks, Social Supermarket and Community Advice AND to increase the CP Partnerships understanding on why people living in AND were having to access services. This report was presented to the June 2024 meeting of AND's Strategic Community Planning Partnership. Recommendations, and potential interventions, from the report will be discussed at future meetings of the SCPP.

### **Outcome 4**

*A vibrant, attractive, sustainable Borough for citizens, visitors, businesses and investors*

#### **Key achievements:**

- Priority 9 of the Big Plan is focused on Sustainability. A Sustainable Tourism workstream with a mix of internal and external partners has been established. This group meets twice a year and had agreed a communication framework that explains what is meant by sustainable tourism.

### **Outcome 5**

*Safe, welcoming and inclusive communities that are flourishing*

#### **Key achievements:**

- Priority 5 of the Big Plan focuses on making Ards and North Down Welcoming for everyone. The workstreams that deliver against this priority are Age Friendly and Dementia Friendly.
- Community Planning Service is researching the mechanism to introduce a Dementia Safeguarding Scheme. This will involve a wrist strap and hand tag product using NFC technology.

### **Outcome 6**

*Opportunities for people to be active and healthy*

#### **Key achievements:**

- Priority 3 of the Big Plan focuses on emotional wellbeing. A Health and Wellbeing Group is being reestablished to develop a digital tool to help make it easier for people to understand, and be signposted to, the five steps to wellbeing activities. During this half year Council and the SE Health Trust have discussed options for the digital tool and the Community Planning Service has identified a low cost option to progressing this initiative.
- Priority 4 of the Big Plan is focused on health equity. The Whole Systems Approach is being led in partnership with PHA. In the first half of this year we



have progressed the PHIRST evaluation of this project. This is an academic evaluation assesses how we have been able to implement the Public Health England guidance of whole systems approaches.

**Outcome 7**  
*Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation*

**Key achievements:**

- The facilitation of the Community Planning Partnership contributes to this outcome.
- The Community Planning Services was involved in finalising the Council's Corporate Plan and developing an easy read version.
- The Community Planning Service provided support to HR in the creation and updating of the Absence dashboard
- The ongoing provision of data and evidence to other internal Council Services has enabled them make evidence based decisions for their service area.

**Emerging issues:**

As part of the commitment to continuous improvement the annual Service Plan is reviewed monthly. The Service Risk register has also been reviewed to identify emerging issues and agree any actions required detailed below:

- The Community Planning Managers involvement in the regional group reviewing the establishment of the first shadow Area Integrated Partnership Board has now been concluded. Additional work and discussion are needed to ensure the new SE AIPB complements the work of the Community Planning Partnership. PHA, SEHSCT and ANDBC will liaise to ensure duplication is avoided. As the work on some of these groups has ended the target for participation over the year many not be met.
- A plan is needed to better promote the achievement of Community Planning over the past 10 years.
- Budget underspend.

**Action to be taken:**

- Work with PHA and SEHSCT on the role of the newly formed SE AIPB.
- Develop a plan to promote Community Planning and to reflect on the last 10 years.
- Community planning budget for second half of the year will be fully utilised and is already committed.

Identified KPI at Risk	Reasons as to why KPI has not been met	Action to be taken	Designated Officer	Date for Review
External Health Partnerships	The regional group reviewing the shadow AIPBS has concluded its work and been stood down	No action required	none	none

Unclassified

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Spend against budget	Plan for budget spend are in place and budget is fully committed for second half of 2024-25	No action required	CP Manager	31 March 2025
Facilitate meetings of Big Plan Workstreams	The WSA Obesity workstream only met once as there was a delay moving to Phase 3	No action required – Phase 3 should progress in January	CP Manager	31 March 2025

# RECOMMENDATION













It is recommended Council note this report.

Unclassified

# Half yearly Performance Report - Community Planning

Generated on: 08 November 2024

Last Update H1 2024/25

Performance Data Traffic Light Icon	PI Short Name	Performance Data Current Value	Performance Data Current Target
	% spend against budget	89.8%	100%
	1 Performance Update Report per annum (all priorities)	0	0
	2 3rd Sector Community Planning Forum meetings per annum	1	1
	1 Research Report per annum (2023/24 poverty)	0	0
	2 Events (Real Lives, Anti-Poverty and 3rd Sector Networking &WSA) – linked to service improvement (engagement)	1	1
	2 Promotional campaigns associated with Big Plan priority issues (Dementia and impact of Community Planning) – linked to service improvement (communication)	1	1
	% staff attendance	100%	93.5%
	% of completed Employee Appraisals in the period September 2023 to March 2025	0%	0%
	Facilitate/participation in 20 meetings of Big Plan Priority Workstreams	9	10
	3 Strategic Partnership Meetings per annum	1	1
	8 statistical updates (1 of which is LMP)	8	4
	Participation in external groups with an impact on wellbeing	6	10

Unclassified

Unclassified

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## ITEM 9b

### Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not applicable
Council/Committee	Corporate Services
Date of Meeting	10 December 2024
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Communications and Marketing
Date of Report	22 November 2024
File Reference	CMR_H124
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Communications - Q2 Performance Report, Comms and Marketing
Attachments	N/A

#### Context

Members will be aware that Council is required, under the Local Government Act 2014, to have in place arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions. To fulfil this requirement Council has in place a Performance Management Policy and Handbook. The Performance Management Handbook outlines the approach to Performance Planning and Management process as:

- Community Plan – published every 10-15 years
- Corporate Plan – published every 4 years (Corporate Plan 2024-2028)
- Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) – published annually in September
- Service Plan – developed annually (approved annually in March)

The Council's 18 Service Plans outline how each respective Service will contribute to the achievement of corporate objectives including, but not limited to, any relevant actions identified in the PIP.

Not applicable

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**Reporting Approach**

The Service Plans will be reported to relevant Committees on a half-yearly basis as undernoted:

Reference	Period	Reporting Month
Quarter 2 (Q2)	April – September	December
Quarter 4 (Q4)	October – March	June

The report for Quarter 2, April to September is attached.

**Corporate Plan 2024-2028**

In line with the Corporate Plan 2024-2028, our service has contributed to 7 outcomes as follows.

**Outcome 1**

*An engaged Borough with citizens and businesses who have opportunities to influence the delivery of services, plans and investment*

**Key achievements:**

- Launch of new.gov.uk website in March/April 2024 – with further content updates and enhancements in the following six months including searchable councillor contacts.
- Launch of digital engagement platform - Citizen Lab; with pilot content related to the Ward Park Environmental Improvement Scheme. Has helped to identify some local community needs/ improvement ideas, which it is hoped will be actioned by the Parks Team by March 2025.
- Average audience growth across all social media channels of 15%.
- Support for the Rural Regeneration Team to deliver a new Village Plan engagement process, involving over 30 public information sessions and a school drawing competition. Ultimately resulting in the return of over 1,500 surveys and improved community engagement relating to village improvement ideas.

**Outcome 2**

*An environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough meeting our net zero carbon targets*

**Key achievements:**

- Ongoing proactive education and information sharing with residents around sustainable practices, especially in relation to waste management and recycling and tree planting.
- Substantial reduction in our overall print production and move to ensure what we do produce is completely sustainable, including our short run in-house production.

**Outcome 3**

*A thriving and sustainable economy*

Not applicable

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### **Key achievements:**

- Suite of investor print/ digital publications created showcasing the Borough as an appealing place to visit and invest. Used to support Council attendance at UK Reiff.
- Large-scale integrated Comms and Marketing campaigns delivered for Economic Development, Regeneration and the LMP – covering job fairs/ child minding academy and Support Local.
- Dedicated Comms and Mktg support for the Bangor Waterfront Regeneration and partnership working to support Bangor Marine Comms and Mktg for the Queen's Parade Development.

### **Outcome 4**

*A vibrant, attractive, sustainable Borough for citizens, visitors, businesses and investors*

### **Key achievements:**

- Delivery, in short time scale, of Olympic Homecoming event in August, which showcases Newtownards and the wider Borough at a local, regional and national level.
- 12 fully integrated comms and marketing campaigns - targeting visitors, investors and encouraging residents to support local.
- PR plan developed and implemented to increase AND profile in ROI to potential visitors has generated 10 new features.
- Destination Awareness Spring campaign targeting potential visitors was delivered achieving a high level of reach in both NI and ROI; 2.9million digital advertising impressions\*\*, 141k reached via social media, 178k via radio.

### **Outcome 5**

*Safe, welcoming and inclusive communities that are flourishing*

### **Key achievements:**

- Ongoing promotion of, and multi-media support for, key community initiatives delivered by Good Relations and PCSP.
- Crisis and Recovery Comms support for the multi-agency response to the Rivenwood WW2 bomb – focused on providing advice and support to impacted residents. Very positive feedback received from residents and partners. Comms learnings shared with regional emergency communications groupings.

### **Outcome 6**

*Opportunities for people to be active and healthy*

### **Key achievements:**

- Improving the physical and mental wellbeing of staff through staff engagement events, e.g. Picnic on the Lawn, Sports Da.
- Ongoing promotion of Parks and outdoor spaces, tree planting events etc, as free to consume active leisure opportunities across the Borough.
- Partnership working at a regional level to share messaging from Department of Health and PHA on a regular basis via Council channels.

Not applicable

**Outcome 7**

*Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation*

**Key achievements:**

- Developing an engaged and informed workforce through a wide range of Internal comms initiatives – biweekly NEWS AND INFO; monthly Top 5 and Senior Leader Update; SUMs Forum.
- Work with colleagues in HR AND OD to support Investors in People.

**Emerging issues:**

As part of the commitment to continuous improvement the annual Service Plan is reviewed on a monthly basis. The Service Risk register has also been reviewed to identify emerging issues and agree any actions required detailed below:

- **Programming:** There is a risk of content saturation on Council social media channels at periods of high activity (especially around largescale events). Prioritising messages based on available resources is essential. The Comms and Mktg teams use resources carefully to ensure impactful communication, however this is not always appreciated/ understood across the organisation as each service wants spotlight for their particular product.
- **Always on content requirements** - The ‘always on’ nature of digital comms requires a high level of resource to develop engaging content and manage appropriate online responses.
- **Bangor Waterfront:** The current focus of the Bangor Waterfront Redevelopment remains on the procurement of design contractors and, as such, there is little ‘new’ information to share. This is causing some understandable frustration among residents who want to see the scheme progress.

**Action to be taken:**

- Further planning meetings with key service areas to help timetable better information sharing and release.
- Increase the frequency of the Bangor Waterfront ezine to once every two months rather than once a quarter to improve information flows.

Identified KPI at Risk	Reasons as to why KPI has not been met	Action to be taken	Designated Officer	Date for Review
Bangor Waterfront sign ups	Stage of the project (procurement) means limited opportunities for public engagement.	Continue to promote the ezine on social media	Bangor Regeneration Comms Manager	March 2025
Kerbside Collection engagement	No Council decision taken on the approach to date	Preparatory work in progress	Head of Communications and Marketing	In line with Council decision making timeframe



Not applicable

**RECOMMENDATION**












It is recommended Council note this report.

Not applicable

Half yearly Performance Report - Communications and Marketing

Generated on: 25 November 2024

Last Update H1 2024/25

Performance Data Traffic Light Icon	PI Short Name	Performance Data Current Value	Performance Data Current Target
	% spend against budget	95.9%	100%
	% staff attendance	98.45%	93%
	% of completed Employee Appraisals in the period September 2023 to March 2025	100%	100%
	% client satisfaction	92%	90%
	Recruit ambassadors re outcomes of corporate plan	2	2
	% increase in signs ups to the Bangor Waterfront ezine	16%	20%
	% households engaged with kerbside collection scheme changes	0%	2%
	% resident awareness of Council services	77%	75%
	% resident satisfaction with Comms.	78%	75%
	% satisfaction with website	92%	90%
	% employee satisfaction with engagement	76%	75%

Unclassified

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## ITEM 9c

### Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not applicable
Council/Committee	Corporate Services
Date of Meeting	10 December 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Corporate Services
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Finance
Date of Report	26 November 2024
File Reference	FIN76
Legislation	Local Government Act (NI) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Finance Performance Report
Attachments	'-

#### Context

Members will be aware that Council is required, under the Local Government Act 2014, to have in place arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions. To fulfil this requirement Council has in place a Performance Management Policy and Handbook. The Performance Management Handbook outlines the approach to Performance Planning and Management process as:

- Community Plan – published every 10-15 years
- Corporate Plan – published every 4 years (Corporate Plan 2024-2028)
- Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) – published annually in September
- Service Plan – developed annually (approved annually in March)

The Council's 18 Service Plans outline how each respective Service will contribute to the achievement of the Corporate objectives including, but not limited to, any relevant actions identified in the PIP.

Not applicable

Reporting Approach

The Service Plans will be reported to relevant Committees on a half-yearly basis as undernoted:

Reference	Period	Reporting Month
Quarter 2 (Q2)	April – September	December
Quarter 4 (Q4)	October – March	June

The report for the first half year is attached.

Corporate Plan 2024-2028

In line with the Corporate Plan 2024-2028, our service has contributed to 1 outcome as follows:

Outcome 7

Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation

Key achievements:

- All statutory deadlines met
- All transaction processing targets for employee payments, income collection and supplier payments were met
- All budget reports issued on time
- Grants policy review completed six months ahead of schedule.

Emerging issues:

As part of the commitment to continuous improvement the annual Service Plan is reviewed on a half yearly basis. Emerging issues and agree any actions required detailed below:

- Although spend against budget is showing red, this is because investment income is above target giving rise a significant underspend across the service

Action to be taken:

Identified KPI at Risk	Reasons as to why KPI has not been met	Action to be taken	Designated Officer	Date for Review
Monthly account reconciliations	Full month end process not yet implemented	Process review	Corporate Acct Performance Acct	January 2025
Interim P2P system	Delays in back filling post	Design already under way	Project Manager	January 2025
Core sign-off				
Network files moved to SharePoint	Other pressures	Process to be completed	Corporate Acct Performance Acct Financial Ops Acct	December 2024
Prompt Payment within 10 days	Current system not fit for purpose	Implementation of new financial management system to	Project Manager Financial Ops Acct	January 2025

Not applicable

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commence on  
14 January  
2025

**RECOMMENDATION**











It is recommended that Council note this report.

Not applicable

Half yearly Performance Report - Finance

Generated on: 13 November 2024

Last Update H1 2024/25

Performance Data Traffic Light Icon	PI Short Name	Performance Data Current Value	Performance Data Current Target
	% spend against budget	76.03%	100%
	% staff attendance	94.68%	93.5%
	% of completed Employee Appraisals in the period September 2023 to March 2025	0%	0%
	% statutory deadlines met	100%	100%
	To pay employees on time	99.6%	100%
	% Debtors payments received within 30 days of invoice date	78%	75%
	To issue monthly budgetary control reports in a timely fashion (in working days)	8	8
	To complete monthly account reconciliations within a timely fashion (working days)	41	8
-	Commence Financial Management System design	To commence Jan 2025	-
	Introduce interim electronic purchase ordering system	In design	30-Sep-2024
-	Improvement in quality of Core sign-off	Coaching to commence in Jan 2025	-
	Transfer all network files to SharePoint	Underway	30-Sep-2024
-	Improve quality of Core sign-off information	Coaching to commence in Jan 2025	-
-	Develop Travel and Subsistence Policy	Development commenced	-

Not applicable

Performance Data Traffic Light Icon	PI Short Name	Performance Data Current Value	Performance Data Current Target
–	Develop Employee Payments Policy	Development commenced	-
	Prompt Payment within 10 working days	70%	80%
	Prompt Payment within 30 calendar days	95%	95%
	Prompt Payment outside 30 calendar days	5%	5%
	Review of Council's Grant Policy by 31st March 2025	30-Sep-2024	31 March 2025

Unclassified

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## ITEM 9d

### Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Corporate Services Committee
Date of Meeting	10 December 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Corporate Services
Responsible Head of Service	Head of STaP
Date of Report	26 November 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	Strategic Transformation and Performance Service Performance Report Q1 + Q2 2024/25
Attachments	Six-monthly performance report (Q1 + Q2) 2024/25

### Context

Members will be aware that Council is required, under the Local Government Act 2014, to have in place arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions. To fulfil this requirement Council has in place a Performance Management Policy and Handbook. The Performance Management Handbook outlines the approach to Performance Planning and Management process as:

- Community Plan – published every 10-15 years.
- Corporate Plan – published every 4 years (Corporate Plan 2024 - 2028).
- Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) – published annually (30 September 2024).
- Service Plan – developed annually (approved April/May 2024).



Not Applicable

The Council's 18 Service Plans outline how each respective Service will contribute to the achievement of the corporate objectives including, but not limited to, any relevant actions identified in the PIP.

**Reporting Approach**

The Service Plans will be reported to relevant Committees on a six-monthly basis as undernoted:

Reference	Period	Reporting Month
Quarter 2 (Q2)	April – September	December
Quarter 4 (Q4)	October - March	June

The report for Quarter 2 2024-25 is attached.

**Corporate Plan 2024-2028**

In line with the Corporate Plan 2024-2028, our service has contributed to one Outcome as follows.

**Outcome 7**

*Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation.*

**Key Achievements:**

**Procurement**

- Procurement savings for the Council are over target for the year to date (£131,229 versus £125,000). Figure achieved through Procurement engaging with Service areas to define project budgets, and tenders received being under this stipulated budget.
- There have been zero procurement challenges.
- Approximately 40 procurements have been completed during 2024 with a reduced team capacity. A number of these have been complex and under additional scrutiny:
  - Supported the Finance Project Team in the appointment of the new finance system provider.
  - Contract Award of the first batch of Bangor Waterfront projects (Ballyholme Yacht Club and Pickie).
  - Supported Leisure in the delivery of Comber Leisure Centre refurbishment.
  - Provision of a Works Contract for Newtownards to Green Road Greenway.
- Approval was given to restructure the service to increase capacity and resilience and to facilitate succession planning. Recruitment is underway to appoint an additional Procurement Officer.

**Digital Services**

- Systems and network uptime is 99%.
- A new Service Desk was launched in early November 2024 replacing the existing offering which was no longer fit for purpose. This is available to all users whether on or off premise and will not require connection to a VPN. All Digital Services Forms are now available through this Service Desk.

Not Applicable

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- The Wide Area Network (WAN) project is almost complete with all sites connected with the exception of Hollywood HRC.
- Council's telephony estate has been replaced with softphones. Handover from Atlas to 'Business as Usual' anticipated in December 2024.
- The majority of c.300mobile phones have been successfully migrated across networks.
- The hardware refresh procurement is underway with all desktops due to be replaced with laptops by end March 2025. This will result in the standardisation of equipment across the organisation, enabling hybrid working and improved working environments, which should result in improved stability and productivity.
- Digital Services supported Corporate Communications Transformation to develop and deliver a new corporate website/ platform.
- Digital Services supported Finance to progress the new finance system project (currently at development stage).
- Digital Services lead the development of our Data Strategy, in collaboration with an external specialist. This was completed in November 2024 and is the first stage in the journey to procure an Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS).
- Digital Services will be centrally involved in the development and implementation of the EDRMS (which is currently being procured). This will modernise the Council's document management practices, ensuring data security, regulatory compliance and enhanced operational efficiency.
- Digital Services have recently procured and are in the process of implementing a SOC (Security Operations Centre)/ SIEM (Security Information and Event Management) via a Managed Service (24x7x365). This Service provide continuous monitoring of our network identifying potential threats before they can cause harm and by assisting in the response to security breaches quickly minimising the impact of any breaches.

### **Transformation**

Since the last performance update (June 2024) the Service has:

- Complied with statutory legislation through completion of the 2024/25 Performance Improvement Plan and 2023/24 Self-Assessment Report.
- Supported Corporate Communications and Digital Services to develop and deliver a new corporate website/ platform.
- Supported Leisure Services to:
  - Develop a ten-year Leisure Strategy (due for completion in January 2025).
  - Resume APSE benchmarking with the first benchmarking report now received.
  - Progress staff restructuring (Phase 3 – Leisure and Fitness Associates).
- Supported Procurement to complete a staffing options paper.
- Supported Tourism to progress a mid-point review of the Tourism Events Strategy (ongoing).

Not Applicable

- Undertaken a review of Corporate legal services provision.
- Developed a new Corporate Grants Policy (approved by Council).
- Supported Digital Services to implement Office RND, implement a new telephone system and transfer the mobile phone contracts.
- Supported Finance to progress the new finance system project (currently at development stage).

**Emerging issues:**

As part of the commitment to continuous improvement the annual Service Plan is reviewed on a monthly basis. The Service Risk register has also been reviewed to identify emerging issues, which are detailed below:

- There are approximately 50 procurement exercises already identified for 2025. Appointment of additional staff is critical (anticipated to resolved through current recruitment process).
- Training and development of the Procurement Service staff in preparation for the implementation of the new Procurement Act (February 2025).
- Succession planning is an identified risk within Digital Services.
- Two of the Transformation Officers are on temporary contracts. In order to create resilience within the Service and to facilitate succession planning, the Council is investigating the viability of recruiting these posts on a permanent basis.

**Action to be taken:**

- Complete recruitment of new Procurement Service post and induct and embed staff member within the Service.
- The Transformation Team will commence a review of Digital Services to understand the optimal staffing complement and structure required to deliver the ever-increasing demands in relation to digital transformation across the organisation.
- The Transformation Team will continue to gather and collate evidence to demonstrate the value added of their activities with a view to securing permanent funding for their posts from June 2025.

Identified KPI at Risk	Reasons as to why KPI has not been met	Action to be taken	Designated Officer	Date for Review
Spend against budget lower than expected (98.46%)	Vacant Performance Improvement Officer post	Investigate the potential reallocation of this funding to the Transformation Officer post(s).	Head of Strategic Transformation and Performance	March 2025
Implement Social Value in Procurement Policy	Year-end target and not due until 31/03/25 but not achieved to date due to lack of resources	To be progressed in January 2025 following recruitment of additional resources.	Procurement Manager	March 2025

Not Applicable















92% of service calls are satisfactorily addressed within timescales (against a target of 97%)	This figure only reflects those calls logged through the helpdesk. Many staff continue to email Digital Services staff and contact them in person, and these service requests/ response times are not captured.	This should be resolved with the new helpdesk, which went live in November 2024.	Digital Services Manager	March 2025
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RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes this report.

Not Applicable

Half yearly Performance Report - Strategic Transformation and Performance (20/11/24)

Performance Data Traffic Light Icon	PI Short Name	Performance Data Current Value	Performance Data Current Target
	% Spend against budget	98.46%	100%
	% staff attendance	96.07%	93.5%
	% of completed Employee Appraisals in the period September 2023 to March 2025	100%	100%
	% Service calls satisfactorily addressed within timescales	92%	97%
	% systems and network uptime	99%	99%
	Implement high priority technical projects identified in Digital Strategy	2	2
	Implement SOC/SIEM	31-Oct-2024	31-Mar-2025
	No. of successful Procurement Challenges	0	0
	Implement Social Value in Procurement Policy	N/A	31-Mar-2025
	Procurement Contract Savings	£131229	£125000
	Attendance at ED organised SME training events	0	0
	Develop annual Performance Improvement Plan by statutory deadline	30-Jun-2024	30-Jun-2024
	Develop annual Self-Assessment Report by statutory deadline	30-Sep-2024	30-Sep-2024
	Support the delivery of 10 Transformational Projects across Council	12	5

Unclassified

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## ITEM 9e

### Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Corporate Services Committee
Date of Meeting	10 December 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Corporate Services
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Administration
Date of Report	12 November 2024
File Reference	ADM19
Legislation	Local Government Act (NI) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Administration Performance Report December 2024
Attachments	

#### Context

Members will be aware that Council is required, under the Local Government Act 2014, to have in place arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions. To fulfil this requirement Council approved the Performance Management Policy and Handbook in October 2015. The Performance Management Handbook outlines the approach to Performance Planning and Management process as:

- Community Plan – published every 10-15 years
- Corporate Plan – published every 4 years (Corporate Plan Towards 2024 in operation)
- Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) – published annually in September
- Service Plan – developed annually (approved April/May 2023)

Not Applicable

The Council’s 18 Service Plans outline how each respective Service will contribute to the achievement of the Corporate objectives including, but not limited to, any relevant actions identified in the PIP.

**Reporting approach**

The Service Plans will be reported to relevant Committees on a half-yearly basis as undernoted:

Reference	Period	Reporting Month
Q2	April – September	December
Q4	October – March	June

The report for April – September 2024 is attached.

**Corporate Plan 2024-2028**

In line with the Corporate Plan 2024-2028, our service has contributed to 3 outcomes as follows:

**Outcome 1**

*An engaged Borough with citizens and businesses who have opportunities to influence the delivery of services, plans and investment*

**Key achievements:**

- 100% of new policies screened for Rural needs and Section 75.

**Key points to note:**

The timeframes for policies to be produced do not always lend themselves to going through the full screening process in a timely manner.

**Outcome 2**

*An environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough meeting our net zero carbon targets*

**Key achievements:**

- Achievement of ISO14001

**Key points to note:**

This is measured annually.

**Outcome 7**

*Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation*

**Key achievements:**

The Council introduced a new Complaints Handling Procedure in line with the NIPSO Model Complaints Handling Procedure. This was launched in October 2023 and first two quarterly reports have shown a very high rate of resolution and compliance with the procedure. The complaints dashboard is available on the Council’s website as well as the lessons learned from the complaints.

Not Applicable

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Council awarded its highest honour - the Freedom of the Borough - to Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service at a formal conferment ceremony in the City Hall in Bangor Castle on Saturday 12 October. The event was attended by the Deputy Lord Lieutenant, Catherine Champion, The Minister of Health, Mike Nesbitt, local politicians and Firefighters and officiated by the Mayor, Councillor Alistair Cathcart. It paid tribute to NIFRS staff from all seven stations in Ards and North Down – both those in front line and administrative roles – for their dedication, bravery and service to duty. As part of the conferment, Firefighters from local stations delivered a family fun afternoon at Bangor City Hall, which was attended by around 1,000 people (including many Scout groups). There was specialist equipment on display and live demonstrations of firefighting skills. There were also opportunities for visitors to try firefighting activities for themselves.

### Emerging issues:

Cost increases continue to put pressure on the service. Officers endeavour to live within tight budgets with expectations increasing.  
Recruitment remains a concern as many recruitment exercises are not attracting large numbers of applicants, this is making vacancies more difficult to fill and there are gaps in service provision as a result.

### Action to be taken:

Budget issues are taken into consideration when setting next year's budget.  
Paper postage is rolling out but has taken longer than expected due to issues identified as part of the concept testing phase.

Identified KPI at Risk	Reasons as to why KPI has not been met	Action to be taken	Designated Officer	Date for Review
Paper Postage reduced by 50%	Taken longer than expected due to issues identified as part of the concept testing phase	To be closely monitored.	Alison Curtis	31/03/2025

## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council note this report.
















Not Applicable

Half yearly Performance Report - Administration

Generated on: 12 November 2024

Last Update H1 2024/25

Performance Data Traffic Light Icon	PI Short Name	Performance Data Current Value	Performance Data Current Target
	% spend against budget	115.28%	100%
	100% of complaints dealt in line with CHP	100%	100%
	Completion of Title Reconciliation Exercise	50%	50%
	Confer 1 Freedom of the Borough this year	1	1
	Achievement of ISO14001	100%	100%
	Review Roadmap to sustainability by March 2025	50%	50%
	Implement EDRMS to all services by March 2025	10%	0%
	Monitor the implementation of the action plan in the Roadmap to Sustainability	50%	50%
	100% of new policies screened for Rural needs and S75	100%	100%
	EAP and DAP reviewed and agreed by 2025	50%	50%
	Paper Postage reduced by 50%	10%	20%
	% staff attendance	96.13%	93.5%
	% of completed Employee Appraisals in the period September 2023 to March 2025	100%	100%

Not Applicable

Unclassified

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## ITEM 9f

### Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not applicable
Council/Committee	Corporate Services Committee
Date of Meeting	10 December 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Corporate Services
Responsible Head of Service	Head of HR and OD
Date of Report	25 November 2024
File Reference	
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	HR and OD Performance Report – 1 <sup>st</sup> half of the year
Attachments	Table showing performance indicators

#### Context

Members will be aware that Council is required, under the Local Government Act 2014, to have in place arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions. To fulfil this requirement Council approved the Performance Management Policy and Handbook in October 2015. The Performance Management Handbook outlines the approach to Performance Planning and Management process as:

- Community Plan – published every 10-15 years
- Corporate Plan – published every 4 years (Corporate Plan Towards 2028 in operation)
- Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) – published annually in September
- Service Plan – developed annually (approved April/May 2024)

Not applicable

The Council’s 18 Service Plans outline how each respective Service will contribute to the achievement of the Corporate objectives including, but not limited to, any relevant actions identified in the PIP.

**Reporting approach**

The Service Plans will be reported to relevant Committees on a half-yearly basis as undernoted:

Reference	Period	Reporting Month
Ist half of the year	April – September	December
2 <sup>nd</sup> half of the year	October – March	June

The report for the first half of the year, 2024-2025 is attached.

**Corporate Plan 2024-2028**

In line with the Corporate Plan 2024-2028, our service has contributed to one Outcome as follows.

**Outcome 6**

*Opportunities for people to be active and healthy*

**Targets not met**

Number of sick days lost per employees who are sick across the organisation is 14 days, the target is currently 12 days, however, this shows some improvement from the last performance report which reported 16 days lost

**Outcome 7**

*Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation*

**Key Achievements**

- All candidates who have applied for a post in the Council have been notified of the outcome within 2 weeks of shortlisting meetings and/or within 2 weeks from date of interviews taking place.
- All HR staff have had an annual appraisal meeting and targets set for the year, using the digital Appraisal Scheme
- 100% of Team Briefings are delivered to the HR team in a timely manner
- Budget spend against budget is within target for the first half of the year
- The main HR and OD policies (Absence Management/Capability/Dignity at Work/Grievance/Disciplinary) been reviewed with the Trade Unions

Not applicable

- A working group (consisting of HR/Finance and Transformation teams) completed a review of the CORE II integrated software system and made recommendations with regard to improving its effectiveness
- The actions within year 6 of the People Plan are on target to be met at the end of the year

**Key points to note:**

This report gives an update on performance against the 14 Service KPIs with 9 having been totally achieved, 1 showing as borderline and 1 that has not been achieved. The remaining 3 have a target date of 31 March 2025.

**Targets not met**

Number of sick days lost per employees who are sick across the organisation is 14 days, the target is currently 12 days, however, this shows some improvement from the last performance report which reported 16 days lost.

**Action to be taken:**

- Continue to analyse absence statistics and constantly develop and review ideas to encourage higher attendance at work across the organisation
- Ensure that work is ongoing to ensure that Workforce Planning Strategy is created for consultation by March 2025

Identified KPI at Risk	Reasons as to why KPI has not been met	Action to be taken	Designated Officer	Date for Review
Days lost per employee across the Council	Still above target but showing improvement from the previous reporting period	To be kept under review	Rosemary McCullough	31/03/2025

**RECOMMENDATION**















It is recommended that Council note this the report.

Not applicable

Half yearly Performance Report - Human Resources and Organisational Development

Generated on: 25/11/24

Last Update H1 2024/25

Performance Data Traffic Light Icon	PI Short Name	Performance Data Current Value	Performance Data Current Target
	% spend against budget	101.4%	100%
	Implement a 5-year Workforce Strategy	In progress	Mar 25
	Main HR and OD policies to be reviewed and consulted on	100%	100%
	Deliver a project to improve efficiency and effectiveness with regard to CORE II	Review Complete	Mar 25
	% of recruitment exercises completed within 6 weeks	93%	95%
	% of candidates not shortlisted to be informed within 2 weeks from date of shortlisting	100%	100%
	% of candidates not successful at interview to be notified within 2 weeks from date of interview	100%	100%
	Develop a Corporate Induction Programme for all new Council staff so that all staff will be able to settle in more quickly and therefore be more productive	No	Mar 25
	Delivery of Team Briefings	100%	100%
	Average number of days lost per employee (Council Wide)	14	12
	% of actions on year 6 of the People Plan completed	70%	70%
	% of completed HR Employee Appraisals in the period September 2023 to March 2025	100%	100%
	% of staff attendance in HR and OD	96%	95%
	Draft a Succession planning policy for consultation	In progress	Mar 25

Unclassified

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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	10 December 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Corporate Services
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Strategic Transformation and Performance
Date of Report	15 November 2024
File Reference	26051 - Performance Management
Legislation	Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Update on delivery of 2024/25 Performance Improvement Plan (Quarter 1 & Quarter 2)
Attachments	Appendix 1: Update on delivery of 2024/25 Performance Improvement Plan

Members will be aware that the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 places a duty upon Councils to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement and to account for it. At the beginning of each financial year, the Council is required to determine its priorities for improvement which are aligned to the Community Plan and Corporate Plan and to publish a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) by 30<sup>th</sup> June, which sets out improvement objectives for the year ahead, and by 30 September to publish a Self-Assessment Report to review performance against the improvement objectives set in the preceding year.

**Performance Planning and Management**

To fulfil this requirement Council has in place a Performance Management Policy and a Performance Management Handbook. The Performance Management Handbook outlines the approach to the Performance Planning and Management process as:

- Community Plan – published every 10-15 years

Not Applicable

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- Corporate Plan – published every 4 years
- PIP – published annually in June
- Service Plans – developed annually

The Council's 18 Service Plans outline how each respective Service will contribute to the achievement of the Corporate objectives including, but not limited to, any relevant actions identified in the PIP.

Section 90 of the Act requires a council, during each financial year, to collect information which will allow it to assess its performance in achieving its improvement objectives and to measure its performance against performance indicators or standards set by the Department or any other indicators or standards which the council chooses to use.

The Council has governance arrangements in place to assure accountability for improvement and to ensure the delivery of its plans takes place in an open, effective, honest and accountable manner.

These arrangements include:

- Alignment of the service planning and budget process to ensure all costs are included in the estimate process
- An electronic performance management system (Ideagen), which can:
  - analyse data on a range of frequencies for trends and comparison
  - track the progress of indicators and actions
  - provide and communicate regular and robust performance information to managers, Elected Members and the public
- Half yearly reporting on Service Plans to relevant standing committees; in December and June.
- Half yearly reporting on progress against the Performance Improvement Plan to Corporate Services Committee
- Monthly reporting on Capital Projects to Corporate Projects Portfolio Board
- Reporting to Strategic Policy and Finance Group on at least 3 occasions per year
- Appropriate risk management in relation to main programmes of work

### **Performance Improvement Plan 2024/25**

This year council's PIP identified 4 improvement objectives with a corresponding 53 actions together with 7 Statutory Indicators and 4 self-imposed indicators.

It should be noted that this report reflects performance of the PIP only and is not necessarily representative of the overall performance of the organisation.

Where PIP measures are not being met, Action Plans will be presented to parent Committees as part of half yearly Service Plan performance reporting.

An update on performance against the 2024/25 PIP to date is attached at **Appendix 1**.



Not Applicable

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### RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council note the attached Performance Update Report for the 2024/25 PIP (Quarter 1 & Quarter 2).

## **Appendix 1**

**Report to Corporate Services Committee - December 2024**

**Update on delivery of Performance Improvement Plan 2024/25**

**Reporting Period: March – September 2024  
(Quarter 1 & Quarter 2)**

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# Performance Assessment Key


The key outlined below provides definitions for the three Red, Amber, Green (RAG) status levels which have been chosen to measure progress.

RAG Status	Definition
	Target/standard, actions and measures are of concern and are mostly falling short of plan.  <b>Where measures are not being met, Action Plans will be presented to parent Committees as part of half yearly performance reporting.</b>
	Target/standard, actions and measures are mostly on track, but some are falling short of plan.  <b>Where measures are not being met, Action Plans will be presented to parent Committees as part of half yearly performance reporting.</b>
	Target/standard, actions and measures are on track.

## Service Led Performance Indicators

Objective 1: We will increase economic growth by attracting more business and creating jobs					
2024/25 Measure	2024/25 Target	2024/25 Half Yearly Target	2024/25 Half Yearly Value	RAG Status	Reason why KPI not being met / Actions being taken
Oversee the development works to Marine Gardens and the McKee Clock Arena in keeping with the agreed Quality Specification as part of the Queen's Parade redevelopment scheme – anticipated 50% completed by March 2025.	50%	-	-	-	End of Year Target
Approval of Outline Business Case (OBC) and creation of action plan by 31st March 2025 to progress Innovation Hub concept to support the growth of the Creative and Digital Tech sectors in Film and TV production.	Yes	-	-	-	End of Year Target
Develop a master plan and OBC by 31st March 2025 for the delivery of a business park at the former NIE site on Balloo Road, Bangor.	Yes	-	-	-	End of Year Target
Design teams appointed and planning application progressed by 31st March 2025 for Newtownards Citizen Hub.	100%	75%	75%	✓	
Design teams appointed by 31st March 2025 to take forward a number of the Bangor Waterfront redevelopment projects.	100%	75%	75%	✓	
Implement Social Value in Council Procurement Policy by 31st March 2025 to consider how the services we commission and procure can improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the area.	31/03/25	-	-	-	End of Year Target
Create five new Town/ City Advisory Groups following review that was undertaken.	5	-	-	-	End of Year Target – On target to achieve
Create two additional village partnership groups by 31st March 2025 - North Down and Strangford (equivalent to the Ards Peninsula Partnership Group).	2	2	2	✓	
Undertake a review of the existing village plans by 31st March 2025 and agree with the partnership groups key priority projects.	8	8	8	✓	
Develop 5 Urban/Rural projects to procurement stage to access funding streams.	5	1	1	✓	
Complete delivery of the Portaferry Public Realm by 31st March 2025 using funding secured from the Small Settlements Grant.	100%	100%	100%	✓	

Develop and deliver four capital projects using the Covid Recovery Small Settlements Grant.	4	1	1		
Support 17 businesses in 2024/25 through the Digital Transformation Flexible Fund programme.	17	9	1		End of Year Target - On target to achieve.
Create 117 new jobs in 2024/25 through "Go Succeed" (Statutory Indicator). New target of 123 set by DfC.	123	60	32		End of year target – On target to achieve
Deliver 12 projects in 2024/25 through Labour Market Partnership Action Plan (subject to funding).	12	3	4		
Sustainability Checklist for events to be developed and applied to Council's tourism events and grant aided events by 31st March 2025.	Yes	-	-	-	End of Year Target – On target to achieve
Increase % of Out of Borough ticket sales in 2024/25 – experiences and walks and tours to 50%.	50%	-	-	-	The majority of experience and tours have been 3 <sup>rd</sup> party delivery supported by Council – the systems employed to gather out of borough data from these experiences have not been successful. A requirement to collate data within the Terms and Conditions of the new experience programme is being implemented in 2025/26.
Increase % of Out of Borough ticket sales in 2024/25 – food and drink experiences to 33%.	33%	-	21%		End of Year Target.
Deliver 3 training seminars to the tourism/food and drink sectors.	3	3	3		
Deliver 4 training/capacity building sessions via the Festival Forum.	4	2	1		Vacant staff role to support this activity is now filled. Deliver 3 more sessions before end of the year.
Major Planning applications processed within an average of 30 weeks (Statutory Indicator).	<30 weeks	<30 weeks	81.2 weeks		While there has been a reduction in weeks taken to process, major applications continue to be affected by a delay in response by statutory consultees and ongoing capacity issues in the NIW network. Several major applications are subject to Section 76 legal agreements requiring negotiation between legal reps.
Local Planning applications processed within an average of 15 weeks (Statutory Indicator).	<15 weeks	<15 weeks	16.2 weeks		Although there has been an improvement in processing times for local applications there remain ongoing issues in resourcing of statutory consultees, impacting on response times. Lack of front loading of applications also leads to delays in processing. The local category of development set in legislation ranges from a domestic extension to housing

					developments of 49 units which involve a wider range of consultees and studies required by legislation. Many applications require amendments to address material planning objections which add to time taken to resolve where possible by the developer and process.
70% of planning enforcement cases concluded within 39 weeks (Statutory Indicator).	70%	70%	53.9%		Enforcement processing, with the exception of Priority 1 cases and cases approaching immunity, were paused during COVID and the enforcement team continues to work through a backlog of cases, some of which are dependent upon outcome of appeals or retrospective applications.








Improvement Objective 2: We will improve the cleanliness and attractiveness of our Borough					
2024/25 Measure	2024/25 Target	2024/25 Half Yearly Target	2024/25 Half Yearly Value	RAG Status	Reason why KPI not being met / Actions being taken
Achieve or exceed the NI average Cleanliness Index score of 75 (Measured by an independent Litter Cleanliness Survey that produces the Local Environmental Audit and Measure Score (LEAMS) - Cleanliness Index score)	75	75	No data	-	KNIB has not undertaken quarterly surveys as agreed. KPI needs to be removed in the absence of surveys being carried out.
Increase total number of Fixed Penalty Notices issued to a minimum of 375; targeting areas of concern to reduce issues (2023/24 Target: 178)	375	188	176	⚠	
Achieve 100% success in 'Loo of the Year' Awards.	100%	-	-	-	End of Year Target
£21,000 to be invested in 'In Bloom' Projects.	£21,000	-	£21,135 committed	✅	
4 'In Bloom' / Best Kept Awards retained.	4	5	5	✅	
Plant 15,000 trees across the Borough in 2024/25.	15,000	-	-	✅	Trees not planted until start of tree week i.e. first week in December
7 Green Flag awards for the Borough.	7	7	7	✅	
Increase the m2 of rewilded Council maintained ground from 90,000 to 120,000.	120,000	122,800sqm	122,800sqm	✅	
Increase Community Gardening projects organised from 30 to 40.	40	30	92	✅	








Improvement Objective 3: We will improve the Borough's recycling rates					
2024/25 Measure	2024/25 Target	2024/25 Half Yearly Target	2024/25 Half Yearly Value	RAG Status	Reason why KPI not being met / Actions being taken
Increase % of household waste collected that is sent for recycling (including waste prepared for re-use) to 60% (Statutory Indicator: 55.5%).	60%	60%	58.9%	⚠️	
Reduce amount (tonnage) of biodegradable waste that is landfilled to less than 14,395 tonnes (Statutory Indicator). (Previous year's target: 17,124 tonnes)	<14,395	<7197	5752	✅	
Reduce the amount (tonnage) of Local Authority collected municipal waste arisings to less than 83,740 (Statutory Indicator). (Previous year's target: 85,976 tonnes)	<83,740	41,870	44,971	⚠️	First half of year is always higher due to garden waste
Improve recycling rates at Council's Household Recycling Centres to 70%.	70%	70%	75%	✅	
Deliver a new kerbside collection model by 31st March 2025.	31/03/25	-	-	-	End of year target
Commence new kerbside textiles collection service to increase tonnage of textiles diverted from landfill (2024/25 Target is 250 tonnes).	250	100	0	❌	Paused due to current recycled textiles market conditions.
Embed and expand the recycling model at Council delivered events by 31st March 2025.	31/03/25	-	-	-	End of year target

Improvement Objective 4: We will support our businesses and residents to protect and improve their health and wellbeing					
2024/25 Measure	2024/25 Target	2024/25 Half Yearly Target	2024/25 Half Yearly Value	RAG Status	Reason why KPI not being met / Actions being taken
Community planning partnerships - participate in at least 20 external group sessions with an impact on wellbeing.	20	10	9	⚠️	The external group shadowing the new ICS has completed it work and been stood down
Increase the number of businesses registering for Health and Wellbeing initiatives to 24. (KPI changed to number of people benefiting)	24	-	-	-	End of Year Target.
Continue to develop as a Dementia Friendly Council and Borough by 31st March 2025.	Yes	-	-	-	End of Year Target
Move to stage 3 and working towards stage 4 of the Whole Systems Approach to Obesity Plan by 31st March 2025.	Yes	-	-	-	End of Year Target
Develop a Leisure Strategy for the Borough 2025-2035 by 31st March 2025.	31/03/25	-	-	-	End of Year Target – On target to achieve
Deliver 220 Fitness Classes per week by Leisure Ards and Northern Community Leisure Trust (NCLT)/Serco.	220	220	438	✅	
Increase Active Ageing Memberships across Leisure Ards from 400 to 450.	450	400	400	✅	
Increase numbers enrolled in Swim programmes delivered by Leisure Ards and NCLT/Serco from 3,500 to 4,250.	4,250	2,700	2,125	⚠️	
Review of Council's grants policy by 31st March 2025.	31/03/25	Complete	Complete	✅	
Produce and implement a final PEACEPLUS Local Authority Action Plan in 2024/25.	100%	75%	75%	✅	Plan produced however Letter of Offer not yet received to enable implementation to begin.
Development of Greenway - Floodgates to Green Road Project to be onsite 2024/25.	100%	100%	100%	✅	
Development of Greenway - Comber to Newtownards Project to achieve planning permission and contractor procurement to commence by 31st March 2025.	100%	95%	95%	✅	
Planning application to be submitted by 31st March 2025 for Whitespots redevelopment project.	100%	100%	100%	✅	
Construction contractor appointed 2024/25 for the Ward Park redevelopment project.	100%	50%	50%	✅	

## Statutory Indicators

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INDICATOR	2024/25 Target	2024/25 Half Yearly Target	2024/25 Half Yearly Value	RAG Status
ED1: Number of jobs created through the Go Succeed Service (New target of 123 set by DfC)	123	60	32	
PLANNING INDICATORS	2024/25 Target	2024/25 Half Yearly Target	2024/25 Half Yearly Value	RAG Status
P1: Average processing time of major planning applications	<30 weeks	<30 weeks	81.2 weeks	
P2: Average processing time of local planning applications	<15 weeks	<15 weeks	16.2 weeks	
P3: Percentage of enforcement cases processed and concluded within 39 weeks	70%	70%	53.9%	
WASTE MANAGEMENT INDICATORS	2024/25 Target	2024/25 Half Yearly Target	2024/25 Half Yearly Value	RAG Status
W1: Percentage of household waste collected by the district council that is sent for recycling (including waste prepared for re-use)	55.5%	55.5%	58.4%	
W2: The amount (tonnage) of biodegradable Local Authority collected municipal waste that is landfilled	<14,395 tonnes	7,197	5752	
W3: The amount (tonnage) of Local Authority collected municipal waste arisings	<83,740 tonnes	41,870	44,971	

Self-Imposed Indicators

Indicator	2024/25 Target	2024/25 Half Yearly Target	2024/25 Half Yearly Value	RAG Status
Staff Absence	6.00%	6.5%	6.85%	
Resident Satisfaction (conducted biennially) (Conducted 2023)	≥83%	-	-	-
Net Cost per head of population	£400.10	£198.14	£198.55	
Annual Prompt Payment of invoices Within 10 days Within 30 days Outside 30 days	≥80% ≥95% <5%	80% 95% 5%	70% 95% 5%	 *  
*Continuity of staffing presented problems with achieving the target.				

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	10 December 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Corporate Services
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Strategic Transformation and Performance
Date of Report	27 November 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	STEP Board Update
Attachments	Appendix 1 STEP Board Report

The Transformation Service was established in September 2023 and is responsible for:

- Delivering the Council's Strategic Transformation and Efficiency Programme (STEP).
- Supporting individual services with service-specific projects aligned to key strategic transformation priorities and continuous improvement.
- Council's statutory commitments relating to Performance Improvement including the Performance Improvement Plan and Self-Assessment Report.

The Transformation team continues to be staffed by a Transformation Manager, supported by three Transformation Officers:

- The Transformation Manager and one Transformation Officer are on temporary internal secondments until 31 May 2025 (may be extended).

Not Applicable

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- One Transformation Officer is on a temporary contract until 31 May 2025 (may be extended).
- One Transformation Officer is currently on maternity leave and will be on a temporary contract on her return (1 March 2025) until 31 May 2025 (may be extended).

By way of summary, the following outlines the key projects that have been undertaken since the Transformation Service was established in September 2023.

### Continuous Improvement

The Service has undertaken a number of continuous improvement projects linked to both our statutory commitments and our appetite to develop and progress our internal systems and processes to ensure we are operating optimally as an organisation. Specifically, the team:

- Developed the 2024/25 **Performance Improvement Plan** (published 30 June) and completed the 2023/24 **Self-Assessment Report** (published 30 September).
- Completed a review of the performance management process and designed a new **service plan handbook, including template and guidance** for the Council (and is currently supporting its second cycle of the annual service planning process).
- Developed a **Business Continuity Plan** for the Council. An independent consultant has been appointed to carry out an independent review of our Business Continuity Plan and to deliver training to CLT, HoST and SUMs.
- Completed a **Post Project Evaluation** for the **Core2 Project** with lessons learned being considered and implemented in future projects. The team also undertook a review of the residual issues associated with the Core system to improve efficiencies associated with HR and payroll interactions with the system.
- Developed and implemented **standardised project governance structures and documentation** across the portfolio of transformational projects.

### Transformation and Efficiency Projects

In addition to the above continuous improvement projects, the Transformation Service has collaborated and engaged with a number of services across Council in the delivery of a range of transformation and efficiency projects. The projects are categorised as follows:

- Digitalisation
- Estates (Office Rationalisation)
- Redesigning Delivery and Restructuring Staff.

### Digitalisation

- **Digital Strategy** – the Digital Strategy was approved by Council in April 2024. A programme of work is currently being developed to progress the implementation of the projects identified within the strategy. Priority has been given to our data and document management requirements. An **Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS)** will modernise the Council's document management practices, ensuring data security, regulatory compliance and enhance operational efficiency. An independent consultant has been appointed to develop a **Data Strategy** for the Council – the first stage of any EDRMS. The Data Strategy Workshops have been completed a draft strategy is expected in early November.

Not Applicable

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- **Migration of Council Telephone System** - the migration of the main telephone numbers to the new Mitel Cloud system and softphones for laptop users was implemented in June 2024. This new system provides the potential to handle calls more efficiently and Digital Services, with the support of Transformation staff, have progressed this project from the implementation stage through to business as usual from 1 October 2024.
- **Transition of new mobile phones** - Transformation have provided project management support to Digital Services for the migration of c.300 phones from Vodafone to EE. This was 80% complete by end September 2024.
- **Corporate Website/ Platform** - The new website has been live since April 2024 and positive feedback has been received from residents. Transformation and Communications and Marketing are now working with different Services to transfer content online e.g. Regulatory Services to put their licencing applications online and move away from paper-based applications and Licensing to get their application forms online. In addition, the Transformation team have provided internal training to relevant members of staff.
- **Office RnD Hybrid (Room Booking Software)** - The Council did not have an effective mechanism for managing workspaces, booking hot desks, meeting rooms, and other spaces. Office RnD Hybrid has been implemented, which will provide insights into how the workspaces are being utilised across the main Council buildings. It will support the Council's hybrid working model and provide tools for employees to book desks and meeting rooms, ensuring optimal use of office space. Data from the system will be used to inform the office space requirements of our new Civic Office building. The system has been live since 2 September 2024. Statistics are being collected from this date, with monthly reports produced.
- **New Finance System** - 50 staff were surveyed regarding support for the introduction of an interim basic electronic purchase ordering system. 65% responded and all were in favour of progressing with this two-stage approach. On the foot of this, the project board meeting on the 27 July approved this approach and work commenced in September with a view to phasing this system in over the next six months.

Pre-contract engagement with our selected provider have now concluded with agreement of a specification and costings. A report went to Corporate Services Committee in September to award a contract. It is expected that work on implementation will commence in December.

#### **Estates (Office Rationalisation)**

- **Relocation of South Street Staff** – The Community Development and Funded Project Teams were successfully relocated to the Signal Centre in April 2024 and a Post Project Evaluation, including lessons learned, was completed.
- **Relocation of Parks and Cemeteries Staff** – One of Parks and Cemeteries three teams (of office-based staff) relocated to the Castle, from Church Street, during the summer.

#### **Redesigning Delivery and Restructuring Staff**

- **Parks and Cemeteries Restructure** – a new structure with three SUMs is now in place.
- **Community Centre/ Halls Review** – This project has been paused until there is staffing stability.
- **Development of a Leisure Strategy** – Transformation team are providing project management support to Leisure to develop a ten-year Leisure Strategy. Project initiation took place in May with the project currently at the interim report stage and on target to meet the final submission date of January 2025.
- **Leisure Benchmarking Review** - The first NI APSE leisure benchmarking process has been completed for Ards Blair Mayne Wellbeing and Leisure Complex, Comber Leisure

## Not Applicable

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Centre, Portaferry Sports Centre and Londonderry Park (2022/23 data) which now provides leisure with APSE baseline data. The second NI APSE leisure benchmarking process (2023/24 data) is now commencing along with leisure submitting to the UK APSE model also. This process will be completed, and reports received from APSE in February 2025.

- **Leisure Staff Restructure** - Phase 3 (Lifeguards and fitness associates) is now complete. Phase 4 (Administration and front of house operations) is now commencing with discussions ongoing prior to a business case being developed for consideration by CLT. Any financial implications to this phase will be incorporated into budget setting considerations for implementation from 1 April 2025.
- **Waste Review** - The Working Group met in September to receive a number of update reports in relation to two issues that had been raised by Members in respect of the highest scoring scenario identified through the study. These related to the following issues:
  - Markets for Fibres (Paper and Card) – WRAP commissioned a separate report regarding both local and UK market capacity and market prices over the last 10 years. This was largely positive and suggested that separately collected fibres could offer the Council an income stream as opposed to a gate fee under current co-mingled collection arrangements.
  - Mitigation for residents who may have issues with a revised collection system – a list of measures both current and possible new measures were presented to allay some of the Members concerns.

It was agreed that the Working Group has gone as far as it can, and a report is going to the next Environment Committee to seek more wider support and to agree to the development of a public engagement/ consultation programme to be launched early next year via Citizen Lab.

- **Legal Services Review** – A strategic review of the Council's legal services provision is nearing completion to determine the best model for structuring Council's requirement for legal services i.e. a fully in-house model; a hybrid in-house/ outsourced model; or a fully outsourced model. It is anticipated that an Options Paper will be presented to CLT in November to make a decision on a way forward.
- **Grants Review** – Transformation are providing project management support to the grants review project. To date, the Grants Policy has been reviewed and updated and was approved at September Corporate Services Committee/ September Council meeting. Next steps involve the Transformation team working with the Working Group to formalise an Action Plan to roll out the implementation of the Policy and standardise grant documentation (where appropriate) to facilitate the development of an online grants system.
- **Events Strategy mid-point review** – Transformation are providing project management support to the Head of Tourism to deliver a mid-point review of the Events Strategy (Involving 10 Work streams). Particular focus currently on the following work streams/recommendations: Tourism Events Sponsorship opportunities, Bid for Events and Growth Events.

A summary of each of the above ongoing projects is detailed in the attached STEP Board Report (Appendix 1).

### RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council note the attached STEP Board Report.



**STRATEGIC TRANSFORMATION AND EFFICIENCY PROGRAMME (STEP)**

**Board Report**

**18 October 2024**

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## 1. Introduction

The Transformation Service is responsible for:

- Delivering the Council's Strategic Transformation and Efficiency Programme (STEP).
- Supporting individual services with service-specific projects aligned to key strategic transformation priorities and continuous improvement.
- All aspects of Council's statutory commitments relating to Performance Improvement including the Performance Improvement Plan and Self-Assessment Report.

The team consists of one Transformation Manager and three Transformation Officers:

- The Transformation Manager and one Transformation Officer are on temporary internal secondments until 31 May 2025 (may be extended).
- One Transformation Officer is on a temporary contract until 31 May 2025 (may be extended).
- One Transformation Officer is currently on maternity leave and will be on a temporary contract on her return (1 March 2025) until 31 May 2025 (may be extended).

## 2. Progress to Date

### 2.1 Continuous Improvement

Since being established in September 2023 the Service has undertaken a number of continuous improvement projects linked to both our statutory commitments and our appetite to develop and progress our internal systems and processes to ensure we are operating optimally as an organisation. Specifically, the team:

- Developed the 2024/25 **Performance Improvement Plan** (published 30 June) and completed the 2023/24 **Self-Assessment Report** (published 30 September).
- Completed a review of the performance management process and designed a new **service plan handbook, including template and guidance** for the Council (and is currently supporting its second cycle of the annual service planning process).
- Developed a **Business Continuity Plan** for the Council. An independent consultant has been appointed to carry out an independent review of our Business Continuity Plan and to deliver training to CLT, HoST and SUMs.
- Completed a **Post Project Evaluation** for the **Core2 Project** with lessons learned being considered and implemented in future projects. The team also undertook a review of the residual issues associated with the Core system to improve efficiencies associated with HR and payroll interactions with the system.
- Led on a review of **Leisure Services Operating Model**, prior to Council's request to pause.
- Developed and implemented **standardised project governance structures and documentation** across the portfolio of transformational projects.

### 2.2 Transformation and Efficiency Projects

In addition to the above continuous improvement projects, the Transformation Service has collaborated and engaged with a number of services across Council in the delivery of a range of transformation and efficiency projects. The projects are categorised as follows:

- Digitalisation
- Estates (Office Rationalisation)
- Redesigning Delivery and Restructuring Staff.

## 2.2.1 Digitalisation

- **Digital Strategy** – the Digital Strategy was approved by Council in April 2024. A programme of work is currently being developed to progress the implementation of the projects identified within the strategy. Priority has been given to our data and document management requirements. An **Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS)** will modernise the Council's document management practices, ensuring data security, regulatory compliance and enhance operational efficiency. An independent consultant has been appointed to develop a **Data Strategy** for the Council – the first stage of any EDRMS. The Data Strategy Workshops have been completed a draft strategy is expected in early November.
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Pre-contract engagement with our selected provider have now concluded with agreement of a specification and costings. A report went to Corporate Services Committee in September to award a contract. It is expected that work on implementation will commence in December.

## 2.2.2 Estates (Office Rationalisation)

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- **Relocation of Parks and Cemeteries Staff** – One of Parks and Cemeteries three teams (of office-based staff) relocated to the Castle, from Church Street, during the summer.

### 2.2.3 Redesigning Delivery and Restructuring Staff

- **Parks and Cemeteries Restructure** – a new structure with three SUMs is now in place.
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### 3. Transformation Workplan: September 2024 – September 2025

Project	Lead Service	Transformation PM Lead	Status	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25	Feb-25	Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25
Service Planning	Transformation	SMcM	Ongoing												
Corporate Plan Reporting	Transformation	SMcM	Not Started												
Implement Grants Policy and standardise documentation (Phase 2)	Community Development	SMcM	Ongoing												
Electronic Grants System Project (Phase 3)	Community Development	SMcM	Not Started												
Legal Services Review	Transformation	SMcM	Ongoing												
Goss Digital Platform Project	Digital Services	JC	Ongoing												
Financial Management System	Finance	JC	Ongoing												
EDRMS	Digital Services	JC	Not Started												
Leisure Transformation Project (Project 1 - Staff restructure - Phase 4)	Leisure	AH	Ongoing												
Leisure Transformation Project (Project 1 - Staff restructure - Phase 5)	Leisure	AH	Not Started												
Leisure Transformation Project (Project 1 - Staff restructure - Phase 6)	Leisure	AH	Not Started												
Leisure Transformation Project (Project 2 - Leisure Strategy)	Leisure	AH	Ongoing												
Leisure Transformation Project (Project 3 - Benchmarking)	Leisure	AH	Ongoing												
Community Centre/ Halls Review	Leisure	AH	Not Started												
Events Strategy Review	Tourism	AH	Ongoing												
Review of Business Continuity Plan/ Training	Transformation	SW	Ongoing												
Development of Performance Improvement Plan	Transformation	SW	Not Started												
Development of Self Assessment Report	Transformation	SW	Not Started												

## 4. Funding and Budgets

The table below profiles the full range of transformation and efficiency projects (completed, in progress and pipeline):

- Not all projects require funding (some will be completed by the Transformation Service or funded via existing budgets identified during the estimates process).
- A number of pipeline projects are still to be scoped and their budgets remain unknown.
- Of those where budgets are known c.£669k has been spent/ committed to date from transformation funding (September 2023 – March 2025).

In addition to the below, it is anticipated that further projects will be identified in year that will require transformation funding and support.

Project	Transformation Fund (£)	Expected Savings
Transformation Officers x 2	149,897	-
Review of Grants Policy	-	-
Electronic Grants System	Unknown	-
Legal Services Review	-	-
South Street Office Relocation	21,450 (includes c16k dilapidation works)	c.£30,000 saving per annum from April 2025
Digital Strategy	62,000	-
Development of Goss Digital Platform	47,200	-
Financial Management System	-	-
EDRMS (Include Data Strategy)	150,000	-
Core Post Project Evaluation	-	-
Core Review	-	-
Migration of Council Telephones	102,531	c.£50,000 saving per annum from April 2025
Mobile Phones Transitioning	-	c.£24,000 saving per annum from April 2025
Review of Business Continuity Plan/ Training	17,300	-
Engagement Platform – Citizen's Lab	23,000	-
Corporate Plan - Design	3,098	-
Leisure Transformation Project (Project 1 - Staff restructure - Phases 3 - 6)	-	Additional costs are offset by proposed additional income of up to £911k over 5 years <i>(when restructure is implemented)</i>
Leisure Transformation Project (Project 2 - Leisure Strategy)	35,500	-
Leisure Transformation Project (Project 3 - Benchmarking)	-	-
Events Strategy Review	-	-
Organisation Restructure	56,850	-
Parks Transformation	-	c.£500k saving over 5 years <i>(following implementation)</i>
Waste Review	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>668,826</b>	

As stated within the [STEP Funding Criteria.docx](#), business cases will be required for all projects to be funded via the transformation reserves.

Central to the development of business cases will be the requirement to identify how the project meets the commitments set out within the Corporate Plan 2024 – 2028.



**APPENDIX I – Detailed Project Updates**

## 1. Digitalisation

### 1.1 Digital Transformation Strategy

Lead Service	Digital Services
Overview of Project	Ards and North Down Borough Council (ANDBC), supported by BT Digital Transformation Consulting undertook a Digital Discovery and created a Digital Strategy for the future. Aligning with the Council's Corporate Plan, the ambition is to use this strategy to drive the council's journey towards becoming a digitally empowered and efficient organisation.
Expected Outcome	The Digital Strategy has provided the Council with a transformation roadmap that outlines the steps and initiatives needed (structured and prioritised over 3-5 years) to achieve the agreed vision.  A programme of work is currently being developed to progress the implementation of the projects identified within the strategy, which will detail how we will invest in digital technology to make a wide range of Council services work better for staff, residents and partners.
Timeline	October 2023 – March 2024 (Development of Strategy – Complete) April 2024 – February 2025 (Data Strategy – Ongoing) February 2025 onwards (Development of EDRMS)
Role of Transformation	Supported Digital Services in the development of a Digital Strategy which provides a roadmap for implementation to commence in 2024/25. It is anticipated that the Transformation Service will be integral to supporting on a number of the projects identified within the strategy going forward.
Transformation Funding	£62,000 (BT Digital Transformation Consulting) c£150,000 (EDRMS – includes £3k for Data Strategy)

### 1.2 Migration of Council Telephone System

Lead Service	Digital Services
Overview of Project	Traditional landlines will no longer be available by 2025. This project requires the migration of the Council's current telephone lines to an Internet Protocol (IP) solution that allows calls to be made over an internet connection rather than over traditional lines. This will include the introduction to a high proportion of our employees to "softphones" rather than traditional desk phones.
Expected Outcome	This will save the Council c.£50,000 in recurring costs annually (from April 2025).
Timeline	December 2023 – December 2024 (Project complete and Business as Usual from October 2024)
Role of Transformation	The Transformation Service: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided day-to-day management of the project to ensure effective project governance;</li> <li>• Maintained accurate project documentation, including meeting minutes, task lists and ensuring deadlines were met;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acted as a liaison between the supplier and ANDBC; and</li> <li>• Provided regular updates on project progress, addressed concerns, managed and allocated tasks.</li> <li>• Managed the delivery of training to staff.</li> </ul>
<b>Transformation Funding</b>	£102,531

### 1.3 Mobile Phone Transitioning

<b>Lead Service</b>	<b>Digital Services</b>
<b>Overview of Project</b>	<p>Procurement of mobile telephony services to ensure the Council's mobile devices are fit-for-purpose as the switch off of the 3G network has commenced.</p> <p>This project is also in response to a Priority 3 recommendation in the January 2020 Internal Audit of Procurement.</p>
<b>Expected Outcome</b>	This will save the Council c.£24,000 in recurring costs annually.
<b>Timeline</b>	February 2024 – December 2024 (80% complete September 2024)
<b>Role of Transformation</b>	<p>The Transformation Service is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing day-to-day management of the project to ensure effective project governance;</li> <li>• Acting as a liaison between the supplier and ANDBC; and</li> <li>• Providing regular updates on project progress, addressing concerns, managing and allocating tasks.</li> </ul>
<b>Transformation Funding</b>	N/A

### 1.4 Digital Platform Project (Website)

<b>Lead Service</b>	<b>Corporate Communications</b>
<b>Overview of Project</b>	<p>Digitisation opportunities have been prioritised as we seek to offer more efficient services to our ratepayers. We have committed to the development of a Digital Strategy and redevelopment of the Council's website (which has been in place since Local Government Reform), investing in a new digital platform called GOSS.</p>
<b>Expected Outcome</b>	<p>The new platform will enable us to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer alternative channels for the citizen to consume services from the Council; and</li> <li>• Digitise services to deliver a seamless online user experience.</li> </ul>
<b>Timeline</b>	November 2023 – September 2025 (New website live from April 2024)
<b>Transformation Funding</b>	£47,200

## 1.5 Financial Management System

Lead Service	Finance
Overview of Project	<p>The current “Total” system is more than 20 years old and has not undergone a major upgrade since installation. In addition, the current provider has indicated that while it will be providing support for this product for the medium-term, it will not be developing the product beyond what is legally required to comply with legislation.</p> <p>As a result, the Council needs a financial management system that meets modern system standards while producing an element of futureproofing.</p>
Expected Outcomes	<p>The new financial management system should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve internal controls (e.g. purchase to pay system and integration of online payments).</li> <li>• Improve access to and understandability of financial information for non-finance managers.</li> <li>• Improve management information in relation to financial commitments and contract management.</li> <li>• Improve efficiency within the Finance Service (e.g. interfaces with other systems, configurable reporting within system, OCR document reading and automatic matching).</li> <li>• Enable ongoing system development to embrace new technologies.</li> </ul>
Timeline	March 2024 – April 2026
Role of Transformation	<p>The Transformation Service will work closely with the Project Manager and will be responsible for the governance aspects of the project, in addition to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitation of Project Team Meetings and following up on actions;</li> <li>• Updating of key Project documentation (PID, Timeline, Risk Register);</li> <li>• Supporting the Project Team in the development and implementation of a Staff Consultation Engagement Plan; and</li> <li>• Supporting the Project Team and HR in the development and implementation of a Training Programme.</li> </ul>
Transformation Funding	N/A

## 1.6 Office RnD Hybrid - Room Booking Software

Lead Service	Digital Services
Overview of Project	<p>The Council currently does not have an effective mechanism for managing workspaces, booking hot desks, meeting rooms, and other spaces. Office RnD Hybrid will provide insights into how the workspaces are being utilised. It will support the Council’s hybrid working model and provide tools for employees to book desks and meeting rooms, ensuring optimal use of office space.</p>
Expected Outcome	<p>This system will enable us to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gather analytics and monitor the utilisation of space within the Council buildings;</li> <li>• Make data-driven decisions;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance the way we manage our office resources, including meeting rooms, hot desks, and other shared spaces.</li> <li>Help us support hybrid working for Council staff.</li> </ul>
<b>Timeline</b>	April 2024 – August 2024 (System live from 2 September 2024)
<b>Role of Transformation</b>	<p>The Transformation Service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provided day-to-day management of the project to ensure effective project governance;</li> <li>Acted as a liaison between the supplier and ANDBC;</li> <li>Provided regular updates on project progress; and</li> <li>Managed the delivery of training to staff.</li> </ul>
<b>Transformation Funding</b>	N/A

## 2. ***Estates (Office Rationalisation)***

### 2.1 ***Relocation of South Street Staff***

<b>Lead Service</b>	<b>Transformation</b>
<b>Overview of Project</b>	<p>The Community Development Service were located in offices in South Street, Newtownards. The lease was expiring at the end of March 2024 and as part of the rationalisation of council premises it was agreed to relocate the Community Development staff within other council-owned premises.</p> <p>This project facilitated the relocation of staff from South Street, Newtownards to Signal Centre, Bangor.</p>
<b>Expected Outcome</b>	This will save the Council c.£30,000 in recurring costs annually.
<b>Timeline</b>	January 2024 – April 2024 (Project complete)
<b>Role of Transformation</b>	<p>The Transformation Service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project managed the relocation of South Street staff to the agreed premises of Signal Centre, Bangor.</li> <li>Coordinated the Project Team which consists of key services such as Community Development, Assets and Property, Digital Services and others as necessary.</li> <li>Managed the budget and governance associated with the project.</li> </ul>
<b>Transformation Funding</b>	<p>c.£21,450</p> <p>£2,400 costs incurred to date</p> <p>c£3,050 Consultant survey costs</p> <p>c£16,000 Additional costs are anticipated as a result of the building dilapidations survey.</p>

### 3. **Redesigning Delivery and Restructuring Staff**

#### 3.1 **Organisational Restructure**

Lead Service	Corporate Leadership Team (CLT)
Overview of Project	<p>The current organisational design of ANDBC has remained largely unchanged since the merger of the two legacy Councils in 2015. However, the demands, context and challenges faced by the Council have changed.</p> <p>There are also significant opportunities and benefits to be realised from working in new ways. The Council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic required innovation and working across organisational boundaries, generating real insight and learning about what could be achieved at an organisational level.</p> <p>The Council now needs to build on this agility and effectiveness so that it becomes more comfortable with 'doing things differently and doing different things'.</p> <p>In that context, the focus of this review is to ensure the Council has the right leadership structures to deliver the future needs for the Council, our residents and the Borough.</p>
Expected Outcome	<p>The review should produce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A structure that provides the strategic direction, leadership, skills, capacity and capability required to deliver on the Council's vision and priorities as detailed in the Corporate Plan 2024 – 2028.</li> <li>• A report recommending an appropriate organisational and senior staff structure and roadmap to support its implementation (Phase 1).</li> <li>• A project plan outlining the implementation of the Organisational Redesign, including Leadership Development, Culture Change and any required further staff structures (Phase 2/3)</li> </ul>
Timeline	<p>Phase 1 (January 2024 – March 2024 - paused)</p> <p>Updated timeline - September 2024 – March 2025</p>
Role of Transformation	No requirement identified.
Transformation Funding	£56,850

#### 3.2 **Parks and Cemeteries Restructure**

Lead Service	Parks and Cemeteries Service
Overview of Project	<p>The existing Parks and Cemeteries structure was created in 2015 following the merger of the two legacy Councils. In October 2021 it was agreed to demerge the Leisure and Amenities Service creating two new business units i.e. Leisure Services and the Parks and Cemeteries Service.</p> <p>A Head of Parks and Cemeteries was appointed in May 2022, with a clear action to develop and seek approval for a restructuring exercise that would contribute to the transformation of service delivery. The business case was agreed with the Councils Corporate Leadership Team in October 2022.</p>
Expected Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The structure is flatter - levels are merged from eight levels to no more than six.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The structure strengthens management: The proposed three-unit managers (rationalizing the existing four PO posts) will be supported by Assistant Area Managers and Assistant Development Managers.</li> <li>• The structure gives extra responsibilities to grounds maintenance staff with the merging of Grade 3 posts (such as Gardeners) into Grade 4. This will better reflect similar industry (private and local government) grades and ensure staff retention and posts are attractive to new recruits.</li> <li>• The structure is customer focused - a new Development Team is being created to focus on public engagement.</li> </ul> <p>The transformation will improve services and reduce our costs to Council of £500,000 in the next five years (when restructure is implemented).</p>
<b>Timeline</b>	<p>April 2024 – Phase 2 (of 3) of Transformation Process.</p> <p>September 2024 – Expected start of Phase 3 of Transformation Process.</p>
<b>Role of Transformation</b>	No requirement identified.
<b>Transformation Funding</b>	£500,000 savings

### 3.3 Events Strategy Review

<b>Lead Service</b>	<b>Tourism</b>
<b>Overview of Project</b>	<p>Three projects were discussed with the Tourism Department:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of the Events Strategy (Heart AND Soul Events);</li> <li>• Review of McKee Clock Bangor events space; and</li> <li>• Review of the operations of Cockle Row – on hold</li> </ul> <p>As agreed with Tourism, the initial focus will be on a midpoint review of the Events Strategy to support the Events team in taking forward remaining Strategy recommendations under the themes of Event Delivery and Major bid-for events opportunities.</p>
<b>Expected Outcome</b>	It is anticipated that the review will identify a more efficient event delivery model in terms of framework, in-house versus external delivery, capacity, charging, grants, sponsorship, return on investment etc.
<b>Timeline</b>	April 2024 – March 2025 ( <i>Mid-point review of Events Strategy</i> )
<b>Role of Transformation</b>	<p>The Transformation Service is supporting the Tourism Team by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing project management to deliver a mid-point review of the Events Strategy (Involving 10 Work streams). Particular focus currently on the following work streams/recommendations: Tourism Events Sponsorship opportunities, Bid for Events and Growth Events.</li> </ul> <p>The Transformation Service acts as the project manager to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure project governance is in place.</li> <li>• Keep track of tasks and ensure completion of them.</li> <li>• Provide regular updates for the project team.</li> <li>• Manage the timeline to ensure deadlines are met.</li> </ul>
<b>Transformation Funding</b>	N/A



### 3.4 Corporate Grants Policy and Process Review

Lead Service	Community Development
Overview of Project	<p>The ANDBC Grants Policy and Process Review project involved the establishment of a working group to support a detailed internal review and evaluation of grants that are offered and administered across Council. The group will support recommendations from audit, including updating the current Grants Policy.</p> <p>The group will work towards a standardised approach to grants management with a view to moving towards a digital grants management system.</p>
Expected Outcome	<p>The project will result in an updated Grants Policy, which should enhance customer service provision and satisfaction levels. In addition, the streamlined approach, which will be standardised across Council, where possible, will result in increased efficiencies and better use of staff resources. This first phase of work will enable the Council to begin to implement a digital grants management system during 2025-2026.</p>
Timeline	<p>December 2023 – March 2025 (Policy initial review and implementation)</p> <p>2025/26 (Development of a digital grants management system)</p>
Role of Transformation	<p>The Transformation Service will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage the project and will lead on coordinating the Project Team which consists of all services across council that manage grants.</li> <li>• Conduct the internal review and bring forward recommendations to inform an updated Grants Policy.</li> <li>• Manage the governance associated with the project.</li> </ul>
Transformation Funding	Digital grants system costs unknown at this stage

### 3.5 Community Centre/ Halls Review

Lead Service	Community Centres and Halls
Overview of Project	<p>Appointment of consultant to review current community centre and halls provision, undertake a benchmarking process across other NI Councils, report on customers' needs and expectations, identify areas of improvement of current delivery and identify potential alternative operating models and provide a framework to implement potential models.</p>
Expected Outcome	<p>The Council will have options for the future ownership and management of its community centres and halls and a framework to implement whichever offers the best value for the Council and its customers.</p>
Timeline	<p>This project has been paused until there is staffing stability.</p>
Role of Transformation	<p>The Transformation Service will support the Community Centres and Halls Team by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing the project and ensuring project governance is in place.</li> <li>• Keeping track of tasks and ensuring completion of them.</li> <li>• Acting as the main point of contact for the project both internally and externally.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing regular updates for the project team.</li> <li>• Managing the timeline to ensure deadlines are met.</li> <li>• Ensure the Community Centres and Halls team have a framework/ plan to support their future planning.</li> </ul>
<b>Transformation Funding</b>	c£40,000 - TBC (post 2024/25)

### 3.6 Development of Leisure Strategy

<b>Lead Service</b>	<b>Leisure Services</b>
<b>Overview of Project</b>	To support Leisure Services to develop the first Leisure Strategy for ANDBC, which will set the strategic direction for Leisure Services from 2025 – 2035.
<b>Expected Outcome</b>	Leisure Services operates within an extremely competitive environment. Tighter financial controls throughout the Council mean there will be less flexibility to fund projects not in plans. The development of a Leisure Strategy will help provide direction to Leisure Services to provide the best possible leisure experience at the best value for money.
<b>Timeline</b>	January 2024 – January 2025
<b>Role of Transformation</b>	<p>The Transformation Service is supporting the Leisure Services team through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project managing the development of the Leisure Strategy;</li> <li>• Ensuring project governance is in place;</li> <li>• Keeping track of tasks and ensuring completion of them;</li> <li>• Acting as the main point of contact for the project both internally and externally;</li> <li>• Providing regular updates for the project team; and</li> <li>• Managing the timeline to ensure deadlines are met.</li> </ul>
<b>Transformation Funding</b>	£35,500

### 3.7 Leisure Benchmarking Review

<b>Lead Service</b>	<b>Leisure Services</b>
<b>Overview of Project</b>	<p>Support Leisure to carry out a benchmarking exercise of the operations of the four leisure centres in the Ards area (Ards Blair Mayne Wellbeing and Leisure Complex, Comber Leisure Centre, Londonderry Park and Portaferry Sports Centre).</p> <p>The project entails the collection of key data including management, drivers, usage, income, and expenditure. The data will be analysed by the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) who will provide a benchmarking report against UK Leisure Facilities.</p>
<b>Expected Outcome</b>	This benchmarking review will support Leisure in identifying areas of service improvement.
<b>Timeline</b>	January 2024 – February 2025
<b>Role of Transformation</b>	<p>The Transformation Team will support Leisure Services by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing the development of the benchmarking exercise and collection of key data.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring project governance is in place.</li> <li>• Keeping track of tasks and ensuring completion of them.</li> <li>• Acting as the main point of contact for the project both internally and externally (APSE).</li> <li>• Providing regular updates for the project team.</li> <li>• Managing the timeline to ensure deadlines are met.</li> </ul>
<b>Transformation Funding</b>	<p>N/A</p> <p>APSE Performance Network Membership costs funded from Performance Improvement budget.</p>

### 3.8 Leisure Staff Restructure

Lead Service	Leisure Services
<b>Overview of Project</b>	<p>To ensure continued service improvements, the in-house Leisure Services team are continuing to review their staffing structure. The Transformation Service are providing support from Phase 3 onwards.</p> <p><b>Phase 1 - Sports Development (Complete)</b></p> <p>The first phase of this review began in 2020 with the restructuring of the Sports Development function, with the final aspect of that restructure being completed by April 2024 and resource efficiencies being made from April 2024 onwards. This resource efficiency is as a result of the restructure and change in delivery model of the Council soccer programme to align with the delivery model used for all other sports.</p> <p><b>Phase 2 - Swimming Programme (Complete)</b></p> <p>Phase 2 was a review of the swimming staff, completed in January 2023.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The re-evaluation of the swim teacher job description, as part of the business case, resulted in all posts which, previously could not be recruited, now being filled.</li> <li>• The Waves programme was also restructured from 1450 available spaces to 1700 available spaces.</li> </ul> <p><b>Phase 3 - Lifeguards and Fitness Associates (Complete)</b></p> <p>Phase 3 was a review of the In-house Leisure and Fitness Associates (LFA) staff who are employed on multi-skilled contracts.</p> <p>Removal of multiskilled LFA contracts to introduce specific gym-based staff and lifeguard-based staff with dedicated roles, which will: focus on the customer experience; generate new sales and members; and improve retention and attrition.</p> <p><b>Phase 4 - Administration and Front of House Operations (In Progress)</b></p> <p>Phase 4 will look at reforming administration and front of house operations so continuous improvements can be achieved through streamlining and harmonising operations between the two. This will be achieved by centralising all leisure administration at Ards Blair Mayne Wellbeing and Leisure Complex (ABMWLC) and creating a Senior Administration Officer who will oversee all administration work of the section and manage all front of house operations. Any small uplift in cost for this role is expected to be off set by a rationalisation of the hours of</p>

	<p>other administration staff so that the overall effect will be a very small uplift if any.</p> <p><b>Phase 5 - All other parts of the Service</b></p> <p>Phase 5 will look at any other current positions that require review – outdoor recreation attendants, recreation attendants and technical staff (Londonderry Park, ABMWLC and those that manage our pavilions). We will look to rationalise this provision working closely with customers and clubs to deliver a service that is efficient and economic.</p> <p><b>Phase 6 - Review in the light of a completed Leisure Strategy</b></p>
<b>Expected Outcome</b>	<p>The staffing restructure should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve customer service provision resulting in increased membership base, improvement in attrition and retention rates and increased income.</li> <li>• Improve customer service provision.</li> <li>• Improve staff morale and the retention of a good quality workforce.</li> <li>• To retain good qualified and experienced leisure and fitness staff to continue to deliver a high-quality leisure service across the Borough.</li> </ul>
<b>Timeline</b>	<p>Phase 3 - Completed</p> <p>May 2024 – March 2025 (Phase 4)</p>
<b>Role of Transformation</b>	<p>The Transformation Team will support Leisure Services by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeping track of tasks and ensuring completion of them.</li> <li>• Completion of benchmarking exercises across other NI Councils.</li> <li>• Supporting with the development of business cases and reports to CLT.</li> <li>• Managing the timeline to ensure deadlines are met.</li> <li>• Providing support to the project team throughout the stages of the project.</li> </ul>
<b>Transformation Funding</b>	TBC

### 3.9 Waste Review

<b>Lead Service</b>	<b>Waste and Cleansing</b>
<b>Overview of Project</b>	A strategic review of the Council's kerbside collection service to ensure its efficiency and effectiveness and to futureproof the services in terms of new and pending legislative requirements.
<b>Expected Outcome</b>	<p>The Waste Resources Action Programme (WRAP) has been engaged to assist and model several collection scenarios aimed at achieving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher recycling rates.</li> <li>• Reduced residual waste.</li> <li>• Improved efficiency to achieve financial savings.</li> </ul>
<b>Timeline</b>	September 2023 – March 2025
<b>Role of Transformation</b>	No requirement identified.
<b>Transformation Funding</b>	N/A

### 3.10 Legal Services Review

Lead Service	Transformation
Overview of Project	A strategic review of the Council's legal services provision to determine the best model for structuring council's requirement for legal services.
Expected Outcome	<p>Legal Services provision for ANDBC is currently outsourced via a Procurement exercise. The current two-year contract ended in March 2024. Approval to extend the contract for one year was agreed and is due to end in March 2025.</p> <p>Director of Corporate Services requested a review of current Legal Services provision and to identify options for either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A fully in-house model</li> <li>• A hybrid in-house/ outsourced model</li> <li>• A fully outsourced model</li> </ul> <p>This review is nearing completion, and it is anticipated that an Options Paper will be presented to CLT in November 2024 to make a decision on a way forward.</p>
Timeline	June 2024 – November 2024
Role of Transformation	<p>The Transformation Service will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage the governance associated with the project.</li> <li>• Perform a review of current provision for legal services and associated costs.</li> <li>• Carry out a benchmarking exercise across other councils.</li> <li>• Conduct a review and bring forward recommendations in the form of an options paper to present to CLT.</li> </ul>
Transformation Funding	N/A

Unclassified

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## ITEM 12

### Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Corporate Services Committee
Date of Meeting	10 December 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Corporate Services
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Administration
Date of Report	12 November 2024
File Reference	Sus 1
Legislation	Climate Change Act Northern Ireland NI (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Roadmap to Sustainability
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Update on Roadmap Actions Appendix 2 - BITCNI Environmental Benchmarking Survey Report

The Roadmap to Sustainability (the Roadmap) was agreed by Council in March 2021. It has been developed to formalise the Council's commitment to becoming more sustainable and to act as a key enabler in this regard.

The Roadmap runs from the period 2021 to 2028 to coincide with 2 Corporate Plan phases. It will be updated periodically, with the accompanying Action Plan reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

The first update report summarising progress against the key actions agreed in the Roadmap was provided to Council in December 2021 with further updates provided every six months since. The latest six-monthly update against actions has been prepared for Members and is attached to this report at Appendix 1.

Unclassified

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Officers are currently reviewing the Roadmap with SNI. This review will be in line with recommendations from internal audit and the revised version will include the Climate Action Plan.

**Climate Action Plan update**

Officers are working closely with Sustainable NI to develop the Council's Climate Action Plan. Currently a framework is being prepared to ensure that the plan aligns with the existing Roadmap to Sustainability. It is hoped that both the CAP and Roadmap will form one document going forward. This will incorporate existing actions as well as additional ones.

As part of this project, carbon footprint (scope 1, scope 2 and 3 emissions if possible) will be calculated using the Greenhouse Gas Accounting Tool for best practice.

There will be workshops for input from officers and Elected Members as part of this process.

**BITCNI annual NI Environmental Benchmarking Survey**

The Council Retained SILVER status in the BITCNI Benchmarking Survey. The Survey is a self-disclosure exercise that offers organisations a way to be externally assessed and scored on their environmental efforts and performance. Participating organisations have access to a Gap Analysis Report to help them to identify areas that need action and highlights where they are performing well, so it's a comparison tool and real driver for improvement." (Appendix 2)

**George Dawson Award**

On 20 November 2024, Emma Adair, the Council's former Sustainability Officer (now Assistant Development Manager (Environment)) was awarded The George Dawson Award. This award celebrates the significant contribution a businessperson has made to improving the environmental performance of their organisation, and the Award recognises the impact of that contribution on the environment and on the wider community.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council notes this update report.

Table 6.1: Summary of Actions

Key:

Complete
Underway
Not started

	Urgent Actions 6 months	To be action by (HoS lead)	Timescales	December 2024 (current)
1	Rethink the Council model of working – complete a strategic review of the existing staff working of flexible home working arrangements, working hours/contracted hours of 9-5 to avoid high overtime and toil for those working ‘out of hours’ and office accommodation requirements following the Covid 19 pandemic. What became apparent was the ability of council staff to be flexible in how and where they worked. As a result, transport, pollution and carbon emissions decreased. Flexible working can also benefit through reducing office space requirements. This could also potentially benefit the Council through the closure of inefficient office accommodation and the use of effective space planning through, for example, hot desking arrangements. Review contractual working arrangements to reflect service needs, reducing OT and TOIL for weekend working where this is the norm, not the exception.	HoS Human Resources (all Service Units to contribute)	Ongoing	Work in progressing on the Office Rationalisation project. Analysis of current office usage started in September 2024. The aim of this is to collect actual real data on specific usage. Revised Timescale.
2	Review of existing, funded projects, e.g., Belfast Region City Deal - how can these now be completed with Sustainability at their core and particularly with renewables and energy efficiency and social value as a priority. Ensure that Sustainability Champions (see action 3) are at all capital projects meeting.	HoS Strategic Capital Development	Ongoing	Ongoing and included in the large capital review. Draft Capital policy produced
3	Train all staff on Sustainability awareness and Climate Change.  In addition, train a small team of officers/managers as Sustainability Champions utilising Sustainable NI – these champions will be selected by the Roadmap Working Group and approved by relevant line managers. The Sustainability Champions will act as ‘leads’ on Sustainability to work across all service areas to sense check and challenge where sustainability should be considered. They will not be ‘experts’ but trained to a level that they are competent and confident to questions decisions made and perhaps refer back to the Compliance Officer - Sustainability for wider consideration and guidance.	HoS Administration	Complete	Complete
4	Develop a Sustainable Food Strategy for the Council and Borough  Following the Sustainable Food Places approach, key deliverables may include:  1. Establishing a food partnership to lead on the development of the strategy 2. Development of the Sustainable Food Strategy  Establishing ‘Revive and Refresh’ arrangements to ensure that the partnership and strategy is working and being implemented effectively.	HoS Administration	April 2025	Some work has progressed on Sustainable Food Places but a Strategy can only be progressed with additional resourcing.  The sustainable food growing strategy (Let’s Grow Together) is in place: <a href="http://www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/grow">www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/grow</a>  A business case has been prepared and submitted to the sustainability fund for a post to support and deliver this action. This was paused until the new Climate Change and Sustainability Manager is in post.

Table 6.1: Summary of Actions

	Urgent Actions 6 months	To be action by (HoS lead)	Timescales	December 2024 (current)
5	<p>Develop a Tree &amp; Woodland Strategy for the Borough.</p> <p>Key deliverables/ steps may include: The document will have three main aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Engaging - to actively engage and collaborate with the community and others in valuing trees as a vital community asset.</li><li>Increase Accessibility i.e. % of population with access to a 2ha+ wood within 500m. Move towards the NI Average of 10.3% cover from present 7% position by 2025 and UK average of 21.1% by 2030.</li><li>Planting Woodland % population requiring new woodland to be able to access a 20ha+ wood within 4km. Move towards the NI Average of 31.4% access from present 33.9% position by 2025 and UK average of 12.1% by 2030.</li><li>Managing to ensure good tree care, through sustainable management of the tree population and reducing risk.</li></ul> <p>Document will link directly to the DAERA initiative ‘Forests for our Future’.</p>	HoS Parks and Cemeteries	Ongoing	<p>Scheduled Tree Works Completed on Council Land Since June 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Castle Park, Bangor</li><li>Ward Park, Bangor</li><li>Stricklands Glen, Bangor</li><li>Plantation Wood, Bangor</li><li>Kerrs Wood, Bangor</li></ul> <p>Adhoc tree works continue as required across the borough. This scheduled tree maintenance aligns with the Councils Tree &amp; Woodland Strategy to manage our tree stock to ensure not only the health of the trees but the safety, therefore reducing any risk to people or buildings.</p> <p><b>Tree Map</b> The Councils interactive tree map is available for public view via the council website. The Ards and North Down Borough Council's new tree map reflects a progressive commitment to environmental stewardship and community engagement. This initiative aims to catalogue and display the diverse array of trees within Ards and North Downs Borough Woodlands, Parks, and Urban areas, promoting awareness of the region's rich biodiversity.</p> <p><a href="https://www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/Tree-Map">https://www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/Tree-Map</a></p> <p>It is also used during times of tree works so the public can identify which trees are having works done and why. This adds value to our communications with the public.</p> <p>Council has received a draft Tree Asset Valuation report based on the council's current tree data. Officers will review this document and report it to Committee in due course.</p> <p>Since June 2024, a total 19 community tree and woodland projects events where held, his included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>12 outdoor well being sessions in Parks, Breathing/Connecting – Castle &amp; Ward</li></ul> <p>November sees National Tree Week. Activities include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Cairn Wood Walk with Development Officers Tree &amp; Woodland and Greenways &amp; Community Trails</li><li>Seed Gathering Workshop St Columbas College, Portaferry</li><li>Castle Park Tree Tour with Neil Portius</li><li>Cairn Wood Walk with the Development Officer Greenways &amp; Trails</li><li>Orchard Planting in Linnear Park with Kilmaine and Ballymagee Primary Schools</li><li>3 x Forest School Workshops in Londonderry Park, Castle Park &amp; Parkway, Comber</li><li></li></ul>



**Table 6.1: Summary of Actions**

	Urgent Actions 6 months	To be action by (HoS lead)	Timescales	December 2024 (current)
				<p>In October 2023, EM's agreed a proposal for development of a Network of Community Tree Nurseries and associated Seed Gathering Projects.</p> <p>Portaferry In Bloom &amp; Millisle &amp; District Community Association were chosen. These groups have the equipment needed and are ready to gather seeds. Portaferry have gathered seeds already from Nugent Wood and will begin growing.</p> <p>This programme is open for applications again from February 2025 and this will be annual. Aim is for 2/3 per year.</p> <p>Castle Park Tree trail is in development – identifying unique species of trees within Castle Park to create an interactive park for the community.</p> <p>Partnership with the Northern Ireland Forest School Association (NIFSA) has continued aimed at establishing and nurturing three forest schools annually. This collaboration underscores the council's commitment to environmental education and community engagement.</p> <p>Applications to become a Forest School opened on 4th January 2024 and 3 schools were selected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Andrews Memorial Primary School, Comber</li> <li>• Camphill Community, Holywood</li> <li>• Portavogie Primary School, Portavogie</li> </ul> <p>Applications to go out again in January 2025 and another 3 will be chosen.</p> <p>The selection criteria included factors such as the school's commitment to sustainability and environmental education, the availability of space and existing infrastructure for growing activities.</p>
6	<p>Review and update the Council's Sustainability and Environmental Policy including current topics such as climate change and social value in procurement.</p> <p>The Policy was introduced in 2015 and is therefore somewhat dated. It currently does not reference important sustainability issues such as climate change and the need for carbon emissions reduction. With particular emphasis on impacts on "designated" areas of the borough i.e., ASSIs, AONB</p>	HoS Administration	Complete	Complete - This is now live and available on ANDi and Council website.
	<p>Develop a Sustainable Energy Management Strategy and Action Plan.</p> <p>The Council will develop a strategy for maximising the sustainability of its energy use, looking at minimising the amount of energy we use to run our estate and deliver our services as well as maximising opportunities to incorporate renewable energy supplies where possible.</p>	Head of Assets and Property	Complete	Complete. Approved by Council in June 24.

Table 6.1: Summary of Actions

	Urgent Actions 6 months	To be action by (HoS lead)	Timescales	December 2024 (current)
	An action plan will be produced to identify what we can do at each of our properties to deliver on the strategy and allow us to prioritise our interventions in a way that helps us to get most gain as quickly as possible. All of the councils energy is supplied through 'green electricity' contract with Electric Ireland for the next 2 years.			
8	Develop a Car Park Strategy –  A Car Park Strategy has been drafted and is currently being finalised. This will aim to ensure that the Council's public car park estate works in the best possible way for sustainable development of the Borough – in particular the main town centres. The Strategy will promote a shift towards more sustainable forms of transport – including cycling, public transport and electric vehicle uptake.	Head of Regulatory Services	April 2025	'FASTER' project funded via Interreg Funding, now complete – with installation of new rapid EV charge points in Council car parks across the Borough.  Procurement for installation and operation of additional charge points via funding from the UK Government's ORCS (on street residential charge point scheme), in progress via DCS Council.  2024 Car park order implemented. Order reviewed and amended awaiting legislative change to allow implementation (aim mid 2025)  Still awaiting review of legislation by Assembly to allow making of new Council Car Park Order for transferred DfI Car Parks. Much work carried out to encourage DfC to do this.
9	Ongoing review and implementation of Council's Sustainable Waste Resource Management Strategy to ensure sustained progress in maximising the achievement of Circular Economy goals.	HoS Waste and Cleansing Services	Ongoing To 2030	All Member workshop on review of kerbside waste collections model arranged for November 2024.  HRC capital strategy document agreed by Council in September 2024. Member working group to be established to progress review process, using similar model to kerbside collections review.  Contract award for interim residual waste treatment contract agreed by Council November 2024, contract commencement arrangements TBC.
10	Development of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan with nature recovery approach	HOS Parks & Cemeteries	Ongoing	The Local Biodiversity Action Plan was agreed and approved by Council in April 2023 and launched in November 2023.  Successful and steady progress has made during 2023 against the plan's 84 actions and 3 objectives. Please note activities reported on can contribute to and be relevant to more than one objective. Main themes are: <b>Theme 1. Education &amp; Awareness –</b>  Since June 2021 the following Activities/events were carried out <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bioblitz – carried out in August over 2 days at Whitespots Country Park. This was a joint event for both nature specialists and the public to get involved in species identification and monitoring at Whitespots. A total of 335 records were documented across the 2 days. Workshops included moth capture and identification, a Bird Walk &amp; Talk, Minibeast hunt, Tree Identification, Pollinator workshop and Birds of Whitespots.</li> <li>• Brent Geese Shoreline Festival – walk and talk by Kerry Mackie on the Brent Geese.</li> </ul>

Table 6.1: Summary of Actions

	Urgent Actions 6 months	To be action by (HoS lead)	Timescales	December 2024 (current)
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Corporate Volunteering Day with Navico at Whitespots removing tree guards</li><li>• Seed gathering with St Columbas College, Portaferry</li><li>• Annual In Bloom Awards hosted at Clandeboye Lodge Hotel</li><li>• The Development Officer attended events alongside the Development Officer (Play) and did some nature based play activities in various locations across the borough.</li><li>• Development Officer is in the process of completing the Councils return on the All Ireland Pollinator Plan.</li><li>• Attendance at ANDBC's Economic Development Conference.</li></ul> <p><b>Theme 2. Research &amp; Monitoring</b></p> <p>The council continues to report annual to the All Ireland Pollinator Plan and officers are currently pulling together the information for this.</p> <p>A number of site-specific formal surveys have been commissioned including a baseline wintering bird survey and invertebrates survey for Bowtown. Plans are also in place to begin vegetation surveys on rewilding sites once established. Through the Parks &amp; Cemeteries Development team and the Development Officer (Engagement) we are planning to educate young people and communities on monitoring of pollinators etc within their own areas.</p> <p><b>Theme 3. Land Management</b></p> <p>Promote semi-natural grassland biodiversity through local events, and council publicity, hold lowland meadow identification and management training courses</p> <p>A number of feasibility studies have been completed on Laurelbank, Crawfordsburn Glen, Cloughey Beach. Laurelbank requires some additional survey work on its hydrology and Cloughey requires additional research on its site-specific nature in terms of coastal processes so any future plans are fit for purpose.</p> <p>Crawfordsburn Glen has had some maintenance work carried out already and will have some more specifically on the bridges, walkways and fencing.</p> <p>There will be more engagement work in terms of additional bird and bat boxes. Officers will also work with the local community/school to use the Glen for education and awareness raising.</p> <p>The rewilding portfolio will be refreshed to ensure current sites within the initiative are well maintained. There are currently 6 sites within the Initiative all require differing maintenance regimes and some will be used going forward as Flagship sites for education and ongoing monitoring.</p>

Table 6.1: Summary of Actions

	Urgent Actions 6 months	To be action by (HoS lead)	Timescales	December 2024 (current)
				<p>A further 7 have approval to be added to the initiative adding 32,800m2 to the initiative.</p> <p>New signage is in the process of being developed to the website will be updated to reflect the information needed to educate the public on the importance of rewilding in both biodiversity terms and for carbon sequestration.</p> <p>The Grassland Management Strategy has been approved by Council in November 2024. This meets actions within the LBAP.</p> <p>Suitably managed grasslands are vital for biodiversity, nature conservation and carbon storage, holding approximately one-third of global terrestrial carbon stocks. Grasslands provide crucial resilience in the face of climate change, including In Northern Ireland where disruption to business, services and people's daily lives will increase if adverse changes occur.</p> <p>Grasslands use less water, reduce soil erosion and keep carbon stored in the ground. A diverse mixture of grass and wildflower species create an array of habitats that support a diversity of insects and pollinators, a multitude of bird species and other mammals. Healthy grasslands have been proven to improve water quality and increase water quantity and storage for communities, reducing downstream flooding events by regulating runoff, and ensuring high-quality water supplies for future generations.</p> <p>At Bowtown Road the new Habitat Management Plan is underway. It will see the development of rewilding planting to attract a wide variety of wintering birds, habitats for bats, birds and pollinators and natural trails for walking. We hope to work in partnership with local communities and schools to ensure support and education for the site.</p> <p>Task and Finish groups continue to meet to discuss important areas of departmental improvement including herbicide reduction, machinery development and tree &amp; woodland and rewilding opportunities.</p> <p><b>Theme 4. Partnerships</b></p> <p>Council continues to work with a wide range formal and informal groups. Through events and workshops we utilise the skills and knowledge of partners like Forest Schools and Clandeboye Rangers, Ulster Wildlife Trust, Butterfly Conservation, TCV and Field Studies Ireland.</p> <p>Council Officers continue to work with local community groups, particularly in relation to Ulster in Bloom and our own In Bloom grants and awards. A number of these groups are also support in more practical ways by the council as resources allow.</p>

Table 6.1: Summary of Actions

	Urgent Actions 6 months	To be action by (HoS lead)	Timescales	December 2024 (current)
				<p>We aim to extend the 'Friends of' groups following the implementation of the Councils 'Friends of' policy and the success of the Friends of the Walled Garden. The Development Officer (Engagement) is working on building this format for implementation.</p> <p>Through the schools Growing Club and Forest Schools strong partnerships have been developed with local schools, with opportunity for wider network opportunities.</p>
11	Integrated Weed Control Approach to reduce heavy reliance on herbicides.	HOS Parks & Cemeteries	Ongoing	<p>The policy roll out has seen a reduction of 30% in the use of herbicide across the service. All 7 Green Flag sites are now herbicide free and further sites are being trialled.</p> <p>Funding has been secured for the infrastructure upgrade to Hunts Park which will allow this site to remain a herbicide free zone without negative feedback.</p> <p>In addition, a successful business case was submitted for 2 mechanical sweeping units. These will be purchased in the 2025/26 financial year. The success of the business case was assisted by the reference to the policy and also the Roadmap targets.</p> <p>Staff reviewed the effectiveness of the 'FoamStream' system. Trial control was carried out at Movilla Cemetery. This proved to be very effective control and will form a further element of the integrated control program. A business case will be submitted for funding in the 2025/26 financial year.</p>

Table 6.1: Summary of Actions

	Short Term Actions 2 years	To be action by (HoS lead)	Completion date	Dec 2024
12	<p>Develop Sustainable Construction guidance for the future redevelopment of the Council's buildings and spaces.</p> <p>Key deliverables/ steps may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completing a review of existing arrangements in commitments for building/ area refurbishment and new builds to ensure that new building construction and upgraded existing building fabric reach effective standards.</li> <li>Develop sustainable construction considerations for different construction projects i.e. from low project cost refurbishment of public realm spaces and buildings to the construction of new Council buildings and spaces</li> <li>Ensure relevant refurbishment and new builds which have used sustainable construction practices and materials are promoted through the use of educational and awareness signage e.g., for new builds, awareness and education signage in the main reception area(s) outlining the key practices used. This will benefit both the Council through positive PR and also building users and visitors to the building through education and awareness.</li> </ul>	HoS Strategic Capital Development	Ongoing	<p>Ongoing and included in the large capital review.</p> <p>Draft Capital sustainable policy produced</p> <p>All updated legislation included in capital procurement documents regarding NetZero</p>
13	<p>Develop an awareness campaign and supporting materials to promote sustainable working and living within the Council and wider Borough.</p> <p>The campaign may focus on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a sustainable working and living programme to encourage and promote the adoption of sustainable behaviours within the Council and Borough.</li> <li>An introductory communications programme to outline the Council's sustainability Roadmap and explain what sustainability means to the Council and Borough</li> <li>Awareness training for all staff to outline what key sustainable working practices and behaviours are to be adopted e.g. energy and water conservation/ efficiency, waste reduction, safer working practices, responsible procurement and consumption, respect for fellow colleagues</li> </ul> <p>Awareness communications and campaigns for sustainable living and working to encourage and promote the adoption of sustainable behaviours within the Borough for business owners and residents. Content may include sustainable food provision, waste reduction, water and energy conservation, reducing litter and dog fouling, staying safe, respecting your neighbours, preserving Borough facilities for the enjoyment of all, reducing vandalism and crime, supporting and participating in economic development activity.</p>	HoS Administration/supported by Corporate Communications	Ongoing	<p>Ongoing press and social media activity in support of a number of key themes under #StANDforSustainability Topics include: increasing recycling at home with a focus on soft plastics and blue bin items/ recycling education and in practice at events/ AND Sustainable Giants / Tree planting.</p> <p>A number of good practice case studies have been added to the council website to further share good practice - <a href="https://www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/resident/stand-for-sustainability/sustainability-case-studies">https://www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/resident/stand-for-sustainability/sustainability-case-studies</a></p>
14	Set up a central group for funding so as to better capitalise and co-ordinate what the Council applies for.	HoS Administration	March 2022	COMPLETE – sits within Climate Working Group



**Table 6.1: Summary of Actions**

	Short Term Actions 2 years	To be action by (HoS lead)	Completion date	Dec 2024
	The group could also enhance value through joint projects rather than standalone funding projects/ applications.			
15	<p>Develop a Community Food Growing Strategy</p> <p>Key deliverables to include: Develop borough opportunities for our citizens to grow food in a variety of community setting including Community Gardens and Allotments.</p>	HOS Parks & Cemeteries	Complete	<p>Primary schools across the Borough were once again offered the opportunity to apply to join the initiative and Council received a total of eleven applications from various schools that expressed interest in becoming a Growing Club. As per the agreed process, a selection panel comprised of Parks and Cemeteries Officers evaluated the applications and chose the most suitable schools to participate. After thorough review and consideration, the panel selected four schools to be part of the program.</p> <p>The selection criteria included factors such as the school's commitment to sustainability and environmental education, the availability of space and existing infrastructure for gardening activities, the engagement level of teachers, PTA, and the potential for community involvement. The panel's objective assessment ensured a fair and transparent selection process, resulting in the choice of schools that were best aligned with the goals of the Growing Club initiative.</p> <p>The four new schools selected were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kircubbin Integrated Primary School</li> <li>• Alexander Dixon Primary School, Ballygowan</li> <li>• Killard Primary School, Donaghadee</li> <li>• St Patricks Primary School, Holywood</li> </ul> <p>The development Officer (Engagement) has met with all schools and will carry out practical workshops in each school between January – June 2025. Each school receives 3 workshops.</p> <p>The Development Officer (Engagement) will continue to support schools from the 2023/2024 cohort below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Towerview PS, Bangor</li> <li>• Andrews Memorial PS, Comber</li> <li>• Loughries PS, Newtownards</li> <li>• Holywood PS, Holywood</li> <li>• St Patricks PS, Portaferry</li> <li>• St Marys PS, Kircubbin</li> </ul> <p>Bryansburn allotments continue to be active with a number of well establish plots. The site had its annual 'clean up' week which seen the site have its winter clear out. A celebration event was also held to mark the end of clean up week and officially open the new Community Allotment Shed. A space available for allotment holders to meet, chat and socialise whilst being available for groups to be educated and learn about local growing.</p>
16	<p>Develop an overarching Climate Change Mitigation/ Carbon Reduction Strategy for the Council</p> <p>Key deliverables/ content might include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establishing the Council's operational carbon footprint which may include:</li> </ol>	HoS Assets & Property	Ongoing	<p>Scope 1 &amp; 2 Energy data now gathered for years 2019/20, 2021/22, 2022/23, 2023/24 and up to date for Q1 And Q2 for 2024/25.</p> <p>Sustainable NI to help ANDBC with Scope 3 emissions.</p> <p>2019/20 set as baseline and 48% reduction required by 2030 and Net Zero by 2050. Target still being discussed by DAERA for 2040.</p>

Table 6.1: Summary of Actions

	Short Term Actions 2 years	To be action by (HoS lead)	Completion date	Dec 2024
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. scope 1 &amp; 2 emissions sources (e.g. electricity, gas, oil, diesel, petrol)</li> <li>b. additional sources under scope 3 emissions (e.g. water consumption, waste generation, business travel) to encompass the Council's wider environmental impact</li> </ul> <p>2. Set an agreed net zero carbon target and timescale</p> <p>3. Complete a strategic energy review of the Council and develop an accompanying action plan to improve efficiency and reduce emissions. Key tasks may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Review of consumption data, completing targeted half hourly consumption profiling of high consuming buildings.</li> <li>b. Completion of energy audits of targeted buildings to identify current energy management arrangements and opportunities to improve performance through consumption reduction and the use of low/ zero carbon technologies.</li> </ul> <p>4. Assess the potential for the Council to achieve net zero carbon emissions.</p> <p>Complete a review of the Council's owned fleet of vehicles and develop a sustainable fleet management strategy to optimise fuel consumption and reduce carbon emission.</p> <p>Review how mileage policy is interpreted to reduce total actual miles covered by the non-Council owned fleet.</p>			<p>Energy Action Plan and Strategy now complete. AD Sustainability was the 3<sup>rd</sup> party consultant and worked with ANDBC to develop the actions and plans to exercise in order to try and meet targets.</p> <p>Energy dashboard system is progressing well with stakeholders seeing the initial version well progressed and putting forward further suggestions to make it more user friendly for different sections of the council.</p> <p>Working Group has met monthly to go over the fleet plan and how we implement this. Fleet Manager has identified 10 no. Vehicles over the next two years to be changed to EV. Total of 49 vehicles to be changed by 2032.</p> <p>Large infrastructure costs required for NIE upgrade at NRD in Ards to provide sufficient power for full 49 vehicles and requires considerate planning and installation time.</p> <p>3 no. Double EV charging points being installed currently at NRD for 6 parking spaces. This will enable sufficient charging facilities for the next 4 years approx.</p> <p>Energy audits to be carried out on all buildings.</p> <p>Review of largest consuming buildings, with individual look at leisure and communities being carried out currently to identify trends of areas to address high consumption.</p> <p>"Roadmap to Green fleet" document agreed by Council in October 2024.</p>
17	<p>Develop a Climate Adaptation Plan for the Council and Borough</p> <p>Key deliverables to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the creation of a Council wide working Group for Climate Change with the initial focus on Adaptation</li> <li>2. development of the Adaptation Plan with support from Climate NI</li> <li>3. Invest in nature-based solutions to climate change that can deliver for jobs, nature and the economy.</li> </ul>	HoS Administration	Complete	Climate Adaptation Plan is completed and was approved by Corporate Committee and Council in April 2024. This is now on the council website.
18	<p>Take a Natural Capital approach to new infrastructure and decision making.</p> <p>Natural Capital involves understanding the environment in terms of the value and benefits it provides to people. It can be defined as 'The elements of nature that directly and indirectly produce value or benefits to people, including ecosystems, species, fresh- water, land, minerals, the air and oceans, as well as natural processes and functions.' (Natural Capital Committee, 2014)</p>	HoS Parks & Cemeteries	Complete	<p>A number of the Parks &amp; Cemeteries key strategies and plans will all deliver towards a new Natural Capital approach. This includes the LBAP, Tree &amp; Woodland Strategy, Growing Strategy, rewilding initiative, hedgerow planting, Grassland Management Strategy etc.</p> <p>The Tree Asset report is the first survey of the councils green infrastructure to add a 'value' against it – both in cost and carbon. These types of surveys allows us to look at our green space in a more practical and efficient way. When measuring our carbon footprint as an organisation it is often the negative impact we make</p>



Table 6.1: Summary of Actions

	Short Term Actions 2 years	To be action by (HoS lead)	Completion date	Dec 2024
	<p>Key deliverables to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Develop a Natural Capital Asset Register to determine the economic value of our natural assets and therefore their protection.</li><li>Implement a landscape-led approach to planning all new developments</li><li>Develop a green infrastructure strategy that sets standards for quantity, quality, and accessibility of green infrastructure, including parks and green spaces, including measures of equity ensuring the needs of local communities are at the heart of their design.</li><li>Prioritise green infrastructure investment, especially parks and green spaces, in those places which have the greatest need and exhibit the greatest inequalities. And provide improvement support to local places that helps secure the benefits that flow from good quality green infrastructure</li></ul>			<p>that is recorded. However through measuring the carbon sequestration of our green space we can add a positive to that value by absorbing carbon from the atmosphere, thus reducing our impact on the environment and improving our contribution to net zero.</p> <p>There will be further opportunity for this through our Grassland Management, Rewilding and hedgerow planting.</p> <p>The Council Climate Adaptation Plan includes a number of actions already contributing to the councils response to managing the impact on climate change. Projects such as the redevelopment of Ward Park has a number of objectives from Heath &amp; Wellbeing to improved biodiversity and the attraction of more visitors. It also improves the Councils ability to manage extreme and more frequent rainfall by improved management of flood waters through increasing the capacity of the ponds and slowing run off through vegetation and grasslands.</p> <p>Planting more trees provides more shading in times of extreme heat, whilst removing air pollutants and improving health &amp; well being.</p> <p>There are further opportunities to develop Natural Capital and Green Infrastructure further through the Councils Greenways development.</p>
19	Review of Use of Lands by a Third-Party documentation	HoS Administration	Complete	Approved by Council November 2023, Review underway.
20	Use Community Planning priorities to work with partners to join up and expand on health and wellbeing initiatives.	Community Planning Manager	Ongoing	See Action 25 as now combined.
21	Work with AND Poverty Forum and community planning partners to develop a borough wide poverty action plan	Community Planning Manager	Ongoing	Strategic Community Planning Partnership (November 2024) has agreed to establish a strategic Task and Finish Group to consider the recommendations of this report to agree a way forward.
22	Skills and Employability Forum A collaborative network of businesses and education providers to match skills provision with business needs.	Head of Economic Development	Complete/Ongoing	<p>The AND LMP received its Letter of Offer on the 28<sup>th</sup> August 2024 allowing its 24-25 Action Plan to be implemented.</p> <p>As of the 11<sup>th</sup> November the following tenders have been awarded:</p> <p>Tender for the Academy for People with Disabilities Tender for the Transport Academy.</p> <p>As well as the tenders the following projects have been undertaken/ assigned: The quotation for the Classroom Assistant Upskilling Academy was awarded and all 24 participants have been recruited. Additional funding was also secured from DE to facilitate a Childminding Academy within the Borough.</p> <p>The Employer Led Upskilling Programme also opened for Employers on the 12<sup>th</sup> September and closed on the 31<sup>st</sup> October with 25 applications received.</p>

**Table 6.1: Summary of Actions**

	Short Term Actions 2 years	To be action by (HoS lead)	Completion date	Dec 2024
				<p>Completed LMP Projects include: Employer Information sessions (one in person one online), Jobs, Support and Training Fair, two x Skills and Support Clinics (one in Ards and one in Kircubbin), two Employability and Skills Registers have been compiled and uploaded to the website (one for Employers and one for Individuals).</p> <p>Updated figures show that the 22-23 Action Plan created 85 sustainable jobs (10 from the Academy for People with Disabilities, 38 from the Transport Academy, 20 from the Job Fairs, 4 from the Reskilling for Job Vacancies Programme and 13 from the Enterprise Skills Programme).</p> <p>Updated figures show that the 23-24 LMP Action Plan has currently created 98 jobs (11 from the Academy for People with Disabilities, 56 from the Transport Academy, 8 from the Classroom Assistant Cohort 1 and 15 from Cohort 2, 5 from the Job Fair and 3 from the Careers Convention).</p> <p>The 25-26 and 26-27 outline Action Plans were presented to the Regional LMP and an outcome of the funding decision is hoped to be received before April 2025.</p>
23	Pilot the Big Conversation Panel for 12 months to encourage increased level of community engagement. A series of three surveys to encourage sustained public engagement with Council and Community Planning Partner's activities. A way to demonstrate the public sector is listening to its stakeholders by directly communicating with Panel Members how the information they provide via each survey is used to make better decisions regarding the services provided.	Community Planning Manager	Ongoing	<p>Participation is a Community Planning Priority and Citizen Engagement a workstream within this.</p> <p>A report following engagement with people living with Dementia and their families has been presented to the SE Dementia Friendly Partnership and an action plan is being developed. Additional signposting and awareness sessions, plus hubs for libraries have already been rolled out across AND.</p> <p>The Over 50s Council and Youth Voice continue to meet and an intergenerational project involving both is underway.</p> <p>Community Planning and Corporate Communications are developing an Engagement Framework (adopting the principles of community planning) to set out standards of engagement for Council Services.</p> <p>The Considerate Parking Campaign has been delayed due to resourcing issues but a design concept is expected shortly.</p>
24	<p>Reflect on the SD goals within the review of the Big Plan (Community Plan).</p> <p>Part of the 'golden thread' running through the community planning is being able to demonstrate how the performance monitoring links across actions plans, Community Plan indicators and the Programme for Government. Ards and North Down's action plans for each Big Plan priority also include reference to the relevant SD goals demonstrating how sustainable development is integrated in the delivery actions.</p>	Community Planning Manager	Complete	Complete

Table 6.1: Summary of Actions

	Medium Term Actions 5 years	To be action by (HoS lead)	Completion date	Dec 2024
25	Develop partnerships with other agencies to promote health and wellbeing and empower people to take control of their own wellbeing.	HoS Environmental Health, Protection & Development	March 2028	An updated health and wellbeing workstream group has been formally established. This group will focus on emotional wellbeing using the Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing Tool. A digital online tool showing the public (and health practitioners, C&V sector etc) where in AND people can implement the 5 steps is in development.
26	Continue to assess Planning Applications within the planning policy framework (which include but not limited to those related to natural and built heritage, renewables) and relevant design guidance Develop Sustainable Planning and Design response in Local Development Plan draft Plan Strategy to support the Integrated Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy Review of supplementary planning guidance required to accompany plan. Carry out ongoing Enforcement function including trees and conservation.	HoS Planning	March 2025	Draft Plan Strategy to be agreed for publication in 2024 (QT 4)
27	Seek external accreditation, frameworks such as Customer Service Excellence and Investor in People or develop good practice frameworks.	HoS Administration	Complete	NIPSO complaints handling procedure implemented by council in October 2023.
28	Invest in talent development through mentoring and coaching staff and continued learning and development	HoS Human Resources	Complete/Ongoing	Mentoring to Inspire Scheme is in its 3 <sup>rd</sup> year with positive feedback continuing. We have now launched our internal Coaching Framework meaning that employees can avail of 6 sessions with an accredited internal Coach. Using internally accredited coaches and mentors is both cost-effective and sustainable.
29	Review employee recognition to encourage consistency and a clearer link to performance	HoS Human Resources	Ongoing	The internal working group for the People Plan met in May 2024 with progress starting on drafting a <b>Total Reward Strategy/Policy</b> before the next IIP assessment in December 2025. This will build on existing recognition methodologies and provide a best practice approach at the strategic level.
30	Promote and support local enterprise including start-up, incubation, business development programmes and Sustainable Procurement information within any training to local SMEs.	HoS Economic Development	Complete	<p>October 24 – December 24 Heart of Leadership programme. 10 active businesses attending four masterclasses (Culture, Structure, Conflict and Leadership) and 1:1 mentoring focused on change including sustainability.</p> <p>October 24 - March 25 Green Adaptation Programme (GAP). GAP is specially targeted at 10 SME business organisations (10-49 employees) based in the ANDBC region with an ambition to reduce Scope 1 and or Scope 2 emissions in their manufacturing, production or commercial enterprises to achieve 10%+ savings against at least one measure (data-set) in each category (Scope 1 and Scope 2). Delivery includes three days mentoring and progress towards Green Adaptation Action Plan, participation in 4 X Themed Workshops. Outcomes include a Baseline Audit, Identification of key data-set (energy, waste or carbon footprint), implementation of a SMART measurement/platform and a revised a Green Adaptation Legacy Action Plan.</p> <p>As at 11 November 24 Go Succeed Growth and Scaling 276 local enterprises onboarded. Sustainability is an ongoing feature of the growth mentoring and has been identified as a focus for a Peer</p>

Table 6.1: Summary of Actions

	Medium Term Actions 5 years	To be action by (HoS lead)	Completion date	Dec 2024
				Support Network within the programme, plans to implement Jan 25 onwards.  IDNI local event held 03 July Donaghadee Community Centre. Noted following this event the two cluster ideas did not go further. AND has been asked to update the IDNI website (platforming sharing) to provide additional information for 27 November 2024. For latest information on the platform see link below: <a href="#">IDNI   Ards and North Down Borough Council</a>
31	Ensure that actions included within the Integrated Strategy for Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development 2018-2030, such as protecting our Built Heritage, Sustainable Transport Strategy and Continuous Coastal Route are facilitated through other plans and strategies such as the Council's Biodiversity Action Plan.	HoS Jointly Regeneration, Economic Development, Tourism & Leisure & Amenities	Ongoing	Ongoing ITRDS actions being reviewed alongside budget allocation and objectives. DAERA funding ongoing for the Seal Sanctuary with year one of five complete.
32	Setting up a council 'Select Committee' on Sustainability – to monitor/review the sustainability of major policy/project proposals. To comprise of senior officers/managers/elected members and possibly relevant external stakeholders – suggested external members should include but not limited to Sustainable NI and other key members of the Councils Community Planning Partnership. The aim of this group would be to scrutinise all policies, strategies, projects, funding etc at the very highest level.	HoS Administration	Ongoing	This action will be reviewed as part of the overall Roadmap review to address when it can be achieved within the resources available.
33	Develop a Borough Marketing and Communications strategy attract investment, visitors and new residents.	HoS Regeneration, Economic Development, Tourism	Complete	Complete
34	Introduce a citizens assembly – consider better ways to gather feedback from AND residents by direct engagement via a Citizens Assembly with membership across all demographics.	HoS Administration & Community Planning Manager	Complete	Complete
35	Incentivise behaviour change through a revised Recycling Community Investment Fund.	HoS Regulatory Services	Complete/Ongoing	The Recycling Community Investment Fund continues to support Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful and the Live Here Love Here campaign. This is a wide ranging fund providing financial support to community groups for environmental projects at a local level.  Project ELLA has not received the expected up take in schools, and NET are putting in place an outreach program, initially to local primary schools, to increase the profile of the program.
36	Develop a Community Empowerment/ Resilience Programme.	HoS Regulatory Services	Ongoing	Small internal, task and finish working group to be developed to look at how to progress this action.
37	Develop customer service including enhancement of online/mobile service offering.	HoS Administration	Ongoing	Work ongoing with Transformation Team to deliver some of the workstreams from the digital and data strategy.
38	Invest in technology to support paperless office.	HoS Administration	Ongoing	Work ongoing with Transformation Team to deliver some of the workstreams from the digital and data strategy.
39	Develop and promote volunteering opportunities within Council (including staff) and with partner organisations.	HoS Human Resources	March 2028	As with previous update – no formal policy on staff volunteering has been developed. There continues to be opportunities for staff to volunteers, eg Christmas foodbank volunteering. A 'friend of' policy continues to be delivered through Parks & Cemeteries.
40	Develop approaches to promote cross-council working.	HoS Administration	Complete	Complete

**Table 6.1: Summary of Actions**

New actions

	Actions – under way	To be action by (HoS lead)	Timescales	Dec 2024
41	<p>Sustainable Events – Events have committed to improving sustainability at Events within their Service Unit Plan:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ongoing work to improve sustainability at events has been undertaken during the past years, however we wish to put this on a formal footing</li> <li>2. In line with the Council's action on climate change we would seek to mitigate any ramifications on climate change of our events</li> </ol>	HoS Tourism	Ongoing	<p>Ongoing - This Recycling initiative has been continued successfully this season to date. Improvements have been made to the appearance of the stations – making the centres more easily identifiable. There are also branded uniforms for team members.</p> <p>To note average recycling rate for events is almost 90%.</p> <p>The Events team has also increased the availability of buses to events. These were previously free, however, to ensure management of the demand a small charge will be introduced from Comber Earlies Food Festival onwards.</p> <p>A full review of the power supply at events will be undertaken, with a desire to trial the use of hybrid generators.</p>
42	<p>Sustainable Tourism – Community Plan</p> <p>To develop programmes and partnerships that establish Ards and North Down as a sustainable tourism destination.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Agreeing a Priority Performance Measure and Performance Scorecard</li> <li>2. Creation of a Green Network – AND Sustainable Giants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with tourism operators and support them to increase their green credentials and to help create a sustainable choice for visitors</li> <li>• Gather stories from operators that can be used to sell AND as a green tourism destination</li> <li>• Support operators to develop skills in marketing and promoting their story via appropriate platforms</li> <li>• Encourage collaboration</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	HoS Tourism	Ongoing	<p>The business case put forward for financial support was successful. As a result a consultant has been appointed to work with the group.</p> <p>The first meeting will be on 22 November, entitled 'What does success look like' and there will be four further workshops after that covering the following areas:</p> <p>Network Structure and strategy Marketing strategy and planning Getting the most from trade shows Itinerary Development</p> <p>This work will leave the network is a strong position to sell their product to visitors.</p> <p>All work with the group will follow the above structure until the end of March 2025.</p> <p><b>Other Updates</b></p> <p>The group sent a member of the network with a Tourism Development Officer to World Travel Market. Rory from Strangford Lough Activity Centre represented the group and has already reported making strong contacts. TDOs worked with the group to create a presentation.</p> <p>The group is encouraged to share stories with marketing where they can.</p> <p>Website has been updated to include all members. Ten associate members were admitted to the group and they will begin the work with the Consultant on 22 November. They are: Open House Festival, NMNI, Clondeboy Lodge Hotel, Wellig Craft, Mrs Maker is ART, Kiri Cottage, Exploris, Tracey's Farmhouse Kitchen, Clondeboy Estate, Eastwell Farm</p>