

## **ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

27 February 2025

Dear Sir/Madam

You are hereby invited to attend a hybrid meeting (in person and via Zoom) of the Place and Prosperity Committee of the Ards and North Down Borough Council which will be held in the Council Chamber, 2 Church Street, Newtownards, on **Thursday 06 March 2025** commencing at **7.00pm**.

Yours faithfully

Susie McCullough  
Chief Executive  
Ards and North Down Borough Council

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

1. Apologies
2. Declarations of Interest

#### **Reports for Approval**

3. ITEM WITHDRAWN
4. Regeneration Service Plan (report attached)
5. Strategic Capital Projects Service Plan (report attached)
6. Economic Development Service Plan (report attached)
7. Tourism Service Plan (report attached)

#### **Reports for Noting**

8. Growth Event Fund – Year One Update Report (report attached)
9. Notices of Motion
- 9.1 Notice of Motion (652) received from Councillor Chambers and Councillor Hollywood

“That this Council brings back a report detailing the associated costs, viability and public desirability to install a low level positioned lighting scheme along the promenade at Groomsport beach.”

9.2 Notice of Motion (648) received from Alderman Brooks and Councillor Kendall

“This Council acknowledges the success of the Ards and North Down Borough Council Pipe Band Championships, hosted by this Council in Bangor and Newtownards.

This Council notes that other areas of the Borough have the space, potential locations, and infrastructure required to host major events, for example 14,000 people attended the Donaghadee Lights Up event, and that a spread of large events across the Brough brings cultural, social and economic benefits, fostering a sense of whole- Borough inclusivity.

Therefore, working with the Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association NI, this Council will bring back a report considering the potential for the ANDBC Pipe Band Championships to be held across the Borough on a rotational basis in Bangor, Holywood, Newtownards, Comber and Donaghadee.”

10. Any Other Notified Business

\*\*\*IN CONFIDENCE ITEMS 11 - 12\*\*\*

**Reports for Approval (in Confidence)**

11. Extension of Tourism Event Contracts 2025/26 (report attached)

12. Go Succeed Quarterly Update (report attached)

**MEMBERSHIP OF PLACE AND PROSPERITY COMMITTEE (16 MEMBERS)**

Alderman Adair	Councillor Hollywood
Alderman Armstrong-Cotter	Councillor Kennedy
Alderman McDowell	Councillor McCollum
Councillor Ashe (Vice Chair)	Councillor McCracken
Councillor Blaney	Councillor McKimm
Councillor Edmund	Councillor McLaren
Councillor Gilmour (Chair)	Councillor Smart
Councillor Hennessy	Councillor Thompson

Unclassified

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## ITEM 4

### Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	04 March 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Place
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Regeneration
Date of Report	18 February 2025
File Reference	160127
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Regeneration Draft Service Plan 2025-26
Attachments	Appendix 1: Regeneration Draft Service Plan 2025 - 26

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 the Performance Planning and Management process as:

- Community Plan – published every 10-15 years
- Corporate Plan – published every 4 years (Corporate Plan 2024 - 2028 in operation)
- Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) – published annually
- Service Plan – 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.

Not Applicable

Attached is the 2025-26 Service Plan for Regeneration in accordance with the Council's Performance Management Policy and Handbook.

Plans are intended to:

- Encourage compliance with the new legal, audit and operational context.
- Provide focus on direction.
- Facilitate alignment between Corporate, Service and individual plans and activities.
- Motivate and develop staff.
- Promote performance improvement, encourage innovation and share good practice.
- Encourage transparency of performance outcomes.
- Better enable us to recognise success and address underperformance.

The attached Plan:

- Has been developed to align with the objectives of the Big Plan (2017 – 2032) and the Corporate Plan 2024 – 2028 and has been developed in conjunction with staff, officers and management, and in consultation with key stakeholders where relevant.
- Sets out the objectives for the Service for 2025-26 and identifies the key performance indicators used to illustrate the level of achievement of each objective, and the targets that the Service will try to attain along with key actions required to do so.
- Is based on the agreed budget. It should be noted that, should there be significant changes in-year (e.g. due to Council decisions, budget revisions or changes to the PIP), the Plan may need to be revised.
- Will be reported to Committee on a six-monthly basis as undernoted.

Reference	Period	Reporting Month
Quarter 1 and Q2	April – September	December
Q3 and Q4	October – March	June

## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council approve the Service Plan.

# REGENERATION

Service Plan: 01 April 2025 – 31 March 2026



**Ards and  
North Down**  
Borough Council

# APPROVALS

Prepared By	Peer Reviewed By	Approved By Director
Anton Cozzo	Richard McCracken	Brian Dorrian
Head of Regeneration	Head of Regulatory Services	Director of Place
05/02/2025	10/02/2025	17/02/2025

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Service	Regeneration
Directorate	Place
Introduction	<div><div><u>Introduction</u></div><p>The Regeneration Service works collaboratively with external stakeholders to identify and successfully apply for funding opportunities to drive regeneration and strategic investment in urban and rural areas of the Borough. In addition, the Service works independently and in partnership with internal stakeholders to design, develop, deliver, and evaluate various projects focused on the betterment of the Borough.</p><div><u>Mission and Vision</u></div><p>The team of staff within the Service are mindful of the broad opportunities for the successful contribution towards the achievement of the Council's priorities, objectives, and commitments associated with their work. For example, the Service has previously, and will continue to, positively contribute towards the 3 priorities detailed in the 2024 – 2028 Ards and North Down Borough Council Corporate Plan. The priorities and an example of the Service's contribution to each priority are detailed below:</p><div><div><div>1. <b>Economic – increasing economic growth by attracting more jobs and business:</b></div><div>The Service engages regularly with the Borough's various Chambers of Commerce. This enables an evidenced based needs analysis of each Chamber of Commerce and compliments the officers independent research which assists with the concept, design, and delivery of regeneration projects aimed at increasing economic growth within the Borough. For example, amongst other various projects the successful completion of the Portaferry Public Realm and installation of Paddington Bear as part of a UK wide 'trail' enabled Animation, Connectivity, and Placemaking benefits resulting in economic benefits in urban and rural areas within the Borough.</div></div><div><div>2. <b>Environmental – reducing carbon emissions as we transition to net zero:</b></div><div>During the design and implementation phases of relevant projects the Service has the opportunity, in partnership with internal and external stakeholders, to reduce the carbon footprint of projects. For example, in a recent public realm scheme which included significant building works and plant machinery used there was a focus on using sustainable products, equipment, and effective waste management processes. Energy efficient lighting and cycling infrastructure in various projects also contribute to the net zero target being achieved.</div></div><div><div>3. <b>Social - improving wellbeing through social inclusion and reduced inequality:</b></div><div>The Service has implemented several engagement methods with various stakeholders and sectors. The aim of these groups is to empower the local community from various demographics to communicate their opinions, suggestions, and concerns to the Council. For example, regular and scheduled meetings take place between officers and:</div><div><div><div><div>• City/Town Advisory Groups</div><div>• Village Partnerships</div><div>• Chambers of Commerce, and</div><div>• Steering Group meetings</div></div></div><p>These considerations, in addition to the various social, inclusion, and inequality considerations form part of the project process. This ensures the appropriate governance of this priority, for example, several Connectivity, Placemaking, and</p></div></div></div></div>



Environmental Improvement Schemes encourage and enable social and wellbeing opportunities via improvements to existing open spaces or the creation of new spaces.

#### Key Successes and Learning

In preparation for the Corporate Plan Priorities the Service has undertaken and successfully completed the following processes to enable a positive contribution from the Service and wider Directorate.

- 1. Economic** – The Council has approved a business case that detailed a staffing restructure within the Service. This has enabled the required resources to create a new 'Strategic Service Unit' within the Service. This will facilitate the progression of larger and specific regeneration projects that are focused on growing the non-domestic rate base within the Borough. This will further enhance the contribution towards the economic priority. Additionally, further resources have been approved in the existing Service Unit which will provide a greater level of operational capabilities in an extremely busy team of staff.
- 2. Environmental** - After several successful Environmental Improvement Schemes the Service will continue to strive to deliver these environmentally beneficial schemes in order to positively contribute towards this priority. On an external level, an opportunity exists for the Service to support the Department of Infrastructure's (DfI) Active and Sustainable Travel policy. For example, cycling infrastructure forms part of our projects when possible and work on a rural Cycle and Walking Trail is progressing.
- 3. Social** - An opportunity was identified to reconstitute some of the working groups to gain further feedback and input from various demographic groups that are currently underrepresented. This process will be completed by March 2025 with the launch of the new urban and rural working groups anticipated in Spring 2025.

## 2. Context, Challenges and Key Assumptions

<b>Political</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The relatively new Stormont Executive and previous fragility of the previous Executive may increase uncertainty at Departmental levels</li> <li>• The continuing out workings of the Belfast Regional City Deal</li> <li>• Any existing or new negative political opinions that could impact on local politics within the Borough</li> <li>• Regional, national, or international political changes and any subsequent change in priorities or policies (budgetary, sustainability etc)</li> <li>• A change in Departmental priorities and any subsequent change in their resource allocation (physical or financial)</li> </ul>
<b>Economical</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The uncertainty of Bank of England interest rates, inflation figures, cost of living</li> <li>• The impact of the new Government's budget decisions and priorities</li> <li>• The uncertainty of future funding budget in Departments (DfC, DfI, DAERA)</li> <li>• Impact of non-domestic rates on business owners</li> <li>• Impact of domestic rates on property owners/tenants</li> <li>• Resident's expectation of the Council's value for money on rates</li> <li>• The higher costs of using sustainable products and processes in the design or delivery of projects</li> <li>• The negative impact of online shopping vs high street shopping</li> </ul>
<b>Social</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The impact of an unstable pattern and amount of resident's disposable income</li> <li>• An increasingly older population</li> <li>• An expectation from some that the Council should undertake work from outside of their remit (on private land for example)</li> <li>• An expectation from some that the Council will take forward all projects identified in Master/Village Plans</li> </ul>
<b>Technological</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A continuation or growth of online shopping trends and its social and economic impact within the Borough</li> <li>• The perceived disparity in available technologies in rural areas (Wi-Fi for example)</li> <li>• The potential negative and positive impacts of technological advances (mobile applications, virtual reality, artificial intelligence) on the Council and it's residents</li> </ul>
<b>Legal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legislative changes due to local, regional, or central Government</li> <li>• Increased audit/terms and conditions associated with external stakeholder funding opportunities (both pre and post award)</li> <li>• A seemingly increased level of risks associated with project design, delivery, and evaluation</li> </ul>

<b>Environmental</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher environmental and sustainability expectations from industries and residents</li> <li>• Sustainability processes and expectations in the design and delivery of projects (products, materials, treatment of waste for example)</li> <li>• Poor coastal defence in rural areas</li> <li>• Emphasis of 'Active Travel' and the required infrastructure</li> <li>• Climate Emergency and the potential plans to tackle this that may impact projects</li> <li>• Aging infrastructure in some areas in the Borough</li> </ul>
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The identified PESTLE factors have the potential to negatively or positively impact the Services' performance. A prevalent concern of the Service is the potential disruption and/or lack of funding available from external funding sources as a result of political, economic, and/or legislative change. If funding sources, amounts, and criteria do change, it could result in a disparity between 'worked up' and completed projects in the Borough. This possibility will need carefully managed particularly given the recent merging of the Urban and Rural Development Manager posts and creation of a new Service Unit.

The challenges from external factors mean it is crucial that the Service achieves the necessary internal support from the Council to enable the continuation of the existing and an enhanced level of contribution towards achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan priorities and various other commitments and objectives.

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A motivated, experienced, and dedicated team of staff within the Service</li> <li>• A recent realignment of areas of responsibility amongst the team of staff has positively impacted work outputs and stakeholders</li> <li>• An excellent network of established internal and external working relationships that benefit the working up and delivery of projects</li> <li>• An effective network of established and relatively new working relationships with external stakeholders (Village Partnerships, City/Town Advisory Groups, and external funding sources) that contribute positively to the design, delivery, and evaluation of projects in urban and rural areas</li> <li>• Recently completed successful projects on a small, medium, and large scale that have enabled improved working knowledge,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The reliance on external funding sources required to deliver some projects is prohibitive</li> <li>• Regeneration powers did not transfer at the time of Local Government Reform – the function and budget remain with the Department for Communities</li> <li>• A misconception by some of the Borough on the extent of the remit and powers of the Regeneration Service and wider Council</li> <li>• A lack of Capital budget can mean worked up projects are unable to proceed to the delivery stage unless externally fund is applicable and available for the project/s</li> </ul>

<p>governance processes and experience within the team of staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A noticeable improvement in engagement from residents in rural areas, evidenced by a large number of responses than in previous years in the Village Plan Engagement process</li> <li>• Support from the Council to provide continuity of service delivery and an enhanced level of outputs from the Service enabled by the new Service Unit</li> </ul>	
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The creation of a new service unit focused on the Strategic regeneration projects aligned to the Economic priority signifies a significant opportunity to the Council and wider Borough of tangible economic growth and sustainability</li> <li>• Positive changes to be implemented in the representation of some demographics in various engagement groups (City/Town Advisory Groups for example)</li> <li>• Through the realignment of staff responsibilities an opportunity exists to create a directory for internal and external use to streamline processes and enquires</li> <li>• A potential organisational restructure may increase resources within the Service</li> <li>• The Village Plan 2025 – 2035 presents a significant opportunity to demonstrate a willingness by the Council to implement some of the project proposals collected from the successful engagement process for the betterment of rural areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The current political and economic instability at a regional level that results in local impacts</li> <li>• Common themes or projects from the relevant groups (Town/Village Groups) that do not align to Council's plans, objectives, or Master Plan or Village Plan or that are unrealistic</li> <li>• A potential organisational restructure may negatively impact resources within the Service</li> <li>• The inconsistent nature of external funding opportunities which negatively impacts the transition of projects from the design stage to the delivery stage</li> <li>• Some posts within the structure are on a temporary basis due to the inconsistent nature of funding opportunities which has the potential to lead to job insecurity and high staff turnover</li> <li>• A currently high level of long-term absence continues to create work pressures amongst the team of staff</li> </ul>

### 3. Strategic Objectives and Collaboration

The table below reflects the key projects that will be undertaken by our Service over the next 12 months, and the key Services that will be collaborated with as part of the process.

Strategic Objective	Collaboration Required	Corporate Plan Priority	Corporate Plan Outcome
<b>Regeneration</b>			
Launch of the Village Plans 2025 - 2035	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning</li> <li>• Parks and Cemeteries</li> <li>• Leisure</li> <li>• Capital Projects</li> <li>• Corporate Communications</li> <li>• Community Development</li> <li>• Community Planning</li> <li>• Assets and Property Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental</li> <li>• Social</li> </ul>	1, 4, 5, 6
Launch of the Local Action Groups 2025 – 2036	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic Development</li> <li>• Parks and Cemeteries</li> <li>• Leisure</li> <li>• Capital Projects</li> <li>• Corporate Communications</li> <li>• Community Development</li> <li>• Community Planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic</li> <li>• Social</li> </ul>	1, 4, 5, 6
Various Urban and Rural Working Up projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assets and Property Services</li> <li>• Planning</li> <li>• Parks and Cemeteries</li> <li>• Leisure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental</li> <li>• Economic</li> <li>• Social</li> </ul>	1, 2, 4, 5, 6

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capital Projects</li> </ul>		
Various Urban and Rural Capital Project Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assets and Property Services</li> <li>Parks and Cemeteries</li> <li>Leisure</li> <li>Corporate Communications</li> <li>Capital Projects</li> <li>Planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmental</li> <li>Economic</li> <li>Social</li> </ul>	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
To commence Phase One of the development works to Marine Gardens and the McKee Clock Arena	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assets and Property Services</li> <li>Parks and Cemeteries</li> <li>Planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmental</li> <li>Economic</li> <li>Social</li> </ul>	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
<b>Strategic Development</b>			
Development of the NIE Site, Balloo Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capital Projects</li> <li>Planning</li> <li>Lands</li> <li>Administration</li> <li>Finance</li> <li>Economic Development</li> <li>Procurement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic</li> </ul>	1, 3, 4, 7
Empty to Energised (working title)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capital Projects</li> <li>Planning</li> <li>Lands</li> <li>Administration</li> <li>Finance</li> <li>Corporate Communications</li> <li>Economic Development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmental</li> <li>Economic</li> <li>Social</li> </ul>	1, 2, 3, 4, 7

Business Improvement Districts (BID)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Administration</li><li>• Finance</li><li>• Corporate Communications</li><li>• Administration</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Environmental</li><li>• Economic</li><li>• Social</li></ul>	1, 2, 3, 4, 7
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## 4. Service Improvement

The “**Service development/ improvement**” element should identify areas of the service that require development/ improvement along with any new, innovative ideas for future improvements. **Please state clearly in the “Rationale” section why the improvement is being undertaken and what evidence there is to support the decision.**

Only Service improvement activities should be included in this section, ‘business as usual’ activities should be detailed in Section 6.

**Please ensure KPIs are included in Section 6 to measure Service development/ improvement(s) outlined below.**

Service development/ improvement 2025/26?	Which of the specified aspects will this improve?	Rationale	Responsible Officer(s)	Who do we need to help us? (Internal and/ or External partners) Please specify
Launch the new Local Action Groups (LAGs), currently City/Town Advisory Groups (C/TAGs)	<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Effectiveness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Quality <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Availability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fairness <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input type="checkbox"/> Efficiency <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Innovation	Based on an internal and external assessment of the current effectiveness of the C/TAG format a reconstitution of these groups will ensure a wider demographic representation. A Council led support structure will increase the effectiveness of these important stakeholder groups that contribute to the Service, Borough, and Council achieving objectives and commitments	SUM HoS	Internal SUMs or HoS, external Departmental reps (Dfc, Dfl etc)
Develop the new Strategic Development Service Unit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategic Effectiveness <input type="checkbox"/> Service Quality <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Availability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainability	The new Strategic Regeneration Service Unit will enable a dedicated resource to identify and secure external funding to develop and deliver strategic projects aligned to the achievement of the Economic priority detailed in the	SUM HoS	Internal departments that can assist in the development and delivery of projects will be crucial in addition to external partners and funding sources



Service development/improvement 2025/26?	Which of the specified aspects will this improve?	Rationale	Responsible Officer(s)	Who do we need to help us? (Internal and/ or External partners) Please specify
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Efficiency <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Innovation	Corporate Plan 2024 – 2028. Equally, budget from the Council will be sought to empower the Service Unit to proceed with projects under internal governance processes		
Secure funding to deliver an Environmental Improvement Scheme	<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Effectiveness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Service Availability <input type="checkbox"/> Fairness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Efficiency <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Innovation	The Regeneration Unit aims to deliver environmental and infrastructure improvements which enhance the quality of our urban and rural spaces. These will create attractive, accessible and functional environments that serve residents, visitors, and the Council's Environmental priority. The Council have invested in the design of an Environmental Improvement Scheme for Millisle. Attracting funding for the scheme will support the achievement of all three priorities within the Corporate Plan; economic, environmental, and social.	SUM HoS	DfC, DfI, DAERA, and internal departments for example Parks and Cemeteries, Leisure, Planning

## 5. Service Risk Register

Service Risk Register should align with the Corporate Risk Management Strategy.

When completing your Service Plan you must review and consider your current Service Risk Register. Please confirm this has been completed.

**Yes**

## 6. Key Activities (KPIs) for 2025/26

*Please ensure service development/ improvements detailed in Section 4 are included as KPIs.*

KPIs should be aligned to the 7 Outcomes of the Corporate Plan 2024-2028, detailed below:

1	An engaged Borough with citizens and businesses who have opportunities to influence the delivery of services, plans and investment
2	An environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough meeting our net zero carbon targets
3	A thriving and sustainable economy
4	A vibrant, attractive, sustainable Borough for citizens, visitors, businesses and investors
5	Safe, welcoming and inclusive communities that are flourishing
6	Opportunities for people to be active and healthy
7	Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation

In addition to the outcomes the KPI should align with one of the three **Corporate Priorities** of the **Corporate Plan**, detailed below:

<b>Corporate Priority 1</b>	<b>Economic</b>	Increasing economic growth by attracting more jobs and businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Business Support</li><li>• Attracting Investment</li><li>• Rural Regeneration</li><li>• Labour Market Partnership</li><li>• Sustainable Tourism</li><li>• Town and City Regeneration</li><li>• Vacant to Vibrant Scheme</li><li>• Innovation Hub</li></ul>
<b>Corporate Priority 2</b>	<b>Environmental</b>	Reduce carbon emissions as we transition to net zero	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Waste Management</li><li>• Digital and Physical Infrastructure</li><li>• Estate Management</li><li>• Tree Planting Strategy</li><li>• Management of Outdoor Spaces</li><li>• Local Development Plan</li><li>• Litter Control and Enforcement</li><li>• Sustainable Waste Resources Strategy</li><li>• Sustainable Energy Management Strategy</li></ul>
<b>Corporate Priority 3</b>	<b>Social</b>	Improving wellbeing through social inclusion and reduced inequality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sport, leisure and outdoor recreation</li><li>• Active travel</li><li>• Environmental Health</li><li>• Community Development</li><li>• Neighbourhood Environment</li><li>• Good Relations</li><li>• Leisure Strategy</li><li>• Placemaking</li></ul>

Existing KPI Number	Performance Measures Should include improvement actions outlined in Section 4 and relevant measures both existing and new.	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service-led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcome	Corporate Priority	KPI to be included in Performance Improvement Plan	2025/26 Reporting						
							2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Target	2024/25 YTD End of Q3	2025/26 Target	Reporting end of ½ yearly target	Reporting end of 2 <sup>nd</sup> ½ yearly target	Cumulative/ Fixed
EC.07.RU.01	% Spend against budget	Mandatory	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	No	86%	100%	85%	100%	Yes	100%	Fixed
EC.07.RU.02	% Staff attendance	Mandatory	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	No	83%	94%	84%	95%	95%	95%	Fixed
EC.07.RU.03	% of completed Employee Appraisals	Mandatory	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	No	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	Fixed
New	To develop/ work up a minimum of 5 projects aligned to the City/Town Masterplans and a minimum of 5 projects aligned to the Village Plans 2025-2035	Service Led	Year end	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	N/A (New KPI)	N/A (New KPI)	N/A (New KPI)	10	No	10	Cumulative
New	To deliver a minimum of 3 capital projects aligned to the City/Town Masterplans and a minimum of 3 capital projects	Service Led	Year end	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	N/A (New KPI)	N/A (New KPI)	N/A (New KPI)	6	No	6	Cumulative

Existing KPI Number	Performance Measures Should include improvement actions outlined in Section 4 and relevant measures both existing and new.	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service-led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcome	Corporate Priority	KPI to be included in Performance Improvement Plan	2025/26 Reporting						
							2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Target	2024/25 YTD End of Q3	2025/26 Target	Reporting end of ½ yearly target	Reporting end of 2 <sup>nd</sup> ½ yearly target	Cumulative/Fixed
	aligned to the Village Plans 2025 – 2035												
EC.03.RU.04	To assess and report on the outputs from the each of the 5 annual Chamber of Commerce Business Plans and grant award. 6 monthly progress reporting followed by completion evaluation report.	Service Led	6 monthly	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	5	5	5	5	Yes	5	Cumulative
New	To develop and launch a capital grant scheme for vacant or derelict properties aimed at transforming vacant properties into vibrant spaces, fostering redevelopment, boosting the local economy and increasing the non-domestic rate base	Service Led	Year end	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A	January 2026	No	Yes	Fixed
New	Completion and evaluation of the Covid Recovery Small Settlements Programme to include 5 capital schemes, 2 working-up schemes, and 2 grant schemes.	Service Led	Year end	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	N/A (New KPI)	N/A (New KPI)	N/A (New KPI)	9	No	9	Cumulative
EC.01.RU.12	To develop a master plan and outline business case towards the delivery of a business park at the former NIE site on the Balloo Road, Bangor	Service Led	Year end	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	N/A	Yes	No	March 2026	No	Yes	Fixed

Existing KPI Number	Performance Measures Should include improvement actions outlined in Section 4 and relevant measures both existing and new.	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service-led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcome	Corporate Priority	KPI to be included in Performance Improvement Plan	2025/26 Reporting						
							2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Target	2024/25 YTD End of Q3	2025/26 Target	Reporting end of ½ yearly target	Reporting end of 2 <sup>nd</sup> ½ yearly target	Cumulative/ Fixed
EC.01.RU.13	To commence Phase One of the development works to Marine Gardens and the McKee Clock Arena in keeping with the agreed Quality Specification as part of the Queens Parade redevelopment scheme – completion March 2026	Service Led	6 monthly	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	N/A	50%	0%	2 update reports	1	2	Cumulative
New	Develop the Bangor 2026 Art and Animation Placemaking Strategy (name TBC)	Service Led	Year end	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	Yes	Fixed
New	To develop a strategy to secure new private sector commercial investment in the Bangor Waterfront area	Service Led	Year end	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	Yes	Fixed
New	To oversee the design and commissioning processes of 3 art pieces for the Bangor waterfront area	Service Led	Year end	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	Yes	Fixed

## 7. What Services/ Activities will be stopped

Please add detail of KPI's that have previously been monitored that will no longer be reported on for 2025/26.  
An example is provided below.

What service/ activities will we be stopping/ changing in 2025/2026	Reason for stopping / changing activity	Savings	Impact on Performance	Impact on the Public	Impact on staffing
The delivery of the Portaferry Public Realm Project	Project completed and officially launched 30.10.24	N/A	N/A	N/A	Officer time has been reallocated to existing and new workloads
To commence a review of the Village Plans and agree with groups the key priorities and actions	Will be completed by 31.3.25. Village Plan 2025 – 2035 commences 1.4.25	N/A	N/A	N/A	Officer time has been reallocated to existing and new workloads
To create 2 new Village Partnership groups	North Down and Strangford Village Partnership groups established, first meetings held May 2024	N/A	N/A	A positive impact for rural residents since the establishment of these groups	Officer time has been reallocated to existing and new workloads

## 8. Reporting, Monitoring and Review

Provide detail below how this plan will be monitored and reviewed.

Monitoring Method	Frequency	Responsible Officer
Team Meetings	Monthly	Head of Service, SUMs
HoST	Quarterly	Head of Service
Full Team meeting	Bi-annual	Head of Service, SUMs
Standing Committee	Bi-annual	Head of Service and Director



Unclassified

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

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	06 March 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Place
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Strategic Capital Development
Date of Report	19 February 2025
File Reference	160127
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Strategic Capital Development Service Plan
Attachments	Appendix 1: Strategic Capital Development Draft Service Plan 2025 - 26

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 the Performance Planning and Management process as:

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

Not Applicable

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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.

Attached is the 2025-26 Service Plan for Strategic Capital Development in accordance with the Council's Performance Management Policy and Handbook.

Plans are intended to:

- Encourage compliance with the new legal, audit and operational context.
- Provide focus on direction.
- Facilitate alignment between Corporate, Service and individual plans and activities.
- Motivate and develop staff.
- Promote performance improvement, encourage innovation and share good practice.
- Encourage transparency of performance outcomes.
- Better enable us to recognise success and address underperformance.

The attached Plan:

- Has been developed to align with the objectives of the Big Plan (2017 – 2032) and the Corporate Plan 2024 – 2028 and has been developed in conjunction with staff, officers and management, and in consultation with key stakeholders where relevant.
- Sets out the objectives for the Service for 2025-26 and identifies the key performance indicators used to illustrate the level of achievement of each objective, and the targets that the Service will try to attain along with key actions required to do so.
- Is based on the agreed budget. It should be noted that, should there be significant changes in-year (e.g. due to Council decisions, budget revisions or changes to the PIP), the Plan may need to be revised.
- Will be reported to Committee on a six-monthly basis as undernoted.

Reference	Period	Reporting Month
Quarter 1 and Q2	April – September	December
Q3 and Q4	October – March	June

## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council approve the Service Plan.

# STRATEGIC CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

Service Plan: 01 April 2025 – 31 March 2026



**Ards and  
North Down**  
Borough Council

# APPROVALS

Prepared By	Peer Reviewed By	Approved By Director
Andrew Dadley	Stephen Daye	Brian Dorrian
Head of Strategic Capital Development	Head of Parks and Cemeteries	Interim Director of Place
15/11/2025	20/11/2024	18/02/2025

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# 1 Introduction to Service

Name of Service	Strategic Capital Development
Directorate	Place
Introduction and Reflection	<p><b>Vision Statement</b></p> <p>The Strategic Capital Development Service Plan will support the delivery of the <b>2024-2028 Corporate Plan's vision</b> of creating a sustainable borough by focusing on the three Corporate Priorities: economic, environmental and social sustainability which will assist in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Boosting Economic Growth:</b> Attracting businesses and generating employment within the Borough.</li><li>• <b>Reducing carbon emissions:</b> Advancing our transition towards a net zero future.</li><li>• <b>Increasing Social Inclusion:</b> Reducing inequalities and promoting social inclusion.</li></ul> <p><b>Mission Statement</b></p> <p><i>The Strategic Capital Development Service performs a key role in supporting, advising and providing strategic direction across all Council directorates in the successful delivery of Council's Strategic Capital Projects.</i></p> <p><b>Service &amp; Delivery Framework</b></p> <p>To effectively fulfil our role and deliver an efficient service we adopt a comprehensive and structured approach to support directorates, emphasising:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>I. <b>Project Prioritisation:</b> Contribute to the achievement of the economic, environmental and social corporate priorities through the prioritisation of capital projects, creating placemaking opportunities to support and attract new businesses increasing footfall in the Borough and secure Best Value for Money (BVfM) for stakeholders.</li><li>II. <b>Structured Project Delivery:</b> Utilising best practice tools and techniques recognised by Central Government, HM Treasury and Project Delivery Professionals, such as the Five Case Model, NEC Contracts, PRINCE 2, the Capital Handbook, MAG Design Reviews, Stakeholder Engagement, Community Participation, Equality and Sustainability Screening, and lessons learned from post project evaluations.</li><li>III. <b>Funding Partnerships:</b> Actively provide support and guidance to Council Directorates and Service Units during the application</li></ol>

process to secure funding from various public sector departments and external sources to deliver our strategic capital projects to drive the economy and attract new visitors, businesses, and residents.

- IV. **Innovation & Technology:** Strive to become a high-performing organisation by embracing technology, implementing innovative solutions, and ensuring officers are well trained and supplied with the necessary resources to deliver exceptional service.
- V. **Robust Governance:** Implementing and promoting robust governance procedures across Council Directorates, emphasising the importance of risk management to effectively manage the complex and challenging situations that arise in the delivery of capital projects within Local Government and the Public Sector.

**Reflection 2024 - 2025**

Strategic Capital Development has embraced the projects it has been involved in over the last year demonstrating commitment and collaboration that have led to key successes. Some notable accomplishments include:

- **Ward Park:** The successful delivery and completion of the desilting works within budget, allowing progress to the next phase, where contractor procurement is currently underway and on track for the larger Ward Park redevelopment.
- **Portaferry Public Realm:** The successful delivery and completion of the works significantly under budget, allowing reallocation of surplus funding to other small settlements schemes within the Borough. The project has been well received by the local residents and business communities.
- **Bangor Waterfront:** Following the appointment of the Integrated Consultant Teams (ICT) for both BYC Watersports Centre in May 2024 and Pickie Fun Park in August 2024, momentum is building on the Bangor Waterfront Redevelopment.
- **Newtownards Citizens Hub:** Following a strong response at the initial PQQ Stage with thirteen submissions, eight candidates have been successfully shortlisted to progress to the ITT stage. The design team contract award is expected in early 2025.
- **Civic and Office Rationalisation:** Significant progress has been made in developing the performance specification and brief for the future of the Council's Estate. This detailed and politically significant analysis has included the identification of a Council approved location for any new accommodation and the implementation of an office rationalisation programme optimising current assets and resources. These efforts align with our corporate objectives of becoming an environmentally sustainable and high-performing organisation.

- **Cross Directorate Collaboration:** The successful ongoing initiative of the Capital Projects Advisory Group (CPAG), chaired by the Head of Strategic Capital Development, continues to enable comprehensive engagement and synergy across all Council Services. CPAG facilitates the sharing of information about work at hand, and lessons learned on all current and planned Capital Works.
- **Capital Sustainability Policy:** The recognition of the Council objective to become more environmentally sustainable and resilient has led to the drafting of a Capital Sustainability Policy promoting sustainable practices in project delivery, has been undertaken by the Head of Strategic Capital Development and is to be adopted by all directorates.
- **Progress Overview (all projects):** The following list of projects highlights the extent to which Strategic Capital Development's Service is intrinsic to creating a vibrant, attractive and sustainable borough for our citizens:
  1. Portaferry Public Realm Scheme – Complete.
  2. Ward Park: Pond de-silting Works – Complete.
  3. Ward Park: Redevelopment Works – Contractor procurement in progress.
  4. Greenways Newtownards to Bangor – Contractor appointed.
  5. Greenways Comber to Newtownards – Awaiting planning approval.
  6. Bangor Waterfront: BYC Watersports Centre – Design Team appointed.
  7. Bangor Waterfront: Pickie Fun Park – Design Team appointed.
  8. Bangor Waterfront: Urban Waterfront & Public Realm – Design Team Procurement in Progress.
  9. Bangor Waterfront: Marina Wetside Facilities – Brief Development in progress.
  10. Bangor Waterfront: Court House, Phase II – Brief Development in progress.
  11. Whitespots Country Park – Design Team appointed.
  12. Civic and Office Rationalisation – Site shortlisting complete with Brief Development in progress.
  13. Newtownards Citizen Hub – Design Team Procurement in Progress.
  14. Cemetery Provision – Site selection progressing.
  15. Portavogie 3G Pitch – Awaiting planning approval.
  16. Multi Use 3G Pitch Ards Peninsula – Design Team appointed.
  17. Donaghadee Sports Facilities – Business Case completed.
  18. Digital Innovation Hub – Awaiting OBC approval and lands negotiations.
  19. Gateway Project – Initiating a Brief and Feasibility Study.



	<div><div>Lessons Learned</div><div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Early Land Acquisition:</b> Prioritise early land acquisition to streamline project timelines, reducing potential delays and ensuring timely project execution.</li><li>• <b>Proactive Planning Applications:</b> Pre-empt and front-load planning applications to mitigate delays caused by response times from statutory consultees, ensuring smoother and more efficient project progression. Ensure Red Line is well defined and future proofed.</li><li>• <b>Consistent Stakeholder Engagement:</b> Maintain continuous and proactive stakeholder engagement by the Council, Consultants and Contractors throughout the design and construction phases, as successfully demonstrated in the Portaferry Public Realm Project.</li><li>• <b>Clarity &amp; Accountability in Selection Processes:</b> Ensure transparency with elected members when identifying preferred options, considering time, cost, and risk factors.</li></ul></div></div>
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## 2 Context, Challenges and Key Assumptions

### 2.1 PESTLE Analysis

<b>Political</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Change of Westminster Government may impact available funding.</li> <li>2. Availability of Capital Funding from NI Executive and Government Departments creating delays in obtaining Business Case and Funding approvals from potential partners e.g. DoE and Libraries NI.</li> <li>3. Ineffective/delayed decision making by Departments significantly impacting on project delivery, such as Departmental requests for excessive level of detail within Business Cases introducing unnecessary delay, financial and resource pressures.</li> <li>4. Aligning with Central Government policies to secure funding has and can require Council to develop projects at risk to an advanced stage of delivery.</li> <li>5. Risk of the Stormont Executive collapsing impacting on Council's current and future Capital ambitions.</li> <li>6. Retraction of Elected Member support of Community support of prioritised Capital portfolio and ambitions.</li> </ol>
<b>Economical</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Financial impact of inflation impacting Council's current and future Capital ambitions.</li> <li>2. Challenging spend profiles and delivery timescales dictated by external funders.</li> </ol>
<b>Social</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Erosion of Community support for the implementation of the Council's Capital portfolio and ambitions.</li> </ol>
<b>Technological</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Central Government and project partners policies and protocols relating to information sharing hindering effective collaboration.</li> </ol>
<b>Legal</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Protracted land negotiations delaying delivery of capital projects.</li> <li>2. Transition to the Procurement Act in February 2025.</li> <li>3. Legal challenges arising during the procurement and planning stages.</li> <li>4. Delayed response times from Statutory Consultees and requests for excessive detail beyond what is reasonably required.</li> </ol>
<b>Environmental</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Council's corporate commitment to become a Sustainable Borough, will require a holistic assessment of whole life costs which may require a higher initial capital investment to facilitate a significant and sustainable reduction in operational cost.</li> <li>2. Increasing standards in Environmental legislation impacting costs and timescales of project delivery.</li> </ol>

## 2.2 SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Experienced &amp; Committed Team:</b> The Service benefits from a dedicated, diverse team with a broad range of skills and expertise.</li> <li>• <b>Proven Track Record:</b> Strong history of delivering complex projects, demonstrating reliable leadership, communication, and risk management.</li> <li>• <b>Collaborative &amp; Strategic Alignment:</b> Effective cross-functional collaboration and strong relationships with internal and external stakeholders.</li> <li>• <b>Adaptability &amp; Innovation:</b> Ability to adapt and think outside the box to solve problems.</li> <li>• <b>Clear Methodologies &amp; Governance:</b> Well-established project management methodologies and strong project governance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Scope Creep:</b> Tendency to accept tasks outside the remit of the Service Unit.</li> <li>• <b>Resource Constraints:</b> Limited resources may impact the ability to manage multiple projects simultaneously.</li> <li>• <b>Dependency on Individuals:</b> Reliance on specific individuals for critical knowledge or skills creates a risk if they become unavailable.</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Corporate Priorities:</b> Opportunity to improve / enhance the delivery of the Corporate Plan and high-quality projects through innovative and sustainable capital delivery.</li> <li>• <b>Cross-Service Collaboration:</b> Forging partnerships with other departments and external bodies to enhance project outcomes.</li> <li>• <b>Sustainability &amp; Innovation:</b> Opportunities to lead in sustainable practices and net-zero aspirations aligned with environmental goals (e.g. BREEAM and Passivhaus).</li> <li>• <b>Social Value:</b> Incorporation of social value initiatives within the delivery of all capital projects.</li> <li>• <b>Technology:</b> Leveraging new technologies to improve project efficiency and effectiveness</li> <li>• <b>Continuous Professional Development:</b> Investment in certifications and training will enhance team capabilities and succession opportunities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Complexity of Capital Delivery:</b> Challenges associated with managing complex capital projects.</li> <li>• <b>Statutory Consultee Delays:</b> Potential delays caused by statutory consultees during the planning process.</li> <li>• <b>Procurement Challenges:</b> Legal challenges and delays during the procurement process.</li> <li>• <b>Reliance on External Funding:</b> Dependence on external funding sources, which may be uncertain.</li> <li>• <b>Budget Pressures:</b> Inflation and other financial pressures impacting project budgets.</li> <li>• <b>Political Influences:</b> Political pressures or decisions that could adversely affect project delivery.</li> <li>• <b>Resource Pressures:</b> Inadequate staffing levels to maintain quality of Service Delivery</li> <li>• <b>Regulatory Changes:</b> Potential changes in regulations that could affect project timelines and costs.</li> </ul>

### 3 Strategic Objectives and Collaboration

Our Service plays a pivotal role in the realisation of the key projects outlined in the ANDBC Corporate Plan, directly contributing to all seven of our strategic outcomes.

Through our structured approach to the delivery of the Capital Projects Portfolio, we support Council in driving outcomes that encourage community engagement, environmental sustainability, economic growth, vibrant and attractive spaces, inclusive communities, and opportunities for health and activity, in line with our Economic, Environmental, and Social priorities.

By adopting established project management frameworks, embracing technology, and ensuring robust risk management across all projects, our Service fosters an efficient and motivated environment aiming to deliver consistent high-quality outcomes across all projects. By sharing best practice and lessons learned with colleagues, we contribute to our goal of being a high-performing organisation.

Strategic Objectives	Collaboration Required
<b>Deliver the Capital Projects Portfolio</b>	
Successfully support the delivery of Council’s portfolio of capital projects that align with Council’s corporate priorities, thereby fostering placemaking and securing value for stakeholders.	All Council Directorates, Service Units, External Funding Partners, Community and Key Project Stakeholders.
<b>Strengthen Funding and Strategic Partnerships</b>	
Support the efforts of Council Directorates and Service Units in securing funding from external sources and cultivating partnerships that support the Corporate Plan.	All Council Directorates, Service Units and External Partners.

## 4 Service Improvement

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Service development/improvement 2025/26?	What will this improve?	Rationale	Responsible Officer(s)	Who do we need to help us?
<p><b>Enhancing Sustainability:</b> Our Service has drafted a Sustainability Policy for Council to implement best practice and ensure that all future projects are planned and implemented with a strong emphasis on sustainability. Seeking opportunities to improve sustainability across new and existing assets, aligns with the Corporate Plan vision as we transition towards our Net Zero Targets.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategic Effectiveness <input type="checkbox"/> Service Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Service Availability <input type="checkbox"/> Fairness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Efficiency <input type="checkbox"/> Innovation	<p><b>Climate Change Commitment:</b> The Council's established commitment to addressing climate change requires guidance and policies to achieve our net zero targets.</p> <p><b>Long-Term Cost Savings:</b> Sustainable practices often lead to long-term cost savings through energy efficiency, reduced waste, and lower operational costs.</p> <p><b>Public &amp; Stakeholder Expectations:</b> Increasingly, residents, businesses, and other stakeholders expect proactive measures towards sustainability and environmental stewardship.</p> <p><b>Regulatory Compliance:</b> Anticipating stricter environmental regulations and standards underscores the need for a formal policy to ensure compliance and avoid potential penalties. By drafting and implementing this Sustainability Policy, we are positioning the Council to lead by example in environmental stewardship and meet our climate and sustainability goals.</p>	HoS	CLT and all Council Directorates and Service Units

Service development/ improvement 2025/26?	What will this improve?	Rationale	Responsible Officer(s)	Who do we need to help us?
<b>Professional Development, Training, and Accreditation within the Service:</b> To align with the Council's ambition to be a high performing organisation, we aim to enhance the skills and knowledge of our team.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategic Effectiveness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Service Availability <input type="checkbox"/> Fairness <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Efficiency <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Innovation	<p>This improvement involves continuing in-house training, attending industry events, and attaining professional qualifications through accredited courses.</p> <p>By prioritising these aspects, we are aligning with our strategic objectives and enhancing our overall service quality. Creating an environment where employees feel valued, empowered, and motivated allows us to deliver higher-quality outcomes, improve cross-functional collaboration, and effectively manage complex projects.</p> <p>Key benefits include:</p> <p><b>Skill Enhancement:</b> Keeping our team updated with the latest industry standards and practices improves service delivery and project outcomes.</p> <p><b>Knowledge Sharing:</b> Participation in industry events facilitates the exchange of ideas and best practices, fostering innovation.</p> <p><b>Accreditation:</b> Attaining professional qualifications boosts credibility and ensures our staff meet high professional standards.</p> <p><b>Employee Growth:</b> The annual appraisal process has indicated a strong</p>	HoS, SUMs and Officers	HR & OD

Service development/ improvement 2025/26?	What will this improve?	Rationale	Responsible Officer(s)	Who do we need to help us?
		<p>desire for professional growth opportunities. Investing in professional development motivates staff and supports career progression, leading to higher job satisfaction and retention. Additionally, offering such opportunities helps attract high-calibre talent to the organisation.</p> <p><b>Organisational Excellence:</b> A well-trained, accredited team enhances overall organisational performance and efficiency.</p>		

## 5 Service Risk Register

Service Risk Register should align with the Corporate Risk Management Strategy.

When completing your Service Plan you must review and consider your current Service Risk Register. Please confirm this has been completed.

Yes

## 6 Key Activities (KPIs) for 2025/26

KPIs aligned to the 7 Outcomes of the Corporate Plan 2024-2028, detailed below:

1	An engaged Borough with citizens and businesses who have opportunities to influence the delivery of services, plans and investment
2	An environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough meeting our net zero carbon targets
3	A thriving and sustainable economy
4	A vibrant, attractive, sustainable Borough for citizens, visitors, businesses and investors
5	Safe, welcoming and inclusive communities that are flourishing
6	Opportunities for people to be active and healthy
7	Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation

In addition to the outcomes the KPI should align with one of the three **Corporate Priorities** of the **Corporate Plan**, detailed below:

<b>Corporate Priority 1</b>	<b>Economic</b>	Increasing economic growth by attracting more jobs and businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Support</li> <li>• Attracting Investment</li> <li>• Rural Regeneration</li> <li>• Labour Market Partnership</li> <li>• Sustainable Tourism</li> <li>• Town and City Regeneration</li> <li>• Vacant to Vibrant Scheme</li> <li>• Innovation Hub</li> </ul>
<b>Corporate Priority 2</b>	<b>Environmental</b>	Reduce carbon emissions as we transition to net zero	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waste Management</li> <li>• Digital and Physical Infrastructure</li> <li>• Estate Management</li> <li>• Tree Planting Strategy</li> <li>• Management of Outdoor Spaces</li> <li>• Local Development Plan</li> <li>• Litter Control and Enforcement</li> <li>• Sustainable Waste Resources Strategy</li> <li>• Sustainable Energy Management Strategy</li> </ul>
<b>Corporate Priority 3</b>	<b>Social</b>	Improving wellbeing through social inclusion and reduced inequality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sport, leisure and outdoor recreation</li> <li>• Active travel</li> <li>• Environmental Health</li> <li>• Community Development</li> <li>• Neighbourhood Environment</li> <li>• Good Relations</li> <li>• Leisure Strategy</li> <li>• Placemaking</li> </ul>



Existing KPI Number	Performance Measures Should include improvement actions outlined in Section 4 and relevant measures both existing and new.	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service-led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcome	Corporate Priority	KPI to be included in Performance Improvement Plan	2025/26 Reporting						
							2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Target	2024/25 YTD End of Q3	2025/26 Target	Reporting end of Q2 Target	Reporting end of Q4 Target	Cumulative/ Fixed
EC.07.CD.01	% Spend against budget	Mandatory	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	97.78%	100%	104%	100%	100%	100%	Fixed
EC.07.CD.02	% Staff attendance	Mandatory	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	99.04%	94%	97.17%	95%	94.5%	95%	Fixed
EC.07.CD.03	% of completed Employee Appraisals	Mandatory	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	100%	100%	100%	100%	N/A	100%	Fixed
EC.03.CD.04	Support the delivery of the Strategic Capital Projects Portfolio	Service Led	6 monthly	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	No	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	Cumulative
EC.07.CD.05	Enhancing Sustainability	Service-led	Year-end	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A	100%	N/A	100%	Fixed
EC.07.CD.06	Professional Development and accreditation	Service Led	6 monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	N/A	4 courses / events	2 courses / events	140 Hours CPD	70 Hours CPD	140 Hours CPD	Cumulative

## 7 What Services / Activities will be stopped

Please add detail of KPI's that have previously been monitored that will no longer be reported on for 2025/26.  
An example is provided below.

What service/ activities will we be stopping/ changing in 2025/2026	Reason for stopping / changing activity	Savings	Impact on Performance	Impact on the Public	Impact on staffing
N/A					

## 8 Reporting, Monitoring and Review

Provide detail below how this plan will be monitored and reviewed.

Monitoring Method	Frequency	Responsible Officer
Team Meeting	Monthly	HoST/ SUMs/ Line Managers
HoST	Quarterly	HoST
Standing Committee	6 Monthly	HoST
Performance Improvement Plan	Annually (June)	Transformation Manager
Self-Assessment Report	Annually (September)	Transformation Manager

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	06 March 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Prosperity
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Economic Development (Interim)
Date of Report	21 January 2025
File Reference	160127
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Economic Development Service Plan 2025-2026
Attachments	App 1: ED Service Plan 2025-2026

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 the Performance Planning and Management process as:

- Community Plan – published every 10-15 years
- Corporate Plan – published every 4 years (Corporate Plan 2024 - 2028 in operation)
- Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) – published annually
- Service Plan – 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.

Not Applicable

Attached is the 2025-26 Service Plan for Economic Development in accordance with the Council’s Performance Management Policy and Handbook.

Plans are intended to:

- Encourage compliance with the new legal, audit and operational context.
- Provide focus on direction.
- Facilitate alignment between Corporate, Service and individual plans and activities.
- Motivate and develop staff.
- Promote performance improvement, encourage innovation and share good practice.
- Encourage transparency of performance outcomes.
- Better enable us to recognise success and address underperformance.

The attached Plan:

- Has been developed to align with the objectives of the Big Plan (2017 – 2032) and the Corporate Plan 2024 – 2028 and has been developed in conjunction with staff, officers and management, and in consultation with key stakeholders where relevant.
- Sets out the objectives for the Service for 2025-26 and identifies the key performance indicators used to illustrate the level of achievement of each objective, and the targets that the Service will try to attain along with key actions required to do so.
- Is based on the agreed budget. It should be noted that, should there be significant changes in-year (e.g. due to Council decisions, budget revisions or changes to the PIP), the Plan may need to be revised.
- Will be reported to Committee on a six-monthly basis as undernoted.

Reference	Period	Reporting Month
Quarter 1 and Q2	April – September	December
Q3 and Q4	October – March	June

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Council approve the Service Plan.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Service Plan: 01 April 2025 – 31 March 2026



**Ards and  
North Down**  
Borough Council

# APPROVALS

Prepared By	Peer Reviewed By	Approved By Director
Alison Stobie	Sharon Mahaffy	Ann McCullough
Head of Economic Development (Interim)	Head of Tourism	Director of Prosperity
07/01/2025	07/02/2025	14/02/2025

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## Introduction to Service

Name of Service	<i>Economic Development</i>
Directorate	<b>Prosperity</b>
Introduction and Reflection	<p>The Economic Development (ED) Service includes two service units: Economic Development and Development Projects which work to support and impact the sustainable economic growth and wellbeing of the Borough. The Service reflects and aligns with the corporate vision specifically in areas outlined in Plans and strategies below.</p> <p><b>Community Plan (The Big Plan)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outcome 4: All people in Ards and North Down benefit from a prosperous and inclusive economy.</li> </ul> <p><b>Corporate Plan 2024-2028</b></p> <p><b>Outcome 3</b> A thriving and sustainable economy</p> <p><b>Outcome 7</b> Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation</p> <p><b>Integrated Strategy for Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development 2018-2030 (ITRDS)</b> The ITRDS presents a coherent vision for the Borough in which the Economic Development Service plays a key role in the delivery of actions and key targets to realise a more prosperous and thriving Borough.</p>
	<p>While many businesses use the services of the Economic Development Service, many businesses remain unaware of what services are on offer. Work has been developed with the Borough Marketing team to raise the profile of AND as a place to invest. However, on a wider scale, we have not attracted new high growth businesses to the Borough due to resources and lack of co-ordinated services with other agencies and appropriate designated space. Going forward we will need to address this to have a wider impact on the economic growth of the Borough in order to grow the business base and, in time, increase the non-domestic rates in the Borough as identified by the Corporate Plan 2024-28.</p> <p>The Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) has demonstrated the importance of working across Directorates, especially within both Prosperity and Place. Some of the key learning is that, progressing the delivery of key projects, and achieving the outcomes for the region and the Borough, will involve allocating sufficient time and resources, partnership working (both internally and externally) and prioritising of tasks. We will need to ensure that we have the resources and expertise to deliver on requirements and take learnings from existing agreements to improve future arrangements.</p> <p>To ensure that we meet the targets set within the ITRDS and BRCD we will need to constantly review the impact of the services we provide. This is often a difficult task in year as not every intervention has a direct cause and immediate effect; often the results are longer term than can be captured in a one-year service plan or, contribute to elements which sustain a business, rather than hit headline achievements. We will need to ensure we get the balance right, with an outcome focus, and secure, where possible, multi-annual budgets to ensure that actions and their impact, as far as possible, can be measured in a meaningful way.</p>



# 1. Context, Challenges and Key Assumptions

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<b>Political</b>	<p>The political environment is relatively stable at this time and scanning ahead does not indicate any change in this status.</p> <p>Nationally the new Labour Government has identified tackling inactivity as a priority for action and this is likely to create opportunities at the NI level for additional funding and support for initiatives to tackle the economically inactivity in our communities. This is likely to have an impact on the future work of the Labour Market Partnership which sits in the Economic Development Service Unit.</p> <p>The Executive have also pointed out several priorities focusing on four main areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increasing the proportion of workers in “good jobs”</li> <li>2. Promote regional economic balance</li> <li>3. Raising low productivity</li> <li>4. Reducing carbon emissions</li> </ol>
<b>Economical</b>	<p>With new Ministerial positions now in place, economic priorities have been announced as above.</p> <p>The Draft Programme for Government 2024-2027 is out for consultation, and amongst other priorities, is seeking to create a globally competitive and sustainable economy.</p> <p>Development of the new Local Economic Partnerships.</p> <p>More specifically for Council, the Integrated Tourism Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy 2018-2030 (ITRDS) and new <i>Go Succeed</i> Service provide key economic targets in relation to job creation and productivity levels and will inform our plans as we go forward.</p> <p>The end of EU Funding and optimising new sources of funding such as UKSPF and PEACE Plus will be key to ensuring continuity of services and support for local businesses.</p>
<b>Social</b>	<p>In Ards and North Down we have an aging population and a high percentage of young people with no qualifications while equally ranking high in the percentage of those with qualifications of NVQ level 4 and above. In planning our actions, resulting from the ITRDS, we will need to address issues to ensure we have a qualified and able workforce which can meet our businesses’ needs right across the Borough.</p> <p>The work being done through the local Labour Market Partnership will help to address some of the issues businesses face in filling vacancies, while helping to upskill and create new pathways for those seeking entry into employment.</p> <p>The way people work and spend their income has changed since the pandemic and despite inflation falling to a level more in line with Government’s targets, consumer confidence still remains cautious.</p> <p>Young people and the long-term economically inactive may be hardest hit by unemployment so we will work with partners, employers and government to deliver the appropriate support.</p>
<b>Technological</b>	<p>Technology is constantly changing the way people engage with services and want to receive information.</p>

	<p>This will impact on how we plan, deliver and communicate with our service users and how we help our businesses to be agile and adapt to the changes in order to grow.</p> <p>The lack of physical and digital infrastructure across the Borough presents issues that still need to be addressed.</p> <p>The requirements for use of digital technologies have increased dramatically and with increasing numbers of employees expected to be working on a hybrid basis, we will need to address digital literacy, capability and security, while ensuring as many people as possible across the Borough get access to fast fibre broadband.</p> <p>The impact that AI may have on businesses.</p> <p>The majority of services that we provide to businesses, such as Go Succeed is heavily reliant on digital technology and this has implications in the way we manage the service and what support we need to do so efficiently.</p>
<b>Legal</b>	<p>Ensuring best practice and value for money means that we will ensure that we comply with all regulations regarding procurement of goods and services and that the training of staff and members is kept up to date, especially in relation to new legislation such as GDPR, new regulations arising from Brexit such as Subsidy Control and the move to include more social clauses in contracts.</p> <p>The impact of the Electronic Travel Authorisation on local tourism and hospitality businesses.</p>

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cohesive and capable team with ability to adapt to changing needs</li> <li>• Ability to leverage funds to optimise support delivered</li> <li>• Good partnership working to deliver results</li> <li>• Horizon scanning to capture latest trends to keep delivery fresh</li> <li>• Relationship building with business base</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing delivery demands/projects with finite resources</li> <li>• Pace of projects and ensuring all team members kept up to speed in a timely manner</li> <li>• Time consuming nature of Government Departments demands on reporting mechanisms against resources</li> <li>• Understanding and use of evolving technologies</li> <li>• Declining business base</li> <li>• Limited number of businesses able to scale</li> <li>• Limited investment, marketing &amp; incentives</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New sources of funding</li> <li>• Use of Digital technologies</li> <li>• Belfast Region City Deal</li> <li>• ED Partnerships</li> <li>• Local Economic Partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uncertainty of funding sources and budgets</li> <li>• Short term funding</li> <li>• Delays in the allocation of funds and issue of Letters of Offer</li> <li>• Increasing delivery demands and competing priorities</li> <li>• Rising costs</li> <li>• Lack of inward investment</li> <li>• Limited human resources to deliver additional projects</li> </ul>

## 2. Strategic Objectives and Collaboration

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Within our new Corporate Plan 2024-2028 we have a vision of *A Sustainable Borough*. One where Economic, Environmental and Social Wellbeing are linked and in which we, as a Council, make decisions about policies, services, investments and resources that balance the demands of each.

By doing so we can positively impact the people and the assets in our Borough and play a part in addressing some of the world's most pressing problems e.g. poverty, inequality, depletion of natural resources, climate change, economic growth etc.

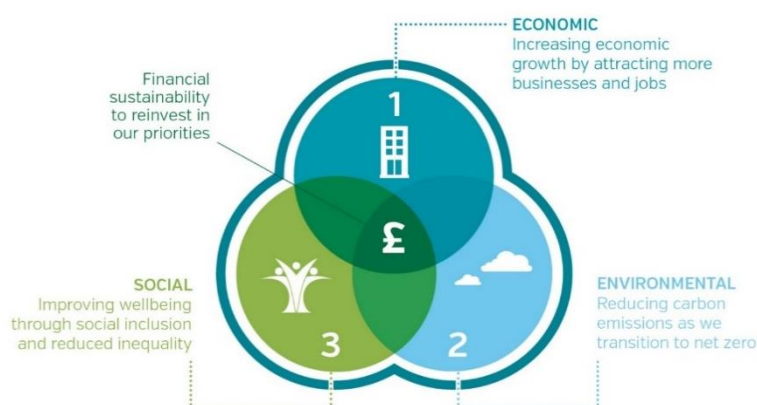
In brief, *A Sustainable Borough* is one where we make sure that we think about economic, social AND environmental impacts when we make decisions.

The three **priorities** we will be delivering against are:

- **ECONOMIC** - increasing economic growth by attracting more jobs and businesses
- **ENVIRONMENTAL** - reducing carbon emissions as we transition to net zero
- **SOCIAL** - improving wellbeing through social inclusion and reduced inequality

These priorities align with the three pillars of sustainable development. They are ambitious, and we will need to work in partnership and collaborate to achieve them.

The diagram below summarises our three Corporate Priorities and shows how they all link together. As you will see at the heart of the diagram is our commitment to address the key issue of our financial sustainability – as without that, we will be less able to deliver on all our ambitions.



We have also identified **seven outcomes** that we want to achieve to meet our priorities. They are (not in order of priority):

1. An engaged Borough with citizens and businesses who have opportunities to influence the delivery of services, plans and investment
2. An environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough meeting our net zero carbon targets
3. A thriving and sustainable economy
4. A vibrant, attractive, sustainable Borough for citizens, visitors, businesses and investors
5. Safe, welcoming and inclusive communities that are flourishing
6. Opportunities for people to be active and healthy
7. Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation

The table below reflects the key projects/ objectives that will be achieved by our Service over the next 12 months, and the key Services across the Council that will be collaborated with as part of the process. In addition, each objective is linked to the Corporate Plan priorities and outcomes.

Strategic Objective	Collaboration Required	Corporate Plan Priority	Corporate Plan Outcome
<b>Economic Development</b>			
Identification and scoping future business sectors within the Ards and North Down Borough Council area to enhance the business base.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regeneration</li> <li>• Planning</li> <li>• Finance</li> <li>• Assets and Property</li> <li>• Transformation</li> </ul>	Economic	1, 2, 3 and 4
Establish Local Economic Partnerships (LEPs) in ANDBC area to develop and implement action plans for the next three financial years beginning in April 2025 with a budget of circa £1.38m per annum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LMP/Sustainability Officer/Manager Community Planning</li> <li>• Corporate Communications</li> <li>• Regeneration</li> <li>• Planning</li> <li>• Tourism</li> <li>• External: Department for the Economy</li> <li>• Invest Northern Ireland</li> <li>• Businesses representatives</li> <li>• FE College</li> <li>• DFE</li> <li>• INI</li> <li>• Local Enterprise Agencies</li> </ul>	Economic	1,2,3, and 4
<b>Development Projects</b>			
Develop the Innovation Hub project as part of the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD). This initiative aims to foster innovation and economic growth through strategic investments and partnerships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capital Projects Unit</li> <li>• Procurement</li> <li>• Corporate Communications</li> <li>• LPS</li> <li>• Consultancy</li> <li>• BRCD PMO</li> <li>• DfE</li> <li>• DoF</li> <li>• Invest Northern Ireland</li> <li>• RFL</li> <li>• Private sector stakeholders</li> <li>• Local residents/businesses</li> <li>• Planning</li> <li>• SERC</li> <li>• Private sector</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	Economic	1, 3 and 4
Development of the Mini Digi Hubs project to utilise the PEACE PLUS investment to develop the Comber Community Centre.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Communications</li> <li>• Capital Projects Unit</li> <li>• Community Development</li> <li>• East Border Region/Partners</li> <li>• SEUPB</li> <li>• Private sector</li> <li>• Assets and Property</li> </ul>		1, 2, 3 and 4

To work with internal and external stakeholders to develop the elements of the BRCD Bangor Waterfront development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Capital Projects Unit</li><li>• Private operator</li><li>• Tourism</li><li>• Assets and Property</li><li>• Planning</li><li>• Corporate Communications</li><li>• Regulatory Services</li><li>• TNI</li><li>• Private sector stakeholders</li><li>• Statutory agencies (Crown Estate)</li><li>• Local Residents (consultation)</li><li>• BRCD Partners</li></ul>		1, 2, 3 and 4
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### 3. Service Improvement

Service development/improvement 2025/26?	Which of the specified aspects will this improve?	Rationale	Responsible Officer(s)	Who do we need to help us? (Internal and/ or External partners) Please specify
Sub-Regional Action Plans - Creation of a Local Economic Partnership in each Council area.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Effectiveness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Service Availability <input type="checkbox"/> Fairness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input type="checkbox"/> Efficiency <input type="checkbox"/> Innovation	<p>Council, with Funding from DfE, will be establishing a Local Economic Partnership with the aim of administering a sub-regional fund for 3 years. 11 LEPs will be created. The ANDBC LEP will bid for funding for projects that may support the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Productivity</li> <li>• Business rate base</li> <li>• Economic inactivity</li> <li>• Collaboration across government bodies</li> <li>• Weak sector activities</li> <li>• Reduction of greenhouse gases/sustainability</li> </ul>	ED Manager/Head of ED	<p><b>Internal:</b> LMP Sustainability Officer/Manager Community Planning Corporate Communications Regeneration Planning <b>External:</b> Department for the Economy Invest Northern Ireland Businesses representatives FE College DfE INI Local Enterprise Agencies</p>
Implementation of the new LMP Action Plan for 2025-27	<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Effectiveness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Service Availability <input type="checkbox"/> Fairness <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input type="checkbox"/> Efficiency <input type="checkbox"/> Innovation	<p>Council, with funding from DfC, has established the local Labour Market Partnership (LMP), based on the Strategic Assessment and needs identified across AND.</p> <p>A request has been made for a multi-annual budget to fund a two-year action plan based on the revised local strategic assessment carried out this year. This new two-year plan will provide continuity to develop further actions that have started in 2024/25 but will also consider new actions aimed at providing training and employment opportunities to those further removed from the labour market and provide a pipeline to the Go Succeed Service.</p>	ED Manager/ LMP Manager	<p><b>Internal:</b> Business Support Team Community Planning Community Development <b>External:</b> Business representatives Government department FE Colleges Voluntary sector representatives</p>

Service development/improvement 2025/26?	Which of the specified aspects will this improve?	Rationale	Responsible Officer(s)	Who do we need to help us? (Internal and/ or External partners) Please specify
Review and continuation of the NI Enterprise Support Service 'Go Succeed' to create jobs	<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Effectiveness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Service Availability <input type="checkbox"/> Fairness <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input type="checkbox"/> Efficiency <input type="checkbox"/> Innovation	Council has a statutory target for job creation through business start activities and provides support services to businesses to assist growth and investment. The current SPF contract is coming to an end on 31 <sup>st</sup> March 25 and we are seeking an extension of possibly two years to continue to deliver the service and improve on it by following the recommendation of the evaluation process that is currently on-going.	ED Manager	<b>Internal:</b> Corporate Communications LMP Tourism Community Development <b>External:</b> Other councils PMO in Belfast City Council SPF DfE
To develop the Innovation Hub project to procure an operator to work with the ICT design team	<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Effectiveness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Service Availability <input type="checkbox"/> Fairness <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input type="checkbox"/> Efficiency <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Innovation	By leveraging £8.921m of BRCD funds, innovation hub will address the market failure of a lack of support and workspace for the screen industries cluster in the Hollywood area	Head of ED/Development Projects Manager/Creative and Digital Development Officer	<b>Internal:</b> Development Projects Capital Projects Unit Corporate Communications Procurement Finance <b>External:</b> Belfast City Council DfE DoF INI SERC Private sector
PEACE Plus– Implementation of the Mini Digi Hubs project at Comber Community Centre to include the appointment of an officer to deliver on investment and drive the project.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Effectiveness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Service Availability <input type="checkbox"/> Fairness <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input type="checkbox"/> Efficiency <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Innovation	Fully funded PEACE Plus project delivering on capital development for Comber Community Centre and revenue based animation in the following year	Head of ED/Development Projects Manager/Creative and Digital Development Officer	<b>Internal:</b> Community Development Assets and property Capital Projects Unit <b>External:</b> East Border Region Peace Plus EBR project partners Private sector
To work with the new operator to develop Pickie Funpark to ICT as part of BRCD project	<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Effectiveness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Service Availability <input type="checkbox"/> Fairness <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability	As part of the BRCD and Bangor Waterfront Redevelopment, Pickie is one of the five elements of the redevelopment.	Head of ED/Development Projects Manager	<b>Internal:</b> Regeneration Finance Capital Projects Unit Planning Procurement

Service development/ improvement 2025/26?	Which of the specified aspects will this improve?	Rationale	Responsible Officer(s)	Who do we need to help us? (Internal and/ or External partners) Please specify
	<input type="checkbox"/> Efficiency <input type="checkbox"/> Innovation			Corporate Communications Assets and Property <b>External:</b> Externally appointed Consultants Operator
To work with the relevant stakeholders to develop Bangor Marina and Harbour to ICT stage as part of BRCD project	<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Effectiveness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Service Availability <input type="checkbox"/> Fairness <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input type="checkbox"/> Efficiency <input type="checkbox"/> Innovation	As part of the BRCD and Bangor Waterfront Redevelopment, Bangor Marina and Harbour is one of the five elements of the redevelopment.	Head of ED/Development Projects Manager	<b>Internal:</b> Regeneration Finance Capital Projects Planning Procurement Finance Corporate Communications Assets and Property <b>External:</b> Externally appointed Consultants Operator



## 4. Service Risk Register

Service Risk Register should align with the Corporate Risk Management Strategy.

When completing your Service Plan you must review and consider your current Service Risk Register. Please confirm this has been completed.

**Yes**

## 5. Key Activities (KPIs) for 2025/26

KPIs should be aligned to the 7 Outcomes of the Corporate Plan 2024-2028, detailed below:

1	An engaged Borough with citizens and businesses who have opportunities to influence the delivery of services, plans and investment
2	An environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough meeting our net zero carbon targets
3	A thriving and sustainable economy
4	A vibrant, attractive, sustainable Borough for citizens, visitors, businesses and investors
5	Safe, welcoming and inclusive communities that are flourishing
6	Opportunities for people to be active and healthy
7	Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation

In addition to the outcomes the KPI should align with one of the three **Corporate Priorities** of the **Corporate Plan**, detailed below:

<b>Corporate Priority 1</b>	<b>Economic</b>	Increasing economic growth by attracting more jobs and businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Support</li> <li>• Attracting Investment</li> <li>• Rural Regeneration</li> <li>• Labour Market Partnership</li> <li>• Sustainable Tourism</li> <li>• Town and City Regeneration</li> <li>• Vacant to Vibrant Scheme</li> <li>• Innovation Hub</li> </ul>
<b>Corporate Priority 2</b>	<b>Environmental</b>	Reduce carbon emissions as we transition to net zero	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waste Management</li> <li>• Digital and Physical Infrastructure</li> <li>• Estate Management</li> <li>• Tree Planting Strategy</li> <li>• Management of Outdoor Spaces</li> <li>• Local Development Plan</li> <li>• Litter Control and Enforcement</li> <li>• Sustainable Waste Resources Strategy</li> <li>• Sustainable Energy Management Strategy</li> </ul>
<b>Corporate Priority 3</b>	<b>Social</b>	Improving wellbeing through social inclusion and reduced inequality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sport, leisure and outdoor recreation</li> <li>• Active travel</li> <li>• Environmental Health</li> <li>• Community Development</li> <li>• Neighbourhood Environment</li> <li>• Good Relations</li> <li>• Leisure Strategy</li> <li>• Placemaking</li> </ul>

Existing KPI Number	Performance Measures Should include improvement actions outlined in Section 4 and relevant measures both existing and new.	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service-led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcome	Corporate Priority	KPI to be included in Performance Improvement Plan	2025/26 Reporting						
							2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Target	2024/25 YTD End of Q3	2025/26 Target	Reporting end of Q2 Target	Reporting end of Q4 Target	Cumulative/ Fixed
	% Spend against budget	Mandatory	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	81.24%	100%	91.8%	100%	100%	100%	Fixed
	% Staff attendance	Mandatory	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	94.97%	94%	97%	95%	94.5%	95%	Fixed
	% of completed Employee Appraisals	Mandatory	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	N/A	100%	100%	100%	-	100%	Fixed
	Number of Jobs created through the Go Succeed Service	Statutory	6 monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	77	164	60	123	32	123	Cumulative
	Number of projects delivered through LMP Action Plan	Service Led	6 monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	12	12	4	12	4	12	Cumulative
	Development of an LEP action plan	Service led	Annual	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	N/A	N/A	Cumulative

Existing KPI Number	Performance Measures Should include improvement actions outlined in Section 4 and relevant measures both existing and new.	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service-led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcome	Corporate Priority	KPI to be included in Performance Improvement Plan	2025/26 Reporting						
							2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Target	2024/25 YTD End of Q3	2025/26 Target	Reporti ng end of Q2 Target	Reporting end of Q4 Target	Cumulative/ Fixed
				<input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7									
	Number of people benefitting from the Health and Wellbeing Initiative	Service Led	Annual	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	35	24	14	24	0	24	Cumulative
	Number of research assignments	Service Led	6 monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	105	75	54	75	30	75	Cumulative
	Number of surveys to identify needs and values of the ED and business support services	Service Led	Annual	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	1	1	1	1	0	1	Cumulative
	Innovation Hub – To develop the project to procure an operator.	Service Led	Annual	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	yes	1	1	1	1	0	1	Cumulative
	PEACE Plus– Implementation of the Digi Hubs project at Comber Community Centre	Service Led	Annual	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	0	0	1	1	0	1	Cumulative

Existing KPI Number	Performance Measures Should include improvement actions outlined in Section 4 and relevant measures both existing and new.	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service-led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcome	Corporate Priority	KPI to be included in Performance Improvement Plan	2025/26 Reporting						
							2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Target	2024/25 YTD End of Q3	2025/26 Target	Reporti ng end of Q2 Target	Reporting end of Q4 Target	Cumulative/ Fixed
	% draw down of Seal Sanctuary Funding from DAERA	Service Led	6 monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	Fixed
	To develop Bangor Marina and Harbour to ICT stage as part of BRCD project	Service Led	6 monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	0	0	0	1	0	1	Fixed
	To develop Pickie Funpark and Harbour to ICT stage as part of BRCD project	Service Led	6 monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	0	0	0	1	0	1	Fixed
	Number of businesses supported through DTFF	Service Led	6 monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	18	18	1	18	9	9	Cumulative

## 6. What Services/ Activities will be stopped

What service/ activities will we be stopping/ changing in 2025/2026	Reason for stopping / changing activity	Savings	Impact on Performance	Impact on the Public	Impact on staffing
EC.04.TO.03 Number of attendants at large scale events	Activity not planned for the coming year	£5,000	None – alternative activity planned	None – alternative activity planned	Staff time reallocated to other activity
EC03 ED07 - appointment of operator, Bangor Marina and Harbour	Activity complete	N/A	None	None	None
EC03 ED08 – appointment of operator, Pickie Fun Park	Activity complete	N/A	None	None	None
EC03 ED09 – approval of OBC for Innovation Hub	Activity complete	N/A	None	None	None

## 7. Reporting, Monitoring and Review

Monitoring Method	Frequency	Responsible Officer
Team Meeting	Monthly	HoST/ SUMs/ Line Managers
HoST	Quarterly	HoST
Standing Committee	6 Monthly	Directors and HoST
Performance Improvement Plan	Annually (30 <sup>th</sup> June)	Transformation Manager
Self-Assessment Report	Annually (30 <sup>th</sup> September)	Transformation Manager

Unclassified

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## ITEM 7

### Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	06 March 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Prosperity
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Tourism
Date of Report	19 February 2025
File Reference	TO/MAR4/160167
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Tourism Service Plan 2025/26
Attachments	Appendix 1 Tourism Service Plan 2025/26

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 the Performance Planning and Management process as:

- Community Plan – published every 10-15 years
- Corporate Plan – published every 4 years (Corporate Plan 2024 - 2028 in operation)
- Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) – published annually
- Service Plan – 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.

Not Applicable

Attached is the 2025-26 Service Plan for Tourism in accordance with the Council’s Performance Management Policy and Handbook.

Plans are intended to:

- Encourage compliance with the new legal, audit and operational context.
- Provide focus on direction.
- Facilitate alignment between Corporate, Service and individual plans and activities.
- Motivate and develop staff.
- Promote performance improvement, encourage innovation and share good practice.
- Encourage transparency of performance outcomes.
- Better enable us to recognise success and address underperformance.

The attached Plan:

- Has been developed to align with the objectives of the Big Plan (2017 – 2032) and the Corporate Plan 2024 – 2028 and has been developed in conjunction with staff, officers and management, and in consultation with key stakeholders where relevant.
- Sets out the objectives for the Service for 2025-26 and identifies the key performance indicators used to illustrate the level of achievement of each objective, and the targets that the Service will try to attain along with key actions required to do so.
- Is based on the agreed budget. It should be noted that, should there be significant changes in-year (e.g. due to Council decisions, budget revisions or changes to the PIP), the Plan may need to be revised.
- Will be reported to Committee on a six-monthly basis as undernoted.

Reference	Period	Reporting Month
Quarter 1 and Q2	April – September	December
Q3 and Q4	October – March	June

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Council approves the Service Plan.



# TOURISM

Service Plan: 01 April 2025 – 31 March 2026



**Ards and  
North Down**  
Borough Council

# APPROVALS

Prepared By	Peer Reviewed By	Approved By Director
Sharon Mahaffy	Alison Stobie	Ann McCullough
Head of Tourism	Head of Economic Development	Director of Prosperity
10/01/2025	13/02/2025	18/02/2025

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# Introduction to Service

Name of Service	<i>Tourism</i>
Directorate	<i>Prosperity</i>
Introduction and Reflection	<p>The Tourism Service consists of:</p> <p><b>Tourism Development</b> (Experience, Food and Drink Development, Industry support and Visitor Servicing); and <b>Tourism Events</b> (delivery of Council tourism events, management of third-party event grants and capacity building).</p> <p>We work closely with our colleagues in Borough Marketing to promote the destination.</p> <p>Our mission is to facilitate, sustainably grow and promote a sustainable tourism offering in the borough to benefit our businesses, communities, and visitors, focussing on key strengths that resonate with our identified markets, to increase the overall NI visitor market share and economic return to the Borough in line with the targets set by the Integrated Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy 2018-2030 (ITRDS). This aligns directly to the economic priority of the Corporate Plan 2024-28 and the outcomes which will result in 'a thriving and sustainable economy' and 'a vibrant, attractive sustainable borough for citizens, visitors, businesses and investors'.</p> <p><b>Key successes include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circa 75,000 attendees at direct delivered events at time of writing (93% of target at 81,000 - 2 events to complete) and the introduction of one new pilot event 'Shorelife Celebration' event adopting a shared venue hosting model.</li> <li>• Continuation of zero contamination rates at tourism events with 82.94% recycling rate for all events until end Sept.</li> <li>• Supporting externally organised events which have delivered 124,000 attendees/participants to date (economic return not finalised at time of writing).</li> <li>• The delivery of a shared trade PR focussed Food Trade and Consumer event 'TASTE at Clandeboye' supporting 30+ Food Network members and providing exposure to c.9000 attendees.</li> <li>• Attendance at 15 outreach venues at time of writing supporting 27,000 enquiries from visitors in total across all our VICs and outreach.</li> <li>• Securing £30,000 of funding to deliver Sustainable business programme in conjunction with TNI with 12 attendees and secured funding at £130,000 to deliver infrastructure enhancements at Burr Point.</li> <li>• Delivery of 11 experiences with 84% of tickets sold and 60% OoB (out of Borough) attendees and on 25.5% OoB attendees at events (at time of writing).</li> </ul> <p>The first set of Local Government District tourism results since 2019 was released by NISRA in August. Due to changes in methodology NISRA advises no data can be compared to previous years. £52m estimated visitor expenditure and 253,363 overnight trips was recorded for the borough in 2023. It would therefore be prudent to reassess the Borough's targets within the ITRDS at this juncture. It is apparent the correct balance of accommodation to support new tourism projects and encourage a greater number of holiday and leisure visitors is required – projects on the horizon should assist.</p> <p><b>Key learnings include:</b></p> <p>The Tourism NI Strategic Plan has indicated its goal is to 'Support the industry to increase the value of tourism by 15% between 2024 and 2027 "through the development and marketing of an Internationally compelling destination focusing on our Landscape, Heritage, History and Culture and world class Food &amp; Drink offer'. The Borough offering has developing products particularly in landscape, heritage and food drink. <b>Our focus in developing experiences to showcase these is critical to ensure profile at national level.</b> Success of our Experience Development Programme and Events harnessing these products and gaining national coverage suggests focus and clarity of message for the destination is key to compete in the domestic market and beyond.</p> <p>Therefore, the continuing <b>key priority</b> for the Tourism Service will be to <b>work with our providers to expand their tourism 'offering' sustainably</b>, whilst ensuring they remain competitive in the highly competitive domestic and close to home markets. Getting the right balance between the perception of value, against achieving an increase in visitor spend and dwell time will be critical to attract a share of NI's out of state visitors.</p> <p>Costs to deliver experiences and events continues to be challenging in the current economic climate – costs continue to increase as suppliers pass on increases, partners are facing similar challenges and provision of services which take account of the changing weather patterns and additional safety requirements are increasing in costs. <b>Continuing partnerships to achieve best return for service delivery</b>, in the most efficient way, will be a continuing key requirement in 2025/26, but it is acknowledged that these are not without challenge but can reap good results.</p> <p>Visitor Servicing continues to change in terms of how people access their information, and this is reflected in our VICs daily. On that basis a <b>further review into visitor service delivery</b> prior to the delivery of opportunities already within the Council overarching estate plans would be prudent in the incoming year.</p>

# 1. Context, Challenges and Key Assumptions

<b>Political</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NI Executive budget may reduce ability to deliver the latest draft Tourism Strategy – a 10-year Plan e.g. no Tourism NI Events Sponsorship Fund in 2023, 2024 to date, no confirmation of capital funds programme to date;</li> <li>Home Office introduction of new travel visa – the Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) scheme – obstacle to travel from ROI to NI.</li> </ul>
<b>Economical</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential failure of local tourism businesses as continue to struggle to regain market/shift in consumer expectations and cost-of-living crisis;</li> <li>Restricted capacity of businesses to open due to staffing;</li> <li>Potential reduction of internal budgets which seek efficiencies;</li> <li>External funding opportunities with very short delivery timelines – very difficult to deliver best return with resource and governance processes in place;</li> <li>Strength of other currencies vs £sterling makes UK more attractive for international travel;</li> <li>Close competitor with lower VAT rate;</li> <li>Cost of doing business and labour market and competition for skilled staff.</li> </ul>
<b>Social</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Latest Tourism NI research indicates travel demand remains high and consumers are adapting their spending behaviour to maximise their budget;</li> <li>Travel trends identified: Positive experiences, human connections, off the beaten track, business and leisure and sustainable lifestyles (TNI, Tourism 360, March 2024);</li> <li>Shorter lead times and uncertainty for bookings for businesses.</li> </ul>
<b>Technological</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuing shift to mobile/online information digital channels/services for customer tourism research and booking;</li> <li>Digital transformation including virtual travel experiences, booking while still at home and touchless tech solutions;</li> <li>Holidays and trips 'led by' mobile technology from start to end of journey;</li> <li>Expectation of consumer to have access to fully functioning mobile services in all of the borough.</li> <li>Increasing use of AI/AR technologies and need to adapt and associated costs.</li> </ul>
<b>Legal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carbon targets and offsetting (Climate Change Act (NI) 2022);</li> <li>Pending Martyn's Law for events delivery;</li> <li>Compliance with relevant legislation re GDPR, procurement, land use, road closures, safety and risk etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unforeseen weather patterns across Europe (NI climate attractive);</li> <li>Heightened awareness of and demand for sustainable travel and tourism/ "green" credentials;</li> <li>Crowded and highly competitive tourism marketplace;</li> <li>ANDBC drive to integrate sustainable materials and processes across all services increase in costs for delivery of experiences and events;</li> <li>Climate change and impacts – increase in costs for delivery for events.</li> </ul>

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Range of family /visitor attractions and activities – 3 of the top 10 visited attractions in NI</li> <li>• 116 miles of coastline (Strangford Lough AONB and Belfast Lough)</li> <li>• Breadth of natural and heritage resources with environmental designations align to consumer trends</li> <li>• Strategic development plan via ITRDS – thematic priorities in marketing, experience development, food and drink development and events delivery</li> <li>• Strong relationship with key tourism partner Visit Belfast – additional reach capabilities to market at lower cost</li> <li>• Committed Tourism team with long term experience and relationships with the local tourism sector</li> <li>• Award winning region for Food and Drink, both nationally and globally</li> <li>• Areas showcased through film and TV</li> <li>• Proximity to Belfast and George Best City Airport</li> <li>• Developed website with growing audience/engagement – good channels to share visibility with key markets</li> <li>• New opportunities to secure income via Council sponsorship policy (tbc approved at time of writing)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competitive market locally with no clear stand out or 'iconic' signature attractor</li> <li>• Proximity to Belfast</li> <li>• Poor public transport network in Borough</li> <li>• Lack of hotel base suitable for tour operators and support growth required in leisure market</li> <li>• No key international event(s)</li> <li>• Minimal tourism development budget to work up projects in advance of funding opportunities (no specific central government 'tourism' grant at time of writing)</li> <li>• Restricted marketing budget</li> <li>• Events delivery primarily free at point of consumption, increasingly difficult to grow events in line with strategy due to increased costs and legislative requirements and reduction in budgets</li> <li>• Lower % of market share of holiday visits and tourism revenue cf NI</li> <li>• No ability to ascertain accurately if tourism has grown due to new methodology employed by NISRA – accommodation providers not returning data so no local occupancy data available.</li> <li>• Digital products</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bangor Waterfront, Queen's Parade and Whitespots Country Park development</li> <li>• Four Points Project – development and promotional opportunities alongside ROI partners</li> <li>• Sustainable tourism businesses and experiences development</li> <li>• Food and drink offering</li> <li>• Wellness, eco and sustainable tourism (adding purpose to their visit)</li> <li>• Screen tourism</li> <li>• Visitor servicing at point of highest footfall – Citizens' Hub and Waterfront development.</li> <li>• 'Bid for' events (partners) and more commercial use of existing council venues / spaces to attract visitors</li> <li>• Digital advancements – AR, VR and Artificial Intelligence in bookings, itineraries etc.</li> <li>• Proximity to Belfast.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased costs</li> <li>• International and national competition</li> <li>• Partner expectations on supporting and funding role/resource</li> <li>• Limited visitor offering 'off season' or reduced during the week due to local business operating models</li> <li>• Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA)</li> <li>• Continuing reduced access to development funds</li> <li>• Weather and climate change impacting seasonality and requirement to 'weatherproof' activities</li> <li>• Businesses not adopting requirement to be fully 'mobile' – contactless, notifications, automated and flexible, cancellations, self-service check-in etc.</li> <li>• Waterfront developments in Bangor impacting footfall/ability to run events in the city centre.</li> </ul>

## 2. Strategic Objectives and Collaboration

Within our new Corporate Plan 2024-2028 we have a vision of *A Sustainable Borough*. One where Economic, Environmental and Social Wellbeing are linked and in which we, as a Council, make decisions about policies, services, investments and resources that balance the demands of each.

By doing so we can positively impact the people and the assets in our Borough and play a part in addressing some of the world's most pressing problems e.g. poverty, inequality, depletion of natural resources, climate change, economic growth etc.

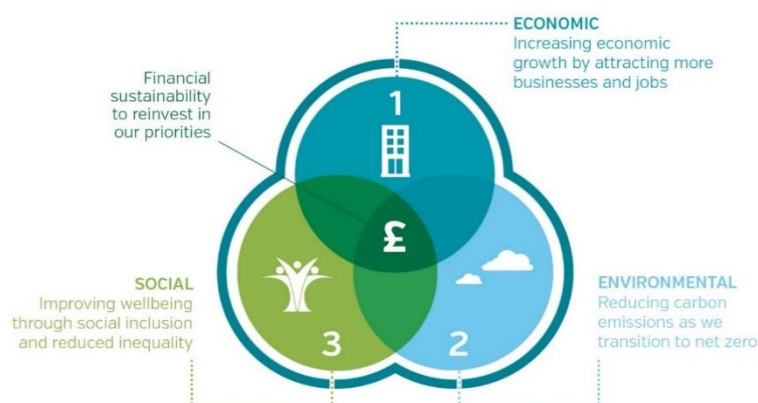
In brief, *A Sustainable Borough* is one where we make sure that we think about economic, social AND environmental impacts when we make decisions.

The three **priorities** we will be delivering against are:

- **ECONOMIC** - increasing economic growth by attracting more jobs and businesses
- **ENVIRONMENTAL** - reducing carbon emissions as we transition to net zero
- **SOCIAL** - improving wellbeing through social inclusion and reduced inequality

These priorities align with the three pillars of sustainable development. They are ambitious, and we will need to work in partnership and collaborate to achieve them.

The diagram below summarises our three Corporate Priorities and shows how they all link together. As you will see at the heart of the diagram is our commitment to address the key issue of our financial sustainability – as without that, we will be less able to deliver on all our ambitions.



We have also identified **seven outcomes** that we want to achieve to meet our priorities. They are (not in order of priority):

1. An engaged Borough with citizens and businesses who have opportunities to influence the delivery of services, plans and investment
2. An environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough meeting our net zero carbon targets
3. A thriving and sustainable economy
4. A vibrant, attractive, sustainable Borough for citizens, visitors, businesses and investors
5. Safe, welcoming and inclusive communities that are flourishing
6. Opportunities for people to be active and healthy
7. Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation

The table below reflects the key projects/ objectives that will be achieved by our Service over the next 12 months, and the key Services across the Council that will be collaborated with as part of the process. In addition, each objective is linked to the Corporate Plan priorities and outcomes.

Strategic Objective	Collaboration Required	Corporate Plan Priority	Corporate Plan Outcome
<b>Tourism</b>			
Implement a Sustainable Tourism Service Delivery Plan 2025/26 – to include trade and industry support, sustainable tourism initiatives (Experiences, Sustainable Giants and Neighbourhood Tourism Programme) delivery of Food and Drink Destination Development Plan and sustainable visitor servicing and promotion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication and Marketing</li> <li>• Finance</li> <li>• Assets and Property</li> <li>• Economic Development</li> <li>• HR</li> <li>• Regeneration</li> <li>• Procurement.</li> </ul>	Economic	2,3, 4 and 5
<b>Events</b>			
Implement a Sustainable Events Service Delivery Plan 2025/26 – to include event delivery, trade support including grants, waste/recycling initiatives, climate proofing, sustainable transport project and programming plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication and Marketing</li> <li>• Transformation</li> <li>• Assets and Property</li> <li>• Waste</li> <li>• Finance</li> <li>• Arts</li> <li>• Regeneration</li> <li>• Lands Compliance</li> <li>• Procurement.</li> </ul>	Economic Social	2, 3 and 4



### 3. Service Improvement

The “**Service development/ improvement**” element should identify areas of the service that require development/ improvement along with any new, innovative ideas for future improvements. **Please state clearly in the “Rationale” section why the improvement is being undertaken and what evidence there is to support the decision.**

Only Service improvement activities should be included in this section, ‘business as usual’ activities should be detailed in Section 6.

**Please ensure KPIs are included in Section 6 to measure Service development/ improvement(s) outlined below.**

Service development/ improvement 2025/26?	Which of the specified aspects will this improve?	Rationale	Responsible Officer(s)	Who do we need to help us? (Internal and/ or External partners) Please specify
Neighbourhood Tourism Development 2025/26 (No.1)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategic Effectiveness <input type="checkbox"/> Service Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Service Availability <input type="checkbox"/> Fairness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input type="checkbox"/> Efficiency <input type="checkbox"/> Innovation	A 3-year programme to support and develop local groups/organisations within city, towns and villages to provide neighbourhood tourism and increase visitor servicing organically.	Tourism Development Manager	Communities, voluntary organisations, Regeneration.
Sustainable Transport at Events Delivery Plan (No.2)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategic Effectiveness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Service Availability <input type="checkbox"/> Fairness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input type="checkbox"/> Efficiency <input type="checkbox"/> Innovation	Delivery of an annual action plan to address ongoing challenges with making attending events more sustainable regarding forms of transport used by attendees.	Events Manager	Translink, Corporate Communications and Marketing, local stakeholders
Deliver 2025/26 PR Action Plan for two key tourism themes and key audiences. (No. 3)	<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Effectiveness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Service Availability <input type="checkbox"/> Fairness <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input type="checkbox"/> Efficiency <input type="checkbox"/> Innovation	An action plan to be delivered on two key themes to continue to increase and raise destination awareness in target markets GB and ROI via appropriate platforms	Borough Marketing Manager	Corporate Communications and Marketing.

## 4. Service Risk Register

Service Risk Register should align with the Corporate Risk Management Strategy.

When completing your Service Plan you must review and consider your current Service Risk Register. Please confirm this has been completed.

**Yes**

## 5. Key Activities (KPIs) for 2025/26

**Please ensure service development/ improvements detailed in Section 4 are included as KPIs.**

KPIs should be aligned to the 7 Outcomes of the Corporate Plan 2024-2028, detailed below:

1	An engaged Borough with citizens and businesses who have opportunities to influence the delivery of services, plans and investment
2	An environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough meeting our net zero carbon targets
3	A thriving and sustainable economy
4	A vibrant, attractive, sustainable Borough for citizens, visitors, businesses and investors
5	Safe, welcoming and inclusive communities that are flourishing
6	Opportunities for people to be active and healthy
7	Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation

In addition to the outcomes the KPI should align with one of the three **Corporate Priorities** of the **Corporate Plan**, detailed below:

<b>Corporate Priority 1</b>	<b>Economic</b>	Increasing economic growth by attracting more jobs and businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Support</li> <li>• Attracting Investment</li> <li>• Rural Regeneration</li> <li>• Labour Market Partnership</li> <li>• Sustainable Tourism</li> <li>• Town and City Regeneration</li> <li>• Vacant to Vibrant Scheme</li> <li>• Innovation Hub</li> </ul>
<b>Corporate Priority 2</b>	<b>Environmental</b>	Reduce carbon emissions as we transition to net zero	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waste Management</li> <li>• Digital and Physical Infrastructure</li> <li>• Estate Management</li> <li>• Tree Planting Strategy</li> <li>• Management of Outdoor Spaces</li> <li>• Local Development Plan</li> <li>• Litter Control and Enforcement</li> <li>• Sustainable Waste Resources Strategy</li> <li>• Sustainable Energy Management Strategy</li> </ul>
<b>Corporate Priority 3</b>	<b>Social</b>	Improving wellbeing through social inclusion and reduced inequality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sport, leisure and outdoor recreation</li> <li>• Active travel</li> <li>• Environmental Health</li> <li>• Community Development</li> <li>• Neighbourhood Environment</li> <li>• Good Relations</li> <li>• Leisure Strategy</li> <li>• Placemaking</li> </ul>

Existing KPI Number	Performance Measures Should include improvement actions outlined in Section 4 and relevant measures both existing and new.	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service-led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcome	Corporate Priority	KPI to be included in Performance Improvement Plan	2025/26 Reporting						
							2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Target	2024/25 YTD End of Q3	2025/26 Target	Reporting end of Q2 Target	Reporting end of Q4 Target	Cumulative/ Fixed
	% Spend against budget	Mandatory	6 Monthly	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	No	97.7%	100%	97.9%	100%	100%	100%	Fixed
	% Staff attendance	Mandatory	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	No	97.99%	94%	96.72%	95%	94.5%	95%	Fixed
	% of completed Employee Appraisals * target to complete was 18 <sup>th</sup> month period.	Mandatory	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	No	76%*	100%	100%	100%	n/a	100%	Fixed
EC.03.T O.01	Attendance at trade focused shows, tourism and food and drink	Service Led	6 monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	No	1	7	5	7	n/a	7	Cumulative
EC.03.T O.02	Attendance at consumer-focused shows - tourism and food and drink	Service Led	6 monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	No	1	4	4	4	2	4	Cumulative
EC.03.T O.03	No. of sites/events supported by visitor servicing outreach	Service Led	6 monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment	No	15	20	22	22	15	22	Cumulative

Existing KPI Number	Performance Measures Should include improvement actions outlined in Section 4 and relevant measures both existing and new.	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service-led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcome	Corporate Priority	KPI to be included in Performance Improvement Plan	2025/26 Reporting						
							2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Target	2024/25 YTD End of Q3	2025/26 Target	Reporting end of Q2 Target	Reporting end of Q4 Target	Cumulative/ Fixed
				<input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Social								
EC.03.T O.04	% of Out of Borough (OoB) ticket sales– experiences and walks and tours)	Service Led	Year end	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	No	50%	50%	37.5%	50%	n/a	50%	Cumulative
new	Neighbourhood Tourism Development 2025/26 - groups assisted in development. (No.1 service improvement)	Service Led	Year end	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	n/a	4	Cumulative
new	Build capacity of the tourism/food and drink/ <b>events sectors</b> (no. of training sessions) * new shared KPI	Service Led	Year end	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	No	3	3	n/a	10	n/a	10	Cumulative
EC.03.T O.09	% increase in followers to Visit AND social media against previous year.	Service Led	6 Monthly	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	36%	20%	30%	25%	15%	25%	Cumulative
EC.03.T O.10	No. of targeted destination awareness AND PR articles – two themes to NI and ROI markets	Service Led	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	No	30	15	28	20	10	20	Cumulative
EC.04.T O.01	% engagement rate of ezines to tourism trade and consumer database	Service Led	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment	No	43%	30%	35%	35%	35%	35%	Fixed

Existing KPI Number	Performance Measures Should include improvement actions outlined in Section 4 and relevant measures both existing and new.	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service-led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcome	Corporate Priority	KPI to be included in Performance Improvement Plan	2025/26 Reporting						
							2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Target	2024/25 YTD End of Q3	2025/26 Target	Reporting end of Q2 Target	Reporting end of Q4 Target	Cumulative/ Fixed
				<input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Social								
EC.04.T O.02	% increase in followers to VisitStrangfordlough social media against previous year	Service Led	6 Monthly	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	No	5%	5%	6%	5%	2.5%	5%	Cumulative
EC.04.T O.03	Number of attendees at Tourism events	Service Led	Year end	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	No	78,700	81,000	80,417	90,000	79,000	90,000	Cumulative
EC.04.T O.04	% customer satisfaction at Tourism Events	Service Led	Year end	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	No	81.63%	85%	84%	85%	n/a	85%	Cumulative
EC.04.T O.05	% attendees from OoB at Tourism Events **2 Switch On events and May Day not included in this KPI from 25/26 onwards)	Service Led	Year End	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	No	23.7%	25%*	21.2%	26%**	n/a	26%	Cumulative
EC.04.T O.06	Average spend per attendee at Tourism Events	Service Led	Year end	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	No	£9.01	£10.50	£15.58	£15.00	n/a	£15.00	Cumulative
new	Number of attendees /participants at grant-aided events (*based on Tourism	Service Led	Year End	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2		No	58,266	58,000	71,530	109,000	n/a	109,000	Cumulative

Existing KPI Number	Performance Measures Should include improvement actions outlined in Section 4 and relevant measures both existing and new.	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service-led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcome	Corporate Priority	KPI to be included in Performance Improvement Plan	2025/26 Reporting						
							2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Target	2024/25 YTD End of Q3	2025/26 Target	Reporting end of Q2 Target	Reporting end of Q4 Target	Cumulative/ Fixed
	Events and Festivals Fund <b>and Growth Events Fund</b> from 25/26 onwards)			<input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social								
new	Development of Sustainable Transport at Events Delivery Plan (No.2)	Service Led	Year end	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	n/a	n/a	n/a	100%	80%	100%	Cumulative

## 6. What Services/ Activities will be stopped

Please add detail of KPI's that have previously been monitored that will no longer be reported on for 2025/26.

What service/ activities will we be stopping/ changing in 2025/2026	Reason for stopping / changing activity	Savings	Impact on Performance	Impact on the Public	Impact on staffing
% OoB attendance at food and drink experiences.	Change of delivery model to majority of food and drink events being delivered by third parties	N/A	None – alternative model tested 2024/25	None – alternative model tested 2024/25	Staff time reallocated to other activity
Food and Drink Destination Development Plan no. key new inputs in year one.	Business as usual and continuing delivery of the plan (2023-27)	N/A	None	None	Normal allocation of resource to BAU activity.
% of food network members (from total membership) on TASTE Facebook social media group page.	Transition of members now complete and monitoring in place.	N/A	None	None	Normal allocation of resource to BAU activity.
Number of sessions delivered for training/capacity building via Festival Forum. This is now	Business as usual	N/A	The activity will continue	None	None

incorporated into the existing service training sessions KPI			therefore no impact.		
Accessibility Audit – Tourism Events	Activity complete	N/A	Findings of audit will be implemented into events delivery	Events will be accessible to more people.	Include in event management plans.
Guide for Sustainability at Events	Activity complete	N/A	Improved guidance	Working towards sustainable roadmap	Include in event management plans and guidance to groups.
Delivery and management of 3 year Growth Events Fund (year 2) and 'Bid For' event fund.	Grant allocated for 25/26 and 26/27 in GEF. no 'Bid For' event organiser approach at time of writing plan.	N/A	none	none	None – reallocation of duties to reconfigured Tourism Events and Festivals Fund.
Cost per attend/participant – grant aided events	Not suitable KPI to report on funds which are open to a competitive process and dependent upon applications.	N/A	none	none	none

## 7. Reporting, Monitoring and Review

Provide detail below how this plan will be monitored and reviewed.

Monitoring Method	Frequency	Responsible Officer
Team Meeting	Monthly	HoS/ SUMs
Standing Committee	6 Monthly	Directors and HoS
Performance Improvement Plan	Annually (30 <sup>th</sup> June)	Transformation Manager
Self-Assessment Report	Annually (30 <sup>th</sup> September)	Transformation Manager



Unclassified

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## ITEM 8

### Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	06 March 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Prosperity
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Tourism
Date of Report	18 February 2025
File Reference	TO/EG69
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Growth Events Fund Year One Update Report
Attachments	Appendix 1 - GEF KPIs and Outputs Year One 2024

### Background

In September 2023, Council approved the introduction of a multi-year events fund - the "Growth Events Fund" (GEF) and a budget of £150,000 per year subject to the annual rates setting process.

In January 2024, Council approved one Growth Events Fund award to Open House Festival for 2024/25 to the value of £105,000, subject to rates setting, and awards of £105,000 for 25/26 and £105,000 for 26/27 subject to annual key performance indicators and adherence to terms and conditions with the Letter of Offer (LoO).

In May 2024, Open House Festival received a LoO for £105,000 subject to a series of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and aligned to targets set by the organiser at the time of application.

There are three objectives within the Growth Events Fund:

- Grow our Local Economy
- Grow our Visitor Experience and Destination and

Not Applicable

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- Grow the potential of our local Community and Place.

Each of the above has a series of KPIs which Open House Festival is required to meet annually, with supporting evidence. Should a KPI not be met, a rationale as to why this is the case is required. Further detail on the individual KPIs relating to Open House Festival is provided in Appendix 1.

### The Event

The Open House Festival was delivered between 29 June 2024 and 31 August 2024 as per the LoO description. There were several key elements to the festival, delivering 88 events in total.

1. Picnic in the Park - free concerts at Ward Park every Sunday in July and August - 18,200 attendees.
2. Seaside Revival Vintage Festival - one day free event at Bangor Seafront - 20,000 attendees.
3. Pickie to Pier – 700 attendees with 161 competitors.
4. The Walled Garden series of events - ticketed events ranging from music to comedy\*
5. Court House programme of events ticketed events ranging from music to comedy\*
6. Folk on a Boat\*
7. Additional fringe events\*

NB. \*total attendees 9,422 for these events. Other free event activities e.g. music sessions made up the total attendee figure.

### Performance against Objectives

#### OBJECTIVE 1: GROW OUR LOCAL ECONOMY

This objective seeks to understand the origin of participants and attendees, bednights generated and the investment/partnership opportunities with local businesses.

		OoB	Bednights
Participants	832	48.5%	20
Attendees	50,677	23%	609*
Total	51,509		629

\*Market research for bednights captured via ticketed events only (9,422 tickets).

Investment and partnership opportunities included local traders, retailers, hot food providers and local arts-based premises. Open House Festival promoted Translink through the event programme, but despite best efforts there was no sponsorship like previous years.

The organiser of the event has indicated a return on Council investment as £16.84. This has been calculated by:

- £34.32 average spend per person (as per market research carried out by the organiser)

Not Applicable

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- multiplied by 51,509 attendees
- equals £1,767,788 total economic benefit
- divided by £105,000 award

## OBJECTIVE 2: GROW OUR VISITOR EXPERIENCE AND DESTINATION

This objective seeks to understand how the event meets sustainability principles and increases awareness of AND nationally and internationally.

As per the LoO, 60% of total expenditure was to be raised via other sources of income, in 2024 65% of income was secured from box office and stall fees.

The engagement evidenced within the marketing plan overview shows growth in increased web views by almost 5% and increased subscriptions to the mailing list by 12% in comparison to 2024.

The overall media reach was 18.5 million (including social media reach) with an advertising value of c£169,000. Throughout the coverage, Council was mentioned within press releases, including quotes from the Mayor, tagged in social media posts and the logo was displayed on banners at key festival venues.

The organiser worked closely with Council staff across several services, including Tourism Events Service, Parks Service and Recycling to introduce recycling stations at both Seaside Revival on Bangor seafront and Bluegrass Picnic in Ward Park. These were staffed by specially trained Open House Festival volunteers, which produced good results, leading to reduced litter and increased recycling at both events.

A disability access audit of Ward Park was undertaken in conjunction with the Council Tourism Events Service. As a result, a fully accessible area was created, which operated at all eight Picnic in the Park events. The organiser received a letter of thanks from the North Down Disability Action Forum and overall, the feedback was excellent.

## OBJECTIVE 3: GROW THE POTENTIAL OF OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY AND PLACE

The final objective seeks to understand how the event supports and invests in local people, businesses, venues and assets. This included volunteer recruitment and training, strategic partnership development and the use of unusual event spaces.

A total of 100 volunteers were recruited and trained. There were 438 individual volunteer shifts and a total of 1,696 volunteer hours. Volunteer induction sessions included in-depth training on recycling stations and on disability access.

Strategic partnerships were developed including media partner County Down Spectator, along with specific partners for Pickie to Pier Swim - Bangor Marina, RNLI, and Safer Waters and Lightfoot food pop-up provision.

Event spaces included Bangor seafront for Seaside Revival event at the McKee Clock Arena, Marine Gardens and Queen's Parade car park, Ward Park – Picnic in

Not Applicable

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the Park at the bandstand, Skippingstone Beach – start and finish of Pickie to Pier swim, as well as the Court House and the Walled Garden.

### Budget

The organiser reports the cost to deliver the event was £341,800. £223,707 of the income total was from raised income (box office, traders, bar sales) £13,901 from the Arts Council National Lottery Fund and the remainder from the Council contribution.

### Support Services

In addition to financial support from Council via the Growth Events Fund, the Tourism Events Team offered the following additional support:

- A dedicated Case Officer who offered advice on completion of risk assessments and Event Management Plan alongside preparing the organiser for presenting the paperwork to a Safety Advisory Group.
- Event Management Toolkit to ensure all event organisers are equipped with skills/knowledge to run their event safely, the Council has established an online toolkit, which is a valuable resource for all event organisers, irrespective of the size of the event.
- Festivals Forum – A member of Open House Festival staff attends the Festival Forum. The Forum meets up to four times annually and Open House has key input to each session.

### Year 2 – 2025/26

The LoO issued on 24 May 2024 offered Open House Festival grant funding of up to £105,000 for 2024/25 and a provisional sum of up to £105,000 for 2025/26 and up to £105,000 for 2026/27, towards eligible costs in respect of each event annually, subject to all terms and conditions being met.

Officers have validated the claim against the LoO and are proceeding with the payment of the award at £105,000 for Open House Festival, in line with the Council approved Scheme of Delegation for the 2024/25 event. The organiser has satisfactorily evidenced meeting of objectives to a sufficient level meeting the terms and conditions associated with the LoO.

The organiser was asked to submit an initial budget and plan for the 2025 event at the end of 2024. Officers are content that the information received warrants the award of £105,000 for Year 2, demonstrating sufficient projected growth across the three objectives of the GEF. Therefore, the appendices including KPIs will be re-drafted and issued based on the objectives above, and aligned to further growth. It should be noted that the organiser has indicated a decline in projected overall attendee numbers in 2025 due to a change to one of the key events within the LoO, i.e. Seaside Revival.

### Seaside Revival

The organiser has met with Council officers on several occasions regarding the future of Seaside Revival, due to its current location at the Seafront. Open House

Not Applicable

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has assessed the possibility of moving Seaside Revival to another venue (such as Ward Park) but feels that this is not close enough to the 'seaside', therefore an alternative genre-specific mini-music festival is currently under development. The proposed event would take place throughout central Bangor during August's Open House Festival over the bank holiday long weekend, Thursday 21 to Monday 25 August 2025 inclusive. The organiser plans to co-programme free events in approximately 10 local bars / venues in addition to a series of ticketed shows in the Court House. Whilst Open House recognises the reduction in potential attendees in comparison to Seaside Revival, it has indicated the following potential impacts of this alternative event:

- Greater number of performers, many of whom will be local and estimated at more than 100 artists.
- Approximately 25% of performers from outside of Northern Ireland, requiring local accommodation, creating bednights and local spend.
- Events will take place inside local venues rather than in the open air, which will guarantee visitors to those premises and in turn, spend within their businesses.
- As the event will take place over five days, rather the one day of Seaside Revival, attendance will be at events over multiple days for many audience members, and consequently should return a higher rate of bednights.
- The event will not be weather dependent as performances will be located inside venues.
- Other local businesses will have the opportunity to "piggyback" on the events e.g. branding, curated music playlists, their own fringe events etc.

The organiser has indicated that it plans to bring back Seaside Revival in the future when the Seafront redevelopment has been completed.

### **Growth Events Fund – Year 2 and Year 3**

In September 2023, Council approved the Growth Event Fund which stated that 'the number and size of grants approved in Year 1 of the Fund (2024) will determine whether the GEF will reopen in Years 2 or 3.'

The full £150,000 was not allocated in Year 1 due to insufficient applications and, therefore, allowing the Fund to reopen in Years 2 and 3. Year 2 of the Growth Events Fund opened on Monday 7 November 2024 and closed on Monday 4 November 2024. As per Fund guidance, two event organisers contacted the Tourism Events Officers to discuss potential applications. One of these was eligible to apply to the Fund. After meeting with officers, the potential applicant made the decision to apply to the Tourism Events and Festivals 2025/26 Fund instead of the Growth Event Fund.

It is unlikely that a suitable applicant will be in the position to meet the criteria aligned to this Fund for one year only i.e. Year 3 – primary aim being that Council can support events to grow from year to year, therefore, the Fund reopening in autumn 2025 for funding year 2026/2027 will be kept under review.

Not Applicable

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council notes the report.

## Appendix 1

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## GEF KPIs Year One 2024 - Open House Festival

### Objective 1: Grow our local economy

KPI no.	Target	Year 1 2024 projected	Year 1 2024 actual	Notes	KPI met – Y/N
1.1	Number of participants from the Borough	360	428	51.4%	Yes
	Number of participants out of the Borough but within NI	350	348	41.8%	No – justification accepted Illness – cancellation of one of the performances
	Number of participants from out of NI	20	56	6.7%	Yes
	<b>TOTAL PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>730</b>	<b>832</b>	99.9% (due to rounding)	
	Number of attendees from the Borough	42,600	39,021	76.9%	No – justification accepted Storms and illness forced cancellation - weather for some Picnic in the Park concerts
	Number of attendees out of the Borough but within NI	11,300	9,629	19%	As above due to reduction in attendees
	Number of attendees from out of NI	2,800	2,027	4%	As above due to reduction in attendees
	<b>TOTAL ATTENDEES</b>	<b>56,700</b>	<b>50,677</b>	99.9% (due to rounding)	
	<b>TOTAL PARTICIPANTS AND ATTENDEES</b>	<b>57,430</b>	<b>51,509</b>		
1.2	Number of bednights (commercial and family and friends)	610	629	20 participants 609 attendees	Yes
1.3	Number of events	80	88	89 planned, 1 cancelled due to weather	Yes

## Appendix 1

<b>1.4</b>	Investment in local businesses (Evidence of growth/new partnerships/new initiatives, including transport providers, local hospitality providers and local suppliers)		Yes	Hot food pops ups 'Deli'. Vintage, Vinyl and Variety markets - Choons, Lightfoot Kitchen and Deli, Bending Sounds, Sans Bakery and the Apache Clothing. Picnic in the Park – ParkLife. Joery Castel Guillemot Kitchen Café Open House Festival. Took part in the Council's Art Tour and Tipple event alongside several other local arts-based premises.	Yes
<b>1.5</b>	Develop a series of local partnerships and sponsorship opportunities		Yes	Bangor Repair Café in the Court House Creative Hubs Talk and Tour for other social enterprises from across NI. The Nines as accommodation partner. Promoted Translink widely throughout our event programme, including Train Friendly badged events with consistent messaging on website and social media encouraging customers to use public transport.	Yes  OH invited to submit a sponsorship application to Translink but, despite repeated attempts at communication, the proposal was never formally accepted or declined.



## Appendix 1

## Objective 2: Grow our Visitor Experience and Destination

	Target	Year 1 actual (new for GEF) KPI met Y/N									
2.1	Introduce new initiative/s to reduce environmental impact at events	Yes									
2.2	Economic sustainability – A minimum of 60% of total expenditure to be raised income (ticket sales/sponsorship)	Yes - 65% of the total income was raised from box office and stall fees									
2.3	Deliver a marketing plan to achieve growth (open rate of ezines, reach and engagement levels, growth in mailing list recipients, in collaborative marketing and introduction of new initiatives)	Yes - see further table below* <table> <tr> <th>Media</th><th>2023</th><th>2024</th></tr> <tr> <td>Total page views</td><td>409,531</td><td>429,557</td></tr> <tr> <td>Mailing list subscribers</td><td>16,359</td><td>18,379</td></tr> </table> <p>The overall media reach was 18.5 million (including social media) with an advertising value of £170,000.</p>	Media	2023	2024	Total page views	409,531	429,557	Mailing list subscribers	16,359	18,379
Media	2023	2024									
Total page views	409,531	429,557									
Mailing list subscribers	16,359	18,379									
2.4	Use ANDBC Logo	Yes - appeared on banners at Ward Park, Walled Garden, posters, social media and quotes within 5no. press releases.									
2.5	Undertake a Disability Audit of Ward Park	Yes - completed successfully with officers.									
*Media		Highlights									
Online reach of 2.7m Advertising value of £56,000		Total newsletters: 17, delivered to 304,473, opened by: 77,352 Total Click Throughs: 10,099 and reach growth: 2,020 (festival mail list only). Total newsletters: 9, delivered: 87,214, opened by: 30,049 Total Click Throughs: 4,550 and reach growth 3,704 (Court House mail list)									
Festival website		Total Users: 53,186 and total page views: 429,557 (growth from 409,531)									
Facebook		26,880 followers, 164,825 reach (festival) 7,837 followers, 222, 010 reach (court house)									
Instagram		5,856 followers									
TV reach 324,000 - advertising value of £10,000		Including two features on UTV Life									
20 radio mentions, 705,000 reach - advertising value of £8,000		Including an entire episode of BBC Radio Ulster's The Ticket									
43 newspaper features, 2m reach -advertising value of £95,000		Including County Down Spectator (ran 27 features, including photo spreads from all eight Picnic in the Park events). The Irish News ran five features									

## Appendix 1

**Objective 3: Grow the potential of our Local Community and Place**

Target no.	Target	Year 1 projected	Year 1 actual	Notes	KPI met – Y/N
3.1	90 volunteers recruited or retained	90	100	23 male volunteers aged from 25 – 76 and 77 female volunteers from age 18 – 84.	Yes
3.2	Increase depth of Volunteer Training (include recycling and enhance disability/access training)	Increase depth	Increased	Training on recycling stations and disability access as well as briefings before every event.	Yes
3.3	Deliver 10 strategic partnerships	10	11	County Down Spectator, RNLI, Safer Waters, Lightfoot, Repair Café, Bullhouse Brewery, Neil Wines, Copeland Distillery, North Down Museum, The Nines and Boom Studios.	Yes
3.4	Utilise a minimum of 6 unusual event spaces, public spaces and highlight natural assets throughout the event	6	7	McKee Clock Arena, Marine Gardens and Queen's Parade	Yes

Appendix 1

				car park, Ward Park, Skippingstone Beach, Court House, Folk on the Boat and the Walled Garden.	
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