

May 6th, 2025


**Notice Of Meeting**

You are requested to attend the meeting to be held on **Wednesday, 14th May 2025 at 7:00 pm** in **Hybrid - City Hall & via Zoom**.

# Agenda

## Agenda

(Attached)

 *C&W 14.05.2025 Agenda.pdf*

*Page 1*

- 1. Apologies**
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
- 3. Deputations**
  - 3.1 Department of Education**
  - 3.2 Rosemount Rec Junior Football Club**

## Reports for Approval

- 4. Social Supermarket**

(Attached)

 *4. Social Supermarket.pdf*

*Page 4*

- 5. Cultural Expressions Updated Agreement**

(Attached)

 *5. Cultural Expressions Updated Agreement.pdf*

*Page 6*

 *5.1 Appendix 1 - CE Agreement 2025-2026.pdf*

*Page 8*

- 6. Re-wilding Initiative 2025 Update**

(Attached)

 *6. Re-wilding Initiative 2025 Update.pdf*

*Page 14*

 *6.1 Appendix 1 - Existing Rewilding Sites.pdf*

*Page 18*




 *6.2 Appendix 2 - Strategic Rewilding Links.pdf*

*Page 20*

- 7. Food Law Code of Practice and Practice Consultation**

## Response

(Attached)

 <b>7. Food Law Code of Practice and Practice Consultation Response.pdf</b>	<b>Page 24</b>
 <b>7.1 Appendix 1 - Food Law Code of Practice Consultation Response.pdf</b>	<b>Page 25</b>
 <b>7.2 Appendix 2- Food Law Code of Practice Consultation Pack.pdf</b>	<b>Page 37</b>

## Reports for Noting

### 8. Mae Murray Foundation Partnership

(Attached)

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### 9. Good Relations Annual Report

(Attached)

 <b>9. Good Relations Annual Report 2024-2025.pdf</b>	<b>Page 144</b>
 <b>9.1 Appendix 1 - Good Relations Annual report 2024-2025.pdf</b>	<b>Page 146</b>

### 10. Funding Opportunities for St Vincent de Paul

 <b>10. Funding Opportunities for St Vincent De Paul (SVP).pdf</b>	<b>Page 168</b>
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### 11. Community Development Annual Report

(Attached)

 <b>11. Community Development Annual Report.pdf</b>	<b>Page 171</b>
 <b>11.1 Appendix 1 -Community Development Annual Report 2024 - 2025.pdf</b>	<b>Page 172</b>

### 12. Ards and North Down Sports Forum Grants (WG April 2025)

(Attached)


 <b>12. Ards and North Down Sports Forum Grants (WG April 2025).pdf</b>	<b>Page 213</b>
 <b>12.1 Appendix 1 - Successful Event Report for Noting 2025-26.pdf</b>	<b>Page 215</b>
 <b>12.2 Appendix 2 - Successful Goldcard Report for Noting 2025-2026.pdf</b>	<b>Page 217</b>

 12.3 Appendix 3 - Successful Individual Travel Accommodation Report for Noting 2025-2026.pdf	Page 220
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 12.4 Appendix 4 - Unsuccessful Report.pdf	Page 229
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### **13. Bi- Monthly Update Report on Portavogie 3G, Penninsula 3G & Portaferry Sports Centre**

(Attached)

 13. Bi Monthly Update on Portavogie 3G, Penninsula 3G & Portaferry Sports Centre.pdf	Page 233
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 13.1 Appendix 1 - Portavogie 3G Update No. 16. April 2025.pdf	Page 235
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 13.2 Appendix 2- Peninsula 3G Update April 2025.pdf	Page 240
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 13.3 Appendix 3 - Status Update on PSC Sports Hall Floor Repair.pdf	Page 243
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### **14. North Down Coastal Path Working Group Minutes for 6 January 2025**

(Attached)

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### **15. Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2033 Progress**

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 15.1 Appendix 1 - Progress on the Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2023 to 2033.pdf	Page 260
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### **16. Tree and Woodland Strategy Update**

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 16.1 Appendix1 - Tree and Woodland Strategy Update Report.pdf	Page 280
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### **17. Play Provision, Loughries**

(Attached)



## 18. Correspondence with the Prime Minister's Office on Winter Fuel Payments

(Attached)

18. Correspondence with the Prime Ministers Office on Winter Fuel Payments.pdf Page 312

18.1. Appendix 1 - Letter from Council Chief Executive to the Prime Minister.pdf Page 313

18.2 Appendix 2 - Response from the Minister for the Dept for Work and Pensions.pdf Page 314

## 19. Notices of Motion

### 19.1 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor McCollum and Alderman McRandal

That this Council acknowledges with pride the outstanding achievement of Rory McIlroy in winning the US Masters tournament at Augusta 2025, thereby completing an historic grand slam of major tournament victories, his enormous contribution to golf through the world and his continued close association with and support for his hometown of Holywood. And further that this Council writes to congratulate Rory on his victory.

### 19.2 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Morgan and Councillor Ashe

**Postponed to June Community and Wellbeing Committee**

We are all aware that dog ownership has increased significantly over the past years. There is a fenced off area on "Muckers" in Comber, which is currently being used by NIW which, when they have finished their work, might lend itself to creating a dog park. This Council should bring back a report that explores the options for creating a dog park in Comber.

## 20. Any Other Notified Business

**\*\*\*ITEMS 21 & 22 IN CONFIDENCE\*\*\***

**Report for Approval Delegated to Committee**

## 21. PEACEPLUS Tenders - Themes 1 and 2 Update

(Attached)

21. PEACEPLUS Tenders - Themes 1 and 2 Update.pdf Not included

## Report for Noting

### 22. Peninsula 3G Updated Costs Report

(Attached)

 22. Peninsula 3G Updated Costs Report.pdf

***Not included***

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

7 May 2025

Dear Sir/Madam

You are hereby invited to attend a hybrid meeting (in person and via zoom) of the Community and Wellbeing Committee of Ards and North Down Borough in the Council Chamber, 2 Church Street, Newtownards and via Zoom on **Wednesday 14 May 2025 commencing at 7pm.**

Yours faithfully

Susie McCullough  
Chief Executive  
Ards and North Down Borough Council

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

1. Apologies
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Deputations
  - 3.1 Department of Education
  - 3.2 Rosemount Rec Junior Football Club

#### **Reports for Approval**

4. Social Supermarket (Report attached)
5. Cultural Expressions Updated Agreement (Report attached)
6. Re-wilding Initiative 2025 Update (Report attached)
7. Food Law Code of Practice and Practice Consultation Response (Report attached)

#### **Reports for Noting**

8. Mae Murray Foundation Partnership (Report attached)
9. Good Relations Annual Report (Report attached)
10. Funding Opportunities for St Vincent De Paul (SVP) (Report attached)

11. Community Development Annual Report (Report attached)
12. Ards and North Down Sports Forum Grants (WG April 2025) (Report attached)
13. Bi-Monthly Update Report on Portavogie 3G, Peninsula 3G & Portaferry Sports Centre (Report attached)
14. North Down Coastal Path Working Group Minutes for 6 January 2025 (Report attached)
15. Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2033 Progress (Report Attached)
16. Tree and Woodland Strategy Update (Report attached)
17. Play Provision, Loughries (Report attached)
18. Correspondence with the Prime Minister's Office on Winter Fuel Payments (Report attached)
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**Postponed to June Community and Wellbeing Committee.**

20. Any Other Notified Business

**ITEMS \*\*\* IN CONFIDENCE\*\*\***

**Report for Approval Delegated to Committee**

21. PEACEPLUS Tenders - Themes 1 and 2 Update (Report attached)

**Report for Noting**

22. Peninsula 3G Updated Costs Report (Report attached)

**MEMBERSHIP OF COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE (16 MEMBERS)**

Alderman Adair	Councillor Douglas
Alderman Brooks (Chair)	Councillor Hollywood
Alderman Cummings	Councillor S Irvine
Alderman McRandal	Councillor W Irvine
Councillor Ashe	Councillor Kendall
Councillor Boyle (Vice Chair)	Councillor McBurney
Councillor Chambers	Councillor McClean
Councillor Cochrane	Councillor Moore

Unclassified

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## ITEM 4

### Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	14 May 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community and Culture
Date of Report	14 April 2025
File Reference	CW142
Legislation	The Local Government Act (NI) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Social Supermarket
Attachments	None

Members will be aware that an open call was held for the Social Supermarket provision in April and May 2024. Provision for Donaghadee, Bangor and Holywood was awarded to Kilcooley Women's Centre (KWC) whilst provision for Newtownards, Comber, Ballygowan and Peninsula was awarded to Bangor Food and Community Support (BFCS). This call covered a 3-year period until March 2027, subject to the receipt of funding each year from Department for Communities (DfC).

Council received notification on 1 April 2025 that support has been provided by the Department to cover the three-month period from 1 April to 30 June 2025 totalling £31,955.56. This is based on 2024/25 allocation. The total amount of SSM funding received in 2024/2025 was £127,822.24.

To ensure a continuation in service KWC and BFSC were issued with a Letter of Offer to cover the Quarter one period as follows:

Not Applicable

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Area		Population	Funding for 31 March 2025 – 30 June 2025, based on 2024/25 budget Quarter 1
Bangor, Holywood, Donaghadee	KWC	55%	£17,575.56
Ards, Comber, Ballygowan, Killinchy Peninsula	BFCS	45%	£14,380.00
Total			£31, 955.56

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council retrospectively approves the award of £17,575.56 to Kilcooley Women’s Centre and £14,380.00 to Bangor Food and Community Support for the period 1 April 2025 to 30 June 2025 which ensured immediate continuity of service provision pending a further letter of offer from the Department for Communities.

Unclassified

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## ITEM 5

### Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	14 May 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community & Culture
Date of Report	30 April 2025
File Reference	GREL415
Legislation	Section 75 of the NI Act 1998
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Cultural Expressions Updated Agreement
Attachments	Appendix 1- Cultural Expression Agreement 2025-2026

Council initially approved a Cultural Expression (CE) Agreement in April 2015, following an extended period of community consultation with relevant groups throughout the Borough. The agreement sets out the principles by which groups that celebrate culture by way of a festival and associated bonfire or beacon around the 11th of July and 31st October may work with the Council.

The Agreement is supported by The Executive Office and Council's Good Relations Action Plan and contains a number of core principles and local agreements which constituted community groups agree and sign up to in return for funding towards cultural festivals. A number of reviews have taken place since it was first introduced in association with stakeholder community groups and partners.

To carry out a further review, the 2024 Agreement was issued to each of the groups by email in the Autumn of 2024 with an offer of a follow up meeting with the Good Relations Team to discuss any potential amendments.



Not Applicable

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The circulated agreement contained a number of suggested amendments to update the document and with the support of the communities engaged, a number of changes have been proposed for 2025.

In previous years the CE Agreement advised that advice should be sought from NI Fire and Rescue Service in relation to the proximity of the bonfires to other buildings and the height of bonfires. NI Fire and Rescue Service confirmed a few years ago that it would no longer offer such advice following an incident in Belfast when houses were burned beside a bonfire which NIFRS had provided safety advice towards.

The Council's Good Relations Team do not provide any advice in relation to size, or proximity of bonfires to surrounding properties, nor impose distance from houses as this would be a matter for specialists to advise upon.

Bonfire and Beacon sites are jointly over seen by a multi-agency statutory group. These partner meetings in relation to bonfire sites, together with weekly site visits to each of the Council, NIHE and EA sites throughout the Borough have begun for 2025.

Staff continue to engage with representatives from each of the sites, when necessary, and following approval of the CE Agreement for 2025 will ask each site to sign up prior to any funding being released.

A further report on the CE programme for 2025 will be brought to the Committee later in the year.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council agrees the attached Cultural Expression Agreement 2025-2026.



## **Cultural Expression Agreement 2025**

**All changes are only with agreement from sites, open to discussion and subject to available funding.**

### **AIMS**

The aims of the Council's Cultural Expression Agreement supported under The Executive Office (TEO), Cultural Expression Programme are as follows:

- To maintain and develop the level of goodwill built up in the local community and build good relations;
- To maintain and develop the core environmental conditions of any bonfires that do take place;
- To continuously support positive local cultural festivals associated with bonfires;
- To enable the Council to fulfill its environmental obligations and to ensure compliance with the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (NI) 2011.

The steps required to ensure that these aims are met are as follows:

- To reduce and minimize damage to public land, thus reducing clean up and reinstatement costs by encouraging the more environmentally friendly alternatives, such as the use of cages or fences to outline the size of the bonfire, sand bases, willow burners and gas beacons;
- To provide funding to support positive community festivals associated with bonfires that positively celebrate local culture and family participation and encourage cultural/educational and diversionary activities;
- The festival should demonstrate a Good Relations element in keeping with the Together: Building a United Community strategy
- To continue to liaise with local representatives to ensure the aims and core principles of this agreement are met.

### **CORE PRINCIPLES & LOCAL AGREEMENTS**



The core principles for participation in the Council's Cultural Expression Agreement are:

- Council funding can only be used to support specified festival and safety costs e.g. bouncy castles, face painting etc. Council funding cannot be used for costs in relation to associated bonfires materials.
- Community groups will have adequate public liability insurance for the festival and cultural/educational/diversionary activities.
- Only festivals associated with established bonfires that have been in situ for a minimum of 3 years, have followed the core principles and local agreements during the 3 years and under an established constituted group will be considered for funding.
- Where an established bonfire site is lost e.g. due to local redevelopment, officers from the Council and/or Northern Ireland Housing Executive may assist local groups to identify a suitable alternative site, where possible. If a site is unavailable and the group transition to festival only, the festival may continue to be supported.
- Council will provide suitable signage for installation at the bonfire sites stating the site is being monitored for fly tipping / illegal dumping/commercial dumping.
- The Council will regularly monitor community associated bonfires sites for tidiness in line with the principles of this agreement and attend cultural festivals. **It is the responsibility of the festival organiser to advise the Good Relations Officers if there is a change to the date of the festival.**
- The Council will provide advice and support for local community based bonfire management committees/groups.

## LOCAL AGREEMENTS

1. Local agreement that materials will not be collected any earlier than 10 weeks (Thursday 1st May 2025) prior to the lighting of bonfires.
2. Local agreement that toxic and unsuitable material will not be collected and burned on bonfires;



3. Local agreement that bonfires will not be constructed or burnt in a way that negatively impacts on community use of the sites to ensure the continuous use of the site by the community.
4. Local agreement that the use of any type of construction machinery e.g. Tractors/Cherry Pickers etc. is used minimally. Due to the cost of reinstating the land, assistance to minimise any damage to the site can be sought from landowners prior to bringing machinery on site.
5. Local agreement that the Council or Northern Ireland Housing Executive contractors have access to bonfire sites to remove unsuitable material with support from local community based management committees.
6. Local agreement that huts will not be created within the body of the bonfires or within an unsafe distance from bonfires, thus ensuring the safety of young people within the community.
7. Local agreement that bonfires should be at a safe distance from the surrounding buildings/ property.
8. Local agreement that emblems and effigies will not be placed on the bonfire

Failure to comply with the above principles will result in the balance of the grant being withheld and could result in some funding being clawed back. The amount of funding to be clawed back will be on a sliding scale and based on the 8 local agreements. (£100 per agreement if not adhered to)

## IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

Council is committed to providing on the ground support to groups who sign up to the core principles detailed above. Good Relations Officers will be available to provide advice and support on all elements of the programme including the implementation process detailed below.

Council will invite Expressions of Interest for funding for cultural festivals from established groups and sites in April 2025.

Awards will only be made to constituted groups who agree and sign up to the core principles and local agreements detailed above. The amount available for any cultural festival, educational programme or a combination of both supported under this programme will depend on the number of groups engaged. The award is dependent on the level of funding received from the Executive Office and the number of successful expressions of interest received. Therefore, if the Executive Offices'



funding to Council is reduced or the number of successful expressions of interest is greater than the budget available, the maximum award to each successful applicant will be reduced equally across all successful applicants. This grant applies only to the period 1 April 2025– 31 March 2026 and will be subject to review.

**Table 1; Maximum Grant Award (subject to availability of funding)**

Events with associated community bonfire		Award
Community festival associated with alternative bonfire eg gas burners/ willow beacons	Community festival, with alternative bonfire, with reduced environmental impact; i.e. willow burners and gas beacons;	Maximum £2300 or dependent on funding available
Community festival, with associated standard bonfire.	Community festival, with associated bonfire, with reduced environmental impact; i.e. those which use: cages/fences to outline the size of the bonfire and/or sand bases.  Bonfire builders should seek to ensure cage/ fences remain in place for the period of collection	Maximum £2300 or dependent on funding available

For advice and support please contact:

Donna Mackey, Good Relations Officer: [donna.mackey@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:donna.mackey@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk)

Telephone 0300 013 3333 Ext 40245

Mobile: *(provided)*

## ACCEPTANCE



I/We \_\_\_\_\_ accept the core principles on behalf of \_\_\_\_\_ and will work in partnership with the Council, NIHE, NIFRS, PSNI and bonfire builders to reach the local agreements detailed in this document.



Location of site/s to which this agreement relates:

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Unclassified

14

## ITEM 6

### Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	14 May 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Parks & Cemeteries
Date of Report	30 April 2025
File Reference	PCA63
Legislation	Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (NI) 2011 Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Re-wilding Initiative 2025 Update
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Existing Rewilding Sites Appendix 2 - Strategic Rewilding Links

The purpose of this report is to recommend an extension of the rewilding sites managed by Council, and update Members on the recent progress of the Council's Rewilding Initiative.

Rewilding is about the restoration of natural ecosystems and encouraging a balance between people and the rest of nature where each can thrive. The creation and maintenance of meadow grasslands is taking place in public open spaces across the UK. The vision of the Rewilding Initiative within Council is to manage our natural assets in a way that promotes nature's recovery. Amenity grassland is the Council's biggest landholding and yet the least biodiverse land that we own. Changing the management of this land stands to make the biggest impact for our local biodiversity. The promotion of biodiversity is a statutory requirement under the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.



Not Applicable

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The current sites equate to a total of 132,302 m<sup>2</sup> as shown in Appendix 1. It is intended these sites continue to be subject to the altered maintenance programmes with a view to encouraging increased diversity and abundance of floral species which will in turn benefit pollinators and overall biodiversity at each site. In addition to the ongoing maintenance, the schedules will be altered to take account of infrequent event use on certain sites. It is critical that the rewilding parks project works in harmony with the overall use of parks and a balanced offering is available across the parks portfolio. Events and community use will be catered for in the integrated grassland management of each chosen site.

### **Key updates 2024-2025**

#### **Community Engagement**

Whitespots Bioblitz: A Bioblitz was held at Whitespots Country Park, Newtownards on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> August 2024 including within the area designated for rewilding under the initiative. The bioblitz was an amazing success with a total of 335 species identified over the 2-day event. This event allowed the *invisible* benefits of the rewilding initiative *visible*, bringing the community together, showcasing the benefits of the initiative to both people and nature and strengthening the case for expanding the initiative.

Celebrating the Rewilding Initiative: To coincide with World Rewilding Day on the 20th March 2025, Council promoted its Rewilding Initiative. This involved the placement of the first permanent rewilding sign at Brompton Road Rewilding site. Brompton is unique in that it is the first wildflower meadow created under the initiative, with native wildflower seed harvested from Crawfordsburn Country Park, less than 2km from the site. The permanent rewilding signs provide key information on rewilding and its benefits for nature and people. The signage will help raise awareness of the initiative and inform the public on why areas are being subjected to a different mowing regime, this helps to avoid confusion or negative assumptions. The signage will help build transparency and maintain public trust by being open about land management changes. They will also help to promote understanding. Many people may not be familiar with the environmental benefits of reduced mowing as well as the benefits to their health and well-being. For those wanting to know more about the rewilding initiative a QR code linking back to the Rewilding page on the council website is available on the sign. The development of a new webpage expands on the information from signage giving the community a deeper understanding of the initiative. Over the coming months permanent signage will be placed across the Borough at sites managed under this initiative.

Rewilding Through the Seasons: Parks and Cemeteries have engaged with a local photographer to help visually capture the rewilding process on sites managed under the initiative through the seasons. We hope this will help us monitor visual changes of the landscape throughout the year and the evolution of the sites over time. This will be used alongside other data and survey results to monitor and evaluate the changes we have made in relation to our maintenance practices. This visual imagery will assist Council to broaden public understanding on rewilding. Images and information on site specific species captured through the project will help showcase biodiversity recovery,

Not Applicable

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seasonal beauty, and nature's resilience, creating awareness and promoting rewilding practices.

### Inclusion of Additional Sites

As well as providing an update on the initial sites where rewilding has been established this report also outlines proposals to extend the Council's rewilding portfolio by 21,700m<sup>2</sup>. After further consideration and discussion permission is sought to extend the existing rewilding portfolio to include selected areas, indicated in the maps below, within the following council sites including:

- Hunts Park, Donaghadee (5,000m<sup>2</sup>)



- Hollywood Nature Park, Hollywood. (11,700m<sup>2</sup>)



Not Applicable

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- Ward Park, Bangor. (5,000m2



## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council continues to approve the above initiative and supports the ongoing development of the parks rewilding project to enhance and promote biodiversity across the Borough.

**Appendix 1**  
**Sites managed under the Rewilding Initiative to Date – March 2025**

No.	Existing Locations	Area (m2)
1	Castle Park, Bangor	9300
2	Ballymenoch Park, Holywood	5347
3	Linear Park, Bangor	1100
4	Tullymally Road, Portaferry	2043
5	Ballystockart, Kathleen Drive, Comber	3404
6	Cloughey Football Pitch, Portaferry	8863
7	Stricklands Glen / Connor Park	17275
8	Seapark, Holywood	7660
9	Brompton Coastal path, Bangor	4448
10	North Street, Greyabbey	2802
11	Bowtown Road, Newtownards	24873

12	Parsonage Road, Kircubbin	13157
13	Demense View, Portaferry	1167
14	Whitespots Country Park, Newtownards	3950
15	Glenlyon, Holywood	1823
16	Windmill Stump, Portaferry	1850
17	Whiterock Carpark,	840
18	Jacks Cut, Newtownards	5000
19	Dalton Glade,	2000
20	Upper Crescent, Comber	6600
21	The Commons, Donaghadee	6700
22	Dermott Gardens, Comber	2100
	<b>Area Managed under the Initiative</b>	<b>132,302 m2</b>

## Appendix 2

Rewilding Links to External & Internal Strategies, Policies & Plans	
National	
	<p><u>EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030</u></p> <p>This strategy is a comprehensive and long-term plan to protect nature and reverse the degradation of ecosystems. It sets ambitious EU targets and commitments for 2030 to achieve healthy and resilient ecosystems. Restoring degraded ecosystems and stopping any further damage to nature and the reverse the decline of pollinators are 2 commitments of the strategy. ANDBC's rewilding initiative directly supports this by altering grassland management practices to restore and enhance wildflower meadow habitats which will directly benefit pollinators.</p>
	<p><u>Nature Positive 2030 Report</u></p> <p>A joint effort by the UK's statutory nature conservation bodies, aims to reverse biodiversity decline by 2030. It sets out key actions and achievable steps for the UK to achieve this, including better conserving habitats outside protected areas and investing in restoration and creation. The rewilding initiative helps deliver practical, low-cost, and local solutions that support the Nature Positive 2030 vision by enhancing biodiversity, restoring biodiversity degraded spaces, and engaging people in nature recovery through biodiversity related workshops and adequate site signage.</p>
	<p><u>All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021 - 2025</u></p> <p>The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan is a framework bringing together different sectors from local authorities, to farmers, schools, gardeners, and businesses, to try to create a landscape where pollinators can survive and thrive. In 2017 Council committed to meeting actions within this plan to help pollinators and are currently listed as one of several council partners within the current plan. The rewilding initiative helps Council meet key actions listed within this plan including:</p> <p><u>Action A: Protect what you have:</u></p> <p>B.1 Manage and restore semi-natural habitats and their native plants B.2 Identify and protect existing sources of food and shelter for pollinators on general council land</p> <p><u>Action B: Alter the frequency of mowing:</u></p> <p>B.4 Aim to create at least 5 meadows (one cut &amp; lift per year)</p> <p><u>Action C: Pollinator friendly planting:</u></p> <p>C.7 Plant a native perennial wildflower meadow</p> <p><u>Action D. Provide nesting habitats:</u></p> <p>B. 16 Bare earth/sand banks for wild pollinator nesting</p>

	<p><u>Action F. Raise Awareness:</u></p> <p>F.21 Build actions for pollinators into existing frameworks and initiatives</p> <p>F. 23 Put up signage to identify pollinator friendly habitats on council land</p> <p><u>Action G. Tracking progress:</u></p> <p>Officers with Parks &amp; Cemeteries report directly to the plan on an annual basis listing and detailing the actions taken by ANDBC.</p>
Regional	
	<p><u>Draft Environment Strategy for Northern Ireland</u></p> <p>The Draft Environment Strategy emphasizes the importance of protecting biodiversity and restoring habitats. The rewilding initiative directly supports this by altering grassland management practices to enhance habitats for pollinators like bees and butterflies. The strategy advocates for nature-based solutions to address environmental challenges. By allowing grasslands to grow naturally, the initiative contributes to carbon sequestration, improves soil health, and enhances ecosystem resilience. These benefits align with the strategy's goals of mitigating climate change and promoting sustainable land use. The rewilding initiative also serves as a platform for community involvement and environmental education. By engaging residents in biodiversity friendly practices, through signage, website information and biodiversity workshops the initiative supports the strategy's objective of increasing public awareness and participation in environmental stewardship.</p>
	<p><u>The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022</u></p> <p>Rewilding initiative aligns closely with the objectives of this Act which aims for net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. By altering grassland management practices the initiative fosters the growth of native wildflowers and supports pollinators. These practices not only enhance biodiversity but also improve ecosystem services, including carbon sequestration and soil health. Such outcomes are in line with the Act's emphasis on supporting nature-based projects that enhance biodiversity and protect ecosystems. The initiative's approach contributes to climate resilience by creating habitats that can better withstand environmental stresses. Additionally, by maintaining grasslands that sequester carbon, reducing the mobilisation of fuel powered vehicles and cutting machinery it aids in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, aligning with the Act's targets for net-zero emissions by 2050.</p>
	<p><u>Green Growth Strategy</u></p> <p>The Green Growth Strategy emphasizes the importance of nature-based solutions for climate mitigation and adaptation, aiming to transition Northern Ireland to a net-zero emissions, nature-rich society. By reducing mowing frequency, the initiative encourages the growth of native wildflowers and in turn supports pollinators. This approach aligns with the strategy's focus on using</p>

	<p>natural processes to address environmental challenges. By allowing grasslands to flourish, the initiative increases the natural capital value of these areas, providing benefits such as carbon sequestration and improved soil health. This supports the strategy's goal of balancing climate action with economic and environmental benefits.</p>
Local	
	<p><u>Local Biodiversity Action Plan</u></p> <p>The initiative supports and complements Council’s Local Biodiversity Action Plans by providing practical, on-the-ground actions that contribute to the overall objectives of the Plan.</p>
	<p><u>Corporate Plan</u></p> <p>The rewilding initiative aligns closely with Council’s Corporate Plan 2024–2028, particularly in advancing the Council's vision of "A Sustainable Borough."</p> <p>One of the priorities of the plan is <u>Increased Economic Growth</u>. People cannot thrive if the nature they depend upon is damaged. By protecting, enhancing, restoring biodiversity through the rewilding initiative we can prevent the loss of ecosystems and the vital building blocks of those ecosystems such as pollinators that support our societies and local economies.</p> <p>The initiative directly aligns with the Environmental Priority of the Plan, to <u>Reduce Carbon Emissions</u>. Reduced cutting frequency means parks teams are mobilised less, there is reduced vehicle usage and less use of cutting machinery which means less fuel consumption reducing the services carbon footprint. Wildflower Meadows also act as significant carbon sinks. Recent research shows British woodlands generally store 1.4 tonnes of carbon per hectare per year, while grasslands and meadows can store up to 3 tonnes per hectare per year. This would indicate that wildflower meadows can sequester more carbon than trees, particularly in the long term and with regard to soil carbon storage. This is largely due to the complex root systems of wildflowers.</p> <p>The third priority of the plan is <u>Improved well-being</u>. Parks &amp; open spaces are associated with improved health &amp; well-being. Rewilding sites can boost our quality of life. Healthy communities rely on well-functioning ecosystems providing ecosystem services such as clean air, fresh water, medicines and food security. They can also provide a location for physical exercise, educational opportunities and a chance to connect with nature which can in turn boost mental health.</p> <p>Educational workshops and citizen science activities carried out on rewilding sites such bug hunts, flower identification, butterfly counts, moth counts and</p>



	identification and creative workshops all contribute to the improved well-being priority of our corporate plan.
	<p><u>Parks &amp; Cemeteries Service Plan</u></p> <p>The Rewilding Initiative contributes directly to several Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) within the Parks and Cemeteries Service Plan. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The maintenance of 130,000m2 of rewilded council land – The total area of council land managed under the rewilding initiative, in April 2025, stands at 132,302 m2.</li> <li>• A reduction in herbicide usage through sustainable practices. Through alternative management practices the rewilding initiative naturally suppresses weeds, boosts ecosystem resilience, and reduces the triggers that usually require herbicide use, all through simple, low-maintenance sustainable land management.</li> </ul>
	<p><u>ANDBC 5 Steps to Well-Being Framework</u></p> <p>The rewilding initiative significantly contributes to community wellbeing, aligning closely with the Five Steps to Wellbeing framework - Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Keep Learning, and Give. Workshops such as Bioblitz's and other locally held biodiversity workshops at rewilding site locations improve connections to nature by bringing people together, they also support continuous learning and promote physical activity. Rewilding creates beautiful, healthy environments that nourish both the land and the well-being of those who live nearby.</p>
	<p><u>ANDBC Roadmap to Sustainability</u></p> <p>The rewilding initiative embodies the overall objectives of the councils Roadmap to sustainability and meets a number of key areas for action including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• natural asset protection and enhancement; achieved through altered grassland management practices encouraging the growth of wildflowers which will in turn benefit pollinators and overall biodiversity.</li> <li>• health, safety and wellbeing: achieved through the variety of engagement and biodiversity related workshops held at rewilding sites.</li> <li>• high quality shared spaces: the initiative transforms shared spaces into beautiful, biodiverse, calming environments that benefit people and nature.</li> <li>• climate change adaptation and mitigation/carbon emissions reduction; the initiative helps cut emissions (through reduced use of machinery and vehicles), store carbon in soils (through altered grassland management), reduce flood and heat risks, and create resilient green spaces contributing significantly to climate mitigation and adaptation</li> </ul>

Unclassified

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## ITEM 7

### Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	14 May 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Environmental Health, Protection and Development
Date of Report	07 April 2025
File Reference	CW22
Legislation	The Food Safety (Northern Ireland) Order 1991
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below: Consultation Response
Subject	Food Law Code of Practice and Practice Consultation response
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Consultation Response Appendix 2 - Consultation Pack

The Food Standards Agency has launched a Consultation on the Proposed amendments to the Food Law Code of Practice (Northern Ireland) and Practice Guidance. The Consultation closes on 19 May 2025.

The Code sets out instructions and criteria to which District Councils in Northern Ireland must have regard when discharging their duties in relation to the delivery of official food control activities.

### RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council approves the attached consultation response.

## **Consultation response form on proposed amendments to the Food Law Code of Practice and Practice Guidance (Northern Ireland)**

**In relation to proposal 1, an updated risk-based approach to the prioritisation and timescales for undertaking initial official controls of new food establishments:**

**Question 1a. Do you consider that the approach will provide Competent Authorities with the ability to deploy current resources more effectively? If not, why not? (Please specify any aspects of the proposal which requires further consideration, and why).**

Ards and North Down Borough Council acknowledges the introduction of the flexibility regarding the timescales for initial official controls of new food businesses. Ards and North Down Borough Council agrees that this will enable Councils to prioritise initial or due official controls of higher risk premises.

Although the Code provides for an initial official control for lower inherent risk businesses within 3 months of commencing operations the FSA (Food Standards Agency) should be aware that Councils will be pressured in providing businesses which are included in FHRS (Food Hygiene Rating Scheme) with a rating in a shorter time scale for commercial reasons. The FSA should be aware that Ards and North Down Borough Council Council's corporate objectives include the economic support of businesses.

The business types that Councils can avail of remote official controls would be limited to those that are low risk and exempt under the FHRS such as childminders, chemists, certain off licences and food brokers. Within the Ards and North Down Borough Council area the number of these types of businesses are low and do not frequently change ownership, therefore it is limited as to officer time saved.

Ards and North Down Borough Council would consider a 'competent person' to be one who meets the qualifications in the current FLCOP (Food Law Code of Practice). While unqualified staff may be able to gather information a suitably qualified person, as per the FLCOP will be required to make the inherent risk assessment.

Currently the Councils MIS (Management Information System) is not set up to accept an inherent risk assessment, therefore further development of the MIS system is required to input data and to extract data. Currently data in respect of the initial risk assessment would not be able to be retrieved or reported on.

Our current MIS defaults to 28 days for a planned initial official control on acceptance of a food registration's proposal to introduce an initial desktop assessment to provide an inherent risk will require additional administration time. Without the appropriate adaptations to the MIS clarity is sought on how this should be recorded.

Due to limited information being provided through RAFB (Registering a Food Business) at the time of registration, it will be necessary to contact businesses to clarify all three elements to accurately assess the “potential hazard”. This will require additional staff resources.

The FSA should consider developing additional mandatory fields in RAFB to capture the necessary business information for both Food Hygiene and Food Standards.

There is no confirmation in the consultation that the FSA will cover the costs of the necessary future development of the MIS.

**Question 1b. It is proposed that, for food hygiene, timescales are provided for initial official controls of all establishments. For food standards, timescales are currently only provided for the highest risk establishments in the Code, with timescales for lower risk establishments provided in separate guidance. Would you agree or disagree with moving the food standards timescales into the Code in the future, so all timescales are in one document? Please describe the main reasons for your answer.**

Ards and North Down Borough Council disagree with moving the food standards low risk establishments timescales into the Code. Retaining the low-risk Food Standard timescales in the Practice guide will provide Councils with the flexibility to use their resources effectively and make their inspection programme more efficient. Where there may be different risks associated with food hygiene and food standards at the same premises then Councils will be better able to manage their inspection programmes based on highest risk and priority. Low risk Food standards inspections may be carried out at the time of the due food hygiene inspection.

**Question 1c. Proposal 1 relates to the timescales for initial official controls. No changes to the timescales for due official controls are proposed as part of this consultation, these will remain, as currently, at 28 days for all establishments. However, to assist us in planning future policy in relation to the timescales for due official controls, do you agree or disagree with keeping the timescales at 28 days? Please describe the main reasons for your answer.**

Ards and North Down Borough Council agree that 28 days should be retained but only for those premises where the greatest risk is identified i.e. A, B and non-compliant C 's. The timescale of three months should be extended to broadly compliant C, D and E categories. This flexibility would assist Councils to address in year activities such as food safety incidents, food poisoning outbreaks etc but still meet the requirements of the Code and ensure the integrity of the FHRS and consumer confidence in the scheme.

**In relation to proposal 2, enabling, in certain circumstances, an establishments food hygiene intervention rating to be amended following a wider range of official control method and techniques including those undertaken remotely:**

**Question 2a. Do you consider that the proposal will enable Competent Authorities to deploy current resources more effectively? If not, why not? (Please specify any aspects of the proposal which require further consideration, and why).**

Ards and North Down Borough Council acknowledge the benefits to the proposed flexibilities for the undertaking of official controls however the mandatory FHRS in NI limits their use. To maintain consumer confidence in the integrity of the FHRS scheme it is not a viable option to make use of other official controls in broadly compliant C and D premises, an inspection is always required to revise the rating.

The proposal recognises that establishments within scope of the FHRS can avail of a non-official control which can be undertaken remotely, but the rating cannot be revised. Ards and North Down Borough Council do not agree with this proposal as this would diminish the consumer confidence when it comes to light that premises are legitimately displaying ratings that were issued 3 or 4 years prior.

With lessons learnt during the Covid 19 pandemic, the lack of physical inspections by Food Safety Officers resulted in a decline in food safety standards, including in those premises previously deemed to be in a lower inherent risk category e.g. Category D premises. Ards and North Down Borough Council found that remote assessments were not a suitable means for applying official controls and could only be used to assist a physical inspection rather a means to adequately risk rate the premises. The time required to set up a remote assessment with the FBO (Food Business Operator) was found to be equivalent to carrying a physical official control.

Consumers have a view that a FHRS rating inspection is carried out at much shorter intervals between primary inspections, this is supported by FSA consumer research which indicates consumers would expect businesses to receive inspection regularly with expectations ranging from a few times a year to every two years. (<https://www.food.gov.uk/research/value-of-fhrs-consumer-research-executive-summary>)

There may be scope to develop the use of partial inspections by qualified officers. They are currently seldom used but may save time and still enable a revised risk rating and FHRS rating to be issued. In order to issue a revised rating all three elements of the FHRS scoring would need to be assessed therefore the feasibility of partial inspections would need to be explored further.

There may be inconsistency of approach to official controls between the 3 nations. England does not operate the mandatory FHRS scheme and has the flexibility to avail of a wider range of official controls, including remote assessment.

Ards and North Down Borough Council agree with the proposed approach to E Category establishments were currently an Alternative Enforcement Strategy (AES)

can be used; the proposal enables Councils to alternate to non-official controls. This proposal would save officer time conducting follow up activities on non-returned AES questionnaires.

The proposed flexibilities descriptors should be more concise.

**Question 2b. If responding on behalf of a Competent Authorities, would you, if implemented, utilise the flexibility to undertake some methods and techniques remotely? If not, why not?**

Ards and North Down Borough Council do not agree to the use of remote inspections for C and D establishments. Previous experience of officers within Ards and North Down Borough Council found that remote assessments were not a suitable means for applying official controls and could only be used to assist a physical inspection rather than a means to adequately risk assess the premises.

As previously stated, Ards and North Down Borough Council would only consider using an official control remotely for E category establishments.

Ards and North Down Borough Council would also consider using remote assessments for the verification of work carried out by a business following a physical inspection.

**In relation to proposal 3, extending the activities that officers, who do not hold a 'suitable qualification' for food hygiene or food standards, can, if competent, undertake:**

**Question 3a. Do you consider that the flexibilities will enable Competent Authorities to deploy resources more effectively? If not, why not? (Please specify any aspects of the proposal which require further consideration, and why).**

Ards and North Down Borough Council do not agree with the utilisation of officers not holding a suitable qualification to undertake official food hygiene and food standards controls in D and E premises and lower risk food standards premises. Official controls should remain with the remit of suitably qualified staff.

The oversight and supervision required by competent officers and lead officers would negate any advantage to the Council.

Ards and North Down Borough Council do however make use of staff without suitable qualifications to carry out other food related duties. The use of such officers to take on administrative duties, informal sampling or low risk service requests allows resources to be used efficiently. Assistance in these areas enables qualified officers to spend more time in the district on physical inspections and carrying out enforcement actions.

Please also see response to question 1 of **Questions in relation to future potential developments – Qualifications**

The current MIS does not allow the extraction of data based on specific risk scores and it would therefore not be possible to determine which Cat D premises have a 5 or 10 for type of food/method of handling rendering this proposal impracticable.

**Question 3b. If responding on behalf of a Competent Authorities, would you, if implemented, utilise this flexibility and authorise officers, if competent, to undertake additional activities, and if so, how many officers would you anticipate authorising? If not, why not?**

We currently have one student EHO (Environmental Health Officer) which is equivalent to 0.1 FTE (Full Time Equivalent) food safety resource who is authorised as a Regulatory Officer and would not intend to extend their authorisation.

Consideration needs to be given to the current role of regulatory officers and similar in that they have a full range of duties, so they may not have additional capacity to carry out other duties.

**In relation to proposal 4, a clarification in approach to interventions at food business establishments that fall into risk category E for food hygiene:**

**Question 4. Do you consider that the proposed approach will provide clarity and consistency in the frequency of official controls at these establishments? If not, why not? (Please specify any aspects of the proposal which require further consideration, and why).**

Ards and North Down Borough Council agree with this proposal.

**In relation to proposal 5, removal of the prescriptive number of hours required for continuing professional development (CPD):**

**Question 5. Do you consider that the approach will provide Competent Authorities with greater flexibility to determine appropriate levels of CPD and training that officers undertake? If not, why not? (Please specify any aspects of the proposal which require further consideration, and why).**

Ards and North Down Borough Council disagree with this proposal. The Code of Practice should retain the requirement of a minimum 20 hours CPD with 10 core hours.

As professionally qualified officers there is an expectation that officers will maintain a level of continuing professional development. It is important that this element is protected in the Code.

It is imperative that officers receive regular training including refresher training to support their competency in food related matters. Food legislation and food technology is continually evolving, and regular training is necessary to ensure that officers have the most up to date knowledge. The FSA should recognise that competency and training are mutually inclusive. In court proceedings the officer's expertise may be questioned by the defence and proof of training can support an expert status.

If there is no incentive to provide training for staff, then there is the potential that training budgets may be affected.

In addition, Ards and North Down Borough Council are aware that this proposal is not being considered in the Welsh consultation. If this proposal were to be implemented, it would create inconsistencies with the Code between the 3 nations and Ards and North Down Borough Council would question why the Food Standards Agency is content for the CPD requirement to be retained in Wales.

**In relation to proposal 6, other amendments to reflect legislative change, provide clarity, improve consistency and keep pace with current practices:**

**Question 6a. Do you consider that the examples of where the additional score of 22 for vulnerable risk groups would not be used, provides further clarity and will improve consistency in the application of the score? If not, why not? (Please specify any aspects of the proposal which require further consideration, and why).**

Ards and North Down Borough Council agree with this proposal.

**Question 6b. Do you agree that the inclusion of additional descriptors, regarding food safety culture, in part 3 of the food hygiene intervention rating scheme, will provide clarification in the assessment of food safety culture? If not, why not? (Please specify any aspects of the proposal which require further consideration, and why).**

Ards and North Down Borough Council agree with this proposal.

**Question 6c. Do you consider that the clarification within the food hygiene intervention rating scheme about how allergen cross-contamination is taken into account will improve consistency? If not, why not? (Please specify any aspects of the proposal which require further consideration, and why).**

Ards and North Down Borough Council agree that this clarification will improve consistency in the risk assessment process.

**Question 6d. Do you consider that moving the guidance on parts two and three of the food hygiene intervention rating scheme from the FHRS Statutory Guidance to the Practice Guidance will improve clarity as to where the guidance can be found? If not, why not? (Please specify any aspects of the proposal which require further consideration, and why).**

Ards and North Down Borough Council agree with this proposal.

**Question 6e. Do you have any objections to the inclusion of the following qualifications within the Code:**

- **Trading Standards Professional Apprenticeship with the food module as an appropriate qualification for food standards**



- **Degree in Environmental Health awarded by the Dublin Institute of Technology (awarded from June 2012 onwards)**

- **Degree in Environmental Health awarded by the Technological University Dublin**

**If you have any objections, please provide reasons for these. (Please specify any aspects of the proposal which require further consideration, and why).**

Ards and North Down Borough Council agree with this proposal.

**Question 6f. Do you consider that the amendments to the terminology in the Code and Practice Guidance has improved clarity and consistency between the documents? If not, why not? (Please specify which sections and any aspects of the proposal that require further consideration, and why).**

Ards and North Down Borough Council agree with this proposal.

**Question 6g. Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to remove references to the Competency Framework from the Code but retain references to it in the Practice Guidance to enable the revised approach to competency assessment as set out in the draft Code? Please describe the main reasons for your answer. (Please specify any aspects of the proposal which require further consideration, and why).**

Ards and North Down Borough Council agree with this proposal.

**Question 6h. Do you agree or disagree with the removal of references to the Practice Guidance and Framework Agreement from the Code? Please describe the main reasons for your answer. (Please specify any aspects of the proposal which require further consideration, and why).**

Ards and North Down Borough Council agree with this proposal.

### **Additional comments and suggestions**

**Question 7. Do you have any additional relevant comments or suggestions regarding the draft Code and Practice Guidance?**

Ards and North Down Borough would seek clarification of the following issues with the Food Standards Risk Assessment Descriptors

#### **Scale of Supply & Distribution**

- Definition – Low Hazard. The wording is not correct – it states - Establishments supplying/distributing food locally, with known local suppliers to the business (including small and local food establishments selling ready to eat food such as corner shops, cafes and restaurants)

This factor is in relation to food being supplied by the specific business and the number of their customers. The wording highlighted needs to be changed as the

interpretation would indicate that it is food being received into the business from local suppliers.

Secondly why is the statement related to ready to eat food. For example, a local butcher supplies cooked ham to a local café it would be scored as low risk but if they supplied mince steak this activity would not meet the definition of low risk.

Could you please give a reason why the term “ready to eat “is specified.

It would read better as Establishments supplying/distributing food locally to small businesses such as corner shops, cafes and restaurants.

- International, National and Regional

NI Councils would need a definition of international, national and regional supply, particularly in the context of NI on the Island of Ireland and physically separated from the UK.

- Complexity of Supply Chain

The descriptors for Significant and Minor Hazard makes reference to the UK. For NI Councils this definition would need to be amended to consider the NI's unique position in regard to being in the EU Regulatory regime.

The descriptor for serious hazard references countries outside the UK equivalent regulatory oversight. Could more detail be provided as to what this means – is it 3rd Countries.

**Question 8a. Do you agree or disagree with our assessment of the impacts on Competent Authorities and our assumptions on familiarisation and training resulting from the proposed changes to the Code? Please describe the main reasons for your answer.**

Ards and North Down Borough Council agree.

**Question 8b. Do you agree or disagree with our assessment of the impacts on Competent Authorities in relation to changes to procedures? Please describe the main reasons for your answer.**

Ards and North Down Borough Council agree with this proposal.

**Question 8c. If responding on behalf of a Competent Authority, how long would you estimate that it will take to update local policies and procedures if the proposals were implemented? If providing an estimate, please explain which proposal (or proposals) it relates to.**

Ards and North Down Borough Council would estimate that 1 hour to review and amend local policies and procedures.

**Question 8d. Do you foresee any other impacts from the implementation of the main proposals detailed beyond those we have identified? Where possible, please explain your views, which proposal (or proposals) they relate to, and**

**provide quantifiable evidence (for example, costs associated with updating your administration systems, existing procedures, the benefits of greater flexibility to allocate staff to activities.)**

Ards and North Down Borough Council would request confirmation that the FSA will cover the cost of any changes necessary to the Councils MIS.

### **Questions in relation to future potential developments - Qualifications**

**Question I. Do you consider that moving the list of FSA endorsed qualifications to the Practice Guidance could provide flexibility to recognise new qualifications more expediently without reducing the professional standards subject to an agreed and published governance procedure being in place? If not, please provide your reasons and evidence of the impact you think this will have.**

Ards and North Down Borough Council strongly disagree with the proposed moving of the FSA endorsed qualifications from the Code to the Practice Guidance. In addition, Ards and North Down Borough Council are aware also that this proposal is not being considered in the Welsh consultation. If this proposal were to be implemented, it would create inconsistencies with the Code between the 3 nations and Ards and North Down Borough Council would question why Food Standards Agency is content for the list of FSA endorsed qualifications to be retained in the Code in Wales and devalue its position in England and Northern Ireland.

Ards and North Down Borough are aware that District Councils are experiencing recruitment and retention challenges, particularly since Covid and support the FSA work stream in this area. However, the suggestion to remove the endorsed qualifications from the Code to the Practice Guidance is not a solution. There has already been a reduction in the length of experience required to be fully authorised. The removal of EHRB (Environmental Health Registration Board) has also weakened the consistent approach to qualification and competence. Any further amendments to this would jeopardise the integrity of the profession. Public perception is that food safety officers have recognised qualifications and that they are overseen by an official body/competent authority.

We acknowledge that there are existing flexibilities within the Code that recognises equivalent qualifications and therefore this proposal is not necessary.

The move from the Code to PG (Practice Guidance) downgrades the status of the listed qualification to an optional list. The FSA endorsed qualifications contained in the Code have to date provided a consistent benchmark for District Council's to ensure that officers responsible for food and public safety have received the appropriate initial training. To date these qualifications have maintained to a high standard of competence throughout the profession. The high level of food safety compliance in the Ards and North Down Borough Council area is due to the quality of the EHO's that have attained these qualifications and been employed by the Council. Removing the need to attain these qualifications has the potential to affect the

profession as a whole and Ards and North Down Borough Council would argue that professional standards will be detrimentally affected.

In addition, this may create inconsistencies between Councils on qualification requirements for the recruitment of Food Safety officers, which in turn may create inconsistencies in competence of these officers and inconsistencies in the application of enforcement and regulation. We believe it would also make it more difficult for the FSA to assess officer competence during audits. To date there has never been any concerns raised by the FSA regarding officer competency at audit due to the qualifications.

The endorsed qualifications provide a consistent level that candidates have to achieve. Under the new proposals each individual will be submitting different evidence of qualification and assessed by differing Lead Food Officers. The qualifications are useful for both the profession and employers as it provides a recognised independent level of consistency and removes the burden from the employer to carry out assessments.

Under this proposal lead food officers will potentially not be officers with a suitable qualification. This too will lead to inconsistencies in officer competence, enforcement and regulation. The lead officer role is essential in ensuring the appropriate oversight of the food safety function and should be protected.

Current EHO's have attained the qualifications through a desire to become an EHO and take pride in the title and the profession. To move the need for a suitable qualification from essential to desirable downgrades their achievements and the work that they do. Removing the qualification has the potential to reduce the value of the EHO and may make the profession less attractive to work in. Jobs could be re-evaluated at lower salaries.

EHO's have for a long time been essential in ensuring food and public safety through proactive and reactive inspections and investigations, including many emergency situations, one such example being the Flicks E-coli outbreak, where through the diligent work of EHO's across many of the Councils, no deaths occurred. EHO's are vital in enforcing the food information regulations and preventing the sale of unsafe food. The number of high-profile cases that have been taken by EHO's in respect of allergen non-compliance is evidence of the need for suitably qualified officers to undertake the food safety function.

Any downgrading of the qualification status of officers carrying out official controls could leave officers open to legal challenge in respect of their competency. Any legal action that they may take could degrade the expert witness status of those officers in a court and severely impact effective regulation.

EHO's develop a wide skill set, due to the training they must undertake to achieve the appropriate qualification. They are not restricted to the function area they work in and can work across a number of public health functions while carrying out their role in food safety. This enables them to maximise the outcomes from any inspection, investigation or contact with business.

Food safety officers work alone and are required to be able to make the appropriate decision at the time of any visit. They must be able to work unsupervised and be competent to make decisions unaided and sometimes under pressurised or volatile situations. The wide skill set, and knowledge gained under the current system of recognised qualifications enables them to make such decisions. While Councils do employ officers without the listed qualifications these officers do not work unsupervised or unaided. It is the EHO that makes the decision on the most appropriate course of action based on the information gathered by the technical assistant or officer. These officers allow DC's (District Councils) to use resources effectively but they do not replace the need for suitably qualified staff.

The move to the PG also removes the robust oversight by FSA and the EU on the qualification of the staff employed to carry out the Food Safety functions. The current oversight is maintaining the high quality of professionals within the food safety function and ensures consistency of recruitment.

EU legislation sets standards for food safety officers, in that food safety units must have a sufficient number of suitably qualified, authorised and experienced staff i.e. have obtained a recognised qualification rather than just training for example the TARP regs make the distinction between Official Fish Inspectors being qualified and assistants being trained. Current legislation also set standards for premises within the City Council area, this proposal could potentially affect premises approved under EU legislation if the EU deem officers in NI as not suitably qualified.

Without independent and consistent oversight, there is the potential for training bodies or private consultants to create training qualifications with no accreditation.

Under this proposal there is the potential for the food safety function to move to private contractors with their own auditors. DC EHO's are vital in providing a neutral and fair regulatory enforcement programme. They are required to undertake conflict of interest declarations to ensure an unbiased approach to regulation and are vital in providing impartial and fair advice, guidance and where necessary enforcement.

The strong working relationships between the DCs in the eleven Councils would be severely impacted by the introduction of private contractors and auditors. All 11 DC's currently work together to ensure consistency and effective regulation and enforcement across the Districts. This close working relationship ensures that food and public safety is maintained across the country in areas such as food fraud, incidents and product recalls and withdrawals. Private contractors would have no such interest in joint working or the wider food safety remit of District Council officers.

Private contractors and auditors will charge a fee for their services and this removes their impartiality.

The removal of suitable qualifications has huge implications for human resource management within the DC's. This suggestion will result in a mix of staff with different qualifications potentially all able to do the same job but on differing pay grades. District Councils would not be able to manage the range of job descriptions, differing contracts and different grading structure. DC's could potentially be in non-

compliance with internal governance procedures in terms of staff recruitment, job descriptions, employee specifications and staff development and progression.

Rather than move the qualifications to an optional requirement it would be better to implement some of the other flexibilities suggested in this consultation and assess their effectiveness first.

District Councils would also welcome the progression of some of the previously suggested solutions that would make our work more efficient and enable DC's to manage their time and resources more effectively e.g. permit to trade, widening the scope of FPNs (Fixed Penalty Notices) for other food safety offences.

Recruitment and retention workstreams within the FSA should also continue. Ards and North Down Borough Council currently work with the University of Ulster, who provide the EH degree in NI, to encourage students to consider District Councils as an employer. The Council also provides a student placement annually. Ards and North Down Borough Council will continue to work with colleagues in other Local Authorities to provide lectures and bespoke training for the University. Ards and North Down Borough Council are also working with schools and colleges to promote the profession. Support from the FSA in this regard would be appreciated to enable DC's to put adequate resources to these initiatives. Awareness raising of the important role of food safety officers in protecting food and public safety should be invested in.

**Question II. What do you perceive to be the advantages, disadvantages and impacts if we move the list of qualifications from the Code to the Practice Guidance?**

Ards and North Down Borough Council would refer you to the answer in Question 1 above.

**Question III. Is there an alternative way that we could more expediently update the list of FSA endorsed qualifications from the one presented?**

Ards and North Down Borough Council would propose that the FSA explore the viability of a shorter consultation timescale for any amendments to the FSA endorsed qualifications.

The FSA endorsed qualifications are not developed very often and to develop an equivalent would take time. This would give time to provide a consultation before implementation.

If the qualifications are removed from the Code and put in the PG then there is no opportunity for consultation on any amendments.

If qualifications are moved to the PG and qualifications are removed from the list, then there is the potential that existing staff may no longer meet the requirements of their role, and the lack of consultation would mean FSA would be unaware of the potential impacts.



## Consultation on proposed amendments to the Food Law Code of Practice and Practice Guidance (Northern Ireland)

**Launch date: 24 February 2025**

**Respond by: 19 May 2025**

### This consultation will be of most interest to

- Competent Authorities – district councils
- Food businesses and industry trade bodies
- Awarding bodies for environmental health professionals
- Trade Unions and expert groups may also have an interest

### Purpose of the consultation

To seek stakeholder views on the proposed changes to the Food Law Code of Practice (the Code) and Practice Guidance (PG).

Key proposals include:

1. an updated risk-based approach to the prioritisation and timescales for undertaking initial food hygiene official controls of new food establishments
2. enabling, in certain circumstances, an establishments food hygiene intervention risk rating to be amended following a wider range of official control methods and techniques, including those undertaken remotely
3. extending the activities that officers, who do not hold a 'suitable qualification' for food hygiene or food standards, can, if competent, undertake
4. a clarification in approach to interventions at food business establishments that fall into risk category E for food hygiene
5. removal of the prescriptive number of hours required for continuing professional development (CPD)
6. other amendments to reflect legislative change, provide clarity, improve consistency and keep pace with current practices

## How to respond

Please use the consultation response form below to provide your comments:

[Consultation response form](#)

The consultation response form should then be emailed to

[CodeReviewResponses@food.gov.uk](mailto:CodeReviewResponses@food.gov.uk)



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# Details of consultation

## Introduction

In Northern Ireland, district councils are Competent Authorities (CAs) responsible for verification and enforcement of compliance with food law in the majority of food businesses. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is responsible for providing advice and guidance on the approach that CAs should take, and this is set out in the statutory Code which is issued by the Department of Health. Additionally, the PG is issued to assist CAs with the discharge of their statutory duty to enforce food law. It is non-statutory, complements the Code, and provides general advice on the approach to enforcement of the law.

CAs have a legal obligation to have regard to the provisions in the Code in relation to the delivery of official controls. The Code requires regular review and revision to ensure that it reflects current priorities, policy and legislative requirements so that CAs delivery of food control activities remain effective, consistent and proportionate.

This consultation provides stakeholders with an opportunity to comment on the proposals, which are outlined below. Parallel consultations are also being undertaken in [England](#) and [Wales](#).

## Background

The food landscape has changed dramatically in the three decades since the current food hygiene regulatory system was introduced, as has the way we buy and consume food. These changes create new opportunities for us to better protect consumers' interests. We want to make sure CAs can target their resources as effectively as possible and ensure that every intervention adds value and drives compliance.

Having assessed the [challenges with the current model](#), in [September 2022](#), the FSA Board endorsed the headline policy proposals for a revised Food Hygiene Delivery Model (FHDM). During the spring of 2023, we held a 12-week consultation on the initial draft proposed developments for a modernised FHDM across [Northern Ireland](#), [England](#) and [Wales](#). As part of the consultation, we held nine local authority (LA) engagement events across the three nations and an online webinar. We also attended some industry group meetings. We received 114 consultation responses and gathered over 2,000 pieces of feedback from across the three nations.

The proposed developments consulted on in September 2023 were:

- a modernised food hygiene intervention rating scheme, including a decision matrix to determine the appropriate frequency of these controls based on the risk posed by a food business establishment

- an updated risk-based approach to the timescales (where not prescribed in legislation) for initial official controls of new food establishments, and undertaking due official controls
- increased flexibility as to the methods and techniques of official controls that can be used to risk rate an establishment, including the use of remote official controls
- extending the activities that officers, such as regulatory support officers, who do not hold a 'suitable qualification' for food hygiene can, if competent, undertake

Our published [response](#) to the consultation captured stakeholders mixed views on some elements of the proposed developments. As a result of the consultation, we decided not to progress the proposals which required piloting, or significant changes to management information systems (MIS) until further information about associated costs was available from the roll out of the Food Standards Model in Northern Ireland and England. Instead, we decided to focus on further developing the policy proposals which had broad support and could be implemented without piloting. These are included in the main proposals for this consultation.

## Main proposals

The main proposals in this consultation are:

- 1) an updated risk-based approach to the prioritisation and timescales for undertaking initial food hygiene official controls of new food establishments
- 2) enabling, in certain circumstances, an establishments food hygiene intervention risk rating to be amended following a wider range of official control methods and techniques, including those undertaken remotely
- 3) extending the activities that officers, who do not hold a 'suitable qualification' for food hygiene or food standards can, if competent, undertake
- 4) a clarification in approach to interventions at food business establishments that fall into risk category E for food hygiene
- 5) removal of the prescriptive number of hours required for CPD
- 6) other amendments which reflect legislative change, provide clarity, improve consistency and keep pace with current practices

## Policy objectives

The proposals set out in this consultation are intended to:

- enhance more effective use of CA resource by:
  - prioritising official controls at highest risk establishments
  - removing unnecessary barriers to official control delivery, including widening the cohort of professionals that can undertake certain activities

- enabling greater use of existing flexibilities as well as, where appropriate, the use of remote official controls
- increase consistency in the delivery of official controls by providing clarification on existing policy
- ensure the continued protection of public health and consumer confidence, including in relation to the food hygiene rating scheme (FHRS)

## Detailed proposals

### Proposal 1: An updated risk-based approach to the prioritisation and timescales for undertaking initial food hygiene official controls of new food establishments

#### Current approach

The current [Code](#) (issued May 2023) provides that, in relation to food hygiene, an initial inspection of new food business establishments must occur within 28 days of registration, or when the CA becomes aware that the establishment is in operation, whichever is the sooner. The Code also provides that CAs must use information supplied by food business operators (FBOs) when registering their food business establishments to determine when to carry out an initial inspection.

The current [PG](#) (issued March 2021), provides that, where the establishment is believed to be low risk, consideration can be given to postponing the initial inspection, in circumstances where conducting it would delay planned interventions to premises involved in high-risk activities. Furthermore, where an establishment has registered 28 days before the commencement of operations, the inspection can be delayed until operations have begun.

#### Proposed approach

It is proposed that CAs use the information supplied by FBOs to assess the potential inherent risk of new food business establishments and apply a more risk-based approach to the timescales for undertaking initial official food hygiene controls. This aligns with the approach taken for food standards.

It is also proposed that the CA may, in certain circumstances, use any method and technique of official control (individually or a combination thereof), provided for in article 14 of Regulation (EU) 2017/625, whether undertaken physically or remotely. This would not apply to those establishments with a potential high inherent risk score, those within scope of the FHRS, or those subject to approval.

It is proposed that CAs review the information supplied by FBOs when registering a new food business establishment (referred to as an initial desktop assessment) within 28 days of registration, or from when the CA becomes aware that the establishment is in operation, whichever is the sooner.

The initial desktop assessment would use any information supplied by the registering FBO and any other information the CA deems relevant, to assess an establishments potential hazard score and determine when to undertake the initial official control. This potential hazard score is provided in part 1 of the food hygiene scoring system (set out in [Annex 1](#) of the Code) which includes the following elements:

- type of food and method of handling
- method of processing
- consumers at risk, including consideration of vulnerable risk groups

The scores from these three elements, when added together, would give the overall 'potential hazard' score.

The FSA's Register a Food Business Service (RAFB) was enhanced in summer 2024, with new questions added to gain information on the three elements listed above, which will assist CAs when reviewing information supplied by the FBO.

It is also proposed that the initial desktop assessment is an activity that can be undertaken by officers not holding a 'suitable qualification' as long as they are competent.

When an establishment's potential hazard score has been determined, it is proposed that an initial official control would be undertaken within the timeframes set out in table 1, using appropriate methods and techniques.

**Table 1: Timescales and methods and techniques for initial official food hygiene controls**

Potential hazard score	Timescales to undertake initial official control	Appropriate methods and techniques of official controls
30 – 97	Initial official control undertaken within 28 days of the establishment commencing operations, or from the initial desktop assessment being carried out, whichever is the sooner	A physical inspection or audit (whether full or partial)
5 – 29	Initial official control undertaken, on a risk basis, within 3 months of the establishment commencing operations, or from the initial desktop assessment being carried out, whichever is the sooner	<p>A physical inspection or audit (full or partial) should be conducted where a CA is legally required to provide a food hygiene rating to an establishment.</p> <p>Otherwise, the CA may use any method and technique of official control (individually or a combination thereof), provided for in article 14 of Regulation (EU) 2017/625, whether</p>

		<p>undertaken physically or remotely, as long as they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are effective and appropriate in the circumstances</li> <li>• verify compliance with relevant food law</li> <li>• enable validation of the desktop assessment</li> </ul>
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Where CAs become aware that a business is trading, but not registered, an initial official control should be undertaken within the above timescales, starting from the date they became aware of the establishment.

It is proposed that, as currently, CAs prioritise initial official controls of new food business establishments, so that those with a lower potential hazard do not cause undue delays to the delivery of initial or due official controls at higher risk and/or non-compliant establishments. For example, if as part of the initial desktop assessment, information indicates potential non-compliance at an establishment, this information may be used to prioritise the initial official control at that establishment, even though this would not necessarily impact the establishment's potential hazard score. This prioritisation approach is consistent with that currently taken to initial food standards controls.

The proposal regarding the methods and techniques of official controls that can be utilised, means that, for higher risk establishments (those with a potential hazard score of between 30-97), CAs would, as currently, undertake a physical inspection or audit (whether full or partial) within 28 days of the establishment commencing operations, or from the initial desktop assessment being carried out (whichever is the sooner).

For lower risk establishments (those with a potential hazard score of between 5-29), CAs would undertake an initial official control, on a risk basis, within 3 months of the establishment commencing operations, or from the initial desktop assessment being carried out (whichever is the sooner). However, the method and technique of official controls used could differ depending on the type of establishment.

CAs would have the flexibility to use any of the methods and techniques of official control set out in article 14 of Regulation (EU) 2017/625, whether physical or remote, albeit not when providing a [mandatory food hygiene rating](#) to the establishment.

When determining appropriate and effective methods and techniques, it is proposed that CAs would take into consideration factors such as, the purpose of the official control, familiarity with the establishment and whether the FBO is capable of receiving an official control remotely. The flexibility to determine the methods and techniques to use would not preclude a CA from undertaking a physical inspection at these establishments, if they choose to.

The timescales and the flexibility on the methods and techniques included in this proposal would not apply to establishments subject to approval under [Regulation \(EC\)](#)

[No 853/2004](#) or the requirements of [Regulation \(EU\) No 210/2013](#) on the approval of establishments producing sprouts, which would continue to receive an initial on-site visit as soon as practicable.

Table 2 provides examples to demonstrate how the proposed approach would differ from the current approach in relation to different types of food business establishment.

**Table 2: Comparison of timescales and methods and techniques for undertaking initial official food hygiene controls at different types of food business establishments**

Business type	Current timescales and intervention type	Proposed timescales and intervention type
Pub serving food	Physical inspection within 28 days of registration	Physical inspection or audit (whether full or partial) within 28 days of desktop assessment
Home caterer, making small number of cakes supplied direct to final consumer	Physical inspection within 28 days of registration	Physical inspection or audit (whether full or partial) within three months of desktop assessment
Food broker who takes legal ownership of food, but never takes physical ownership	Physical inspection within 28 days of registration	Any method and technique of official control (physical or remote) as long as appropriate and effective in the circumstances, within three months of desktop assessment
Sports retailer selling small selection of prepacked chocolate	Physical inspection within 28 days of registration	Any method and technique of official control (physical or remote) as long as appropriate and effective in the circumstances, within three months of desktop assessment

## Rationale for change

In 2017 the FSA commissioned [research](#) to inform work on the modernisation of the risk intervention rating systems for UK food establishments. This found that CA officers saw the requirement to undertake an initial inspection of all establishments within 28 days as not being risk-based and a drain on resources, particularly in urban areas with significant



business churn. Many officers said they would welcome the removal of this requirement and the enabling of alternative approaches, such as desktop risk assessments.

As part of the consultation on a modernised FHDM a risk-based approach to the timescales for undertaking initial official controls, with triaging of new food business establishments, was proposed.

Feedback from the consultation demonstrated that, on balance, the ability to triage and prioritise official controls according to risk was welcomed. However, it was considered that the proposed development for the modernised FHDM was overcomplicated.

Taking into account the feedback, a simplified risk-based approach, which is consistent with the food standards delivery model, has been proposed.

The proposed approach enhances the current provision within the Code that CAs use information supplied by FBOs when registering their food business establishments to determine when to carry out an initial inspection. It also enables the use of a wider range of methods and techniques of official control, including those undertaken remotely, while safeguarding FHRS.

The proposed approach would enable CAs to use their resources effectively by focusing on the highest risk establishments, while still ensuring all establishments are subject to initial official controls within appropriate timescales.

Based on the [2019-20 LAEMS data](#) and the data provided by CAs to the FSA for the year 2022-2023, 50.6% of existing establishments in Northern Ireland have a potential hazard score of less than 29, and would have fallen into the three month timescale for an initial official control. Of these establishments, 99.8% of them fell into risk category D and E. The data also provides that over 99% of these category D and E establishments are broadly compliant (as defined in the Code).

This demonstrates that, based on the potential hazard scores, CAs would be prioritising initial official controls at establishments likely to be risk rated A, B or C, and that, based on levels of compliance, the proposed approach would not have a negative impact on public health.

Additionally, officers not holding a 'suitable qualification' for food hygiene, but who are competent, would be able to undertake the desktop assessment of new establishments, which further enables effective use of CA resources.

## **Proposal 2: Enabling, in certain circumstances, an establishment's food hygiene intervention risk rating to be amended following a wider range of official control methods and techniques, including those undertaken remotely**

### **Current approach**

#### **Flexibilities**

Article 9 of Regulation (EU) 2017/625, and the current Code, provide that CAs must ensure they perform official food controls on all operators regularly, on a risk basis and with appropriate frequency.

The current Code prescribes the methods and techniques of official controls that can be used by CAs for food hygiene, which are based on the risk of an establishment. Flexibilities are provided, enabling CAs to choose which methods and techniques of official controls to use at lower risk establishments. The current approach, and available flexibilities, have been set out in table 3.

This differs to the current approach for food standards, which enables establishments, other than those categorised as priority interventions, to receive any method or technique of official control, including those undertaken remotely, as long as they are effective and appropriate in the circumstances. Those establishments that are categorised as priority interventions, would receive an inspection, partial inspection, or audit.

#### **Revision of food hygiene intervention rating**

The current Code provides that a food hygiene intervention rating can only be revised at the conclusion of an inspection or audit, partial or full, and where sufficient information has been gathered to justify the revision of the rating.

### **Proposed approach**

#### **Flexibilities**

It is proposed that the flexibilities currently available are clarified to explain which type of official control or non-official control can be used and when, and to introduce the option for use of remote official controls, where they are effective and appropriate in the circumstances. Table 3 compares the current flexibilities against those being proposed.

**Table 3: Comparison of current flexibilities against those being proposed**

Food hygiene intervention rating	Current approach	Proposed approach
A or B	Inspection, partial inspection or audit	Physical inspection or audit (whether full or partial)
C (non-broadly compliant)	Inspection, partial inspection or audit	Physical inspection or audit (whether full or partial)
C (broadly compliant)	Alternate between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>inspection, partial inspection or audit; and</li> <li>another type of official control</li> </ul>	Alternate between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>physical inspection or audit (whether full or partial); and</li> <li>any method and technique of official control (individually or a combination thereof), provided for in article 14 of Regulation (EU) 2017/625, whether undertaken physically or remotely</li> </ul>
D (establishments scoring 30 or 40 for type of food and method of handling <sup>1</sup> )	Alternate between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>inspection, partial inspection or audit; and</li> <li>other types of interventions</li> </ul>	Alternate between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>physical inspection or audit (whether full or partial); and</li> <li>any method and technique of official control (individually or a combination thereof), provided for in article 14 of Regulation (EU) 2017/625, whether undertaken physically or remotely; or a non-official control, which can be undertaken physically or remotely</li> </ul>
D (establishments scoring 5 or 10 for type of food)	Alternate between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>an official control; and</li> <li>an intervention that is not an official control</li> </ul>	Alternate between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>any method and technique of official control (individually or a combination thereof), provided for in article 14 of Regulation (EU) 2017/625, whether</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> The scores are from part 1 of the food hygiene scoring system, set out in annex 1 of the Code.

Food hygiene intervention rating	Current approach	Proposed approach
and method of handling <sup>1)</sup>		undertaken physically or remotely; and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a non-official control, which can be undertaken physically or remotely</li> </ul>
E	Alternative Enforcement Strategy (AES), which must ensure establishments continue to be subject to official controls	Alternate between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>any method and technique of official control (individually or a combination thereof), provided for in article 14 of Regulation (EU) 2017/625, whether undertaken physically or remotely; and</li> <li>a non-official control, which can be undertaken physically or remotely</li> </ul>

To support CAs in determining the methods and techniques to use, including whether to undertake them remotely, it is proposed that, as well as ensuring that the methods and techniques can verify compliance and identify non-compliances, they also consider the following factors:

- the purpose of the official control
- which methods and techniques would be most effective and appropriate, in the circumstances, this would take into account whether the CA will subsequently be issuing a revised FHRS rating
- the methods and techniques used previously, including whether undertaken physically or remotely
- whether officers are familiar with the establishment
- the track record of the establishment and any data, information or intelligence received about the establishment since the last official control
- whether the FBO is capable of receiving an official control remotely
- whether the technology used during an official control ensures confidentiality and security of business data

## Revision of food hygiene intervention rating

It is proposed that, in certain circumstances, an establishments food hygiene intervention rating can be amended following a wider range of methods and techniques of official control, including those undertaken remotely.

It is proposed that, the intervention risk rating can be revised at the conclusion of an official control where effective and appropriate methods and techniques have been used, at establishments which are excluded or exempt from FHRS.

For establishments within scope of FHRS, it is proposed that, as currently, a food hygiene intervention rating can only be revised at the conclusion of a physical inspection or audit (full or partial).

Where there is flexibility to use other methods and techniques at establishments within scope of FHRS, these flexibilities can be used. However, as currently, a new intervention rating cannot be issued. but CAs would be able to amend the date that the next intervention is due.

## Rationale for change

As part of the modernised FHDM consultation flexibility as to what methods and techniques for official controls could be used by CAs was proposed.

Respondents generally considered the proposed increase in flexibility to be useful and acknowledged the benefits including potential efficiencies. However, some concerns and limitations were outlined including potential inconsistency in the application of the flexibilities. Also, with regard to the use of remote official controls, there was concern around risk rating some food businesses, especially those receiving an FHRS rating.

Taking into account the feedback, the proposed approach has been refined to address some of the concerns raised. The proposed approach retains the existing flexibilities but clarifies where remote methods and techniques may be used. The proposed approach will also enable, in certain circumstances, the food hygiene intervention rating to be amended following a wider range of methods and techniques of official control, which aligns with the food standards delivery model approach. However, to safeguard the FHRS, this would not apply to those establishments in scope of the scheme.

The proposed approach would enable CAs to use their resources effectively by focusing physical inspections and audits on the highest risk establishments, while providing the flexibility at lower risk establishments for CAs to use other methods and techniques of official controls. This would include those undertaken remotely, and, where appropriate, to amend the risk rating of an establishment where these flexibilities have been used.

## Proposal 3: Extending the activities that officers, who do not hold a 'suitable qualification' for food hygiene or food standards, can, if competent, undertake

### Current approach

The current Code provides that officers holding a 'suitable qualification' for food hygiene or food standards can, if competent, be authorised to undertake official food hygiene and/or standards controls, and other activities at all food businesses, including relevant enforcement action.

It also provides that officers who do not hold a 'suitable qualification' for food hygiene or food standards can, if competent, be authorised to undertake the following activities:

- alternative interventions at lower risk establishments (category D and E establishments for food hygiene)
- education, advice, and coaching
- information gathering (excluding gathering, processing, and sharing intelligence)
- assist, as appropriate, authorised officers (official fish inspectors) at Border Control Posts (BCPs)

### Proposed approach

We propose extending the activities that officers who do not hold a 'suitable qualification' (currently referred to as 'suitable qualifications') can, if competent, be authorised to undertake. This would mean that in addition to the activities listed above, officers not holding a 'suitable qualification' could, if competent, be authorised to undertake:

- sampling
- non-official controls, including:
  - the initial desktop assessment of new food business establishments
  - gathering, processing, and sharing intelligence
- due official food hygiene controls at broadly compliant category D risk rated establishments and category E risk rated establishments which are:
  - not subject to approval under Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 or the requirements of Regulation (EU) No 210/2013 on the approval of establishments producing sprouts
  - rated 10 or less for 'type of food and method of handling'
  - rated 0 for 'method of processing'
- initial official food hygiene controls at establishments which:
  - from the initial desktop assessment are not subject to initial official controls within 28 days, meaning those with a potential hazard score of 30 - 97

- are not subject to approval under Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 or the requirements of Regulation (EU) No 210/2013 on the approval of establishments producing sprouts
- due official food standards controls at establishments which have an inherent risk score of at least 4 and a compliance assessment score of at least 3
- initial official food standards controls at establishments which from the initial desktop assessment, are anticipated to have an inherent risk score of 5

It is also proposed that, if when undertaking official controls it is found the risk rating category (food hygiene), inherent risk (food standards) and/or level of compliance has changed, so that the establishment does not meet the criteria above in relation to initial and due official controls, then the official control would be undertaken as soon as practicable by an officer holding a suitable qualification who is competent to carry out official controls at that type of establishment.

Additionally, if formal enforcement action is required, this would also be undertaken by an officer holding a suitable qualification and who is competent to undertake the formal enforcement action. However, if competent, officers not holding a suitable qualification could undertake informal action following official controls they have undertaken.

As currently, officers not holding a suitable qualification would be subject to appropriate supervision. For example, the outcome of the official controls they undertake, and the risk rating provided, is reviewed by an officer, who holds a suitable qualification and is competent, to ensure the risk rating is appropriate.

## Rationale for change

Officers not holding a 'suitable qualification' are limited in the types of activities they can be authorised to undertake. One of the proposed developments consulted on as part of the modernised FHDM was to extend the activities officers not holding a 'suitable qualification' could, if competent, undertake, which included official controls at low-risk establishments. Feedback to this proposed development highlighted some concerns, however, in general additional flexibility as to who can undertake official controls was welcomed.

Recognising the feedback received, the proposed approach would extend the activities officers not holding a suitable qualification could, if competent, undertake, which would include official controls at low-risk establishments which do not use higher risk processes.

The proposed approach would allow CAs to deploy a wider cohort of officers and enable more effective use of resources. For example, CAs could authorise trainees, if competent, to undertake official control at low-risk establishments.

Based on data provided by CAs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, to the FSA for the year 2023-2024, there were 305 officers (4 in NI) in relation to food hygiene and 209<sup>2</sup> officers (3 in NI) in relation to food standards, employed by CAs who did not hold a suitable qualification. This includes regulatory support officers and trainees working towards a suitable qualification. These officers, if competent, and assuming they have capacity, could be authorised to undertake official controls and the other activities listed above. Considering the Northern Ireland data, if all these officers were to be authorised, then it would mean an additional 4% of officers in relation to hygiene and 3% in relation to standards that could undertake official controls at lower risk establishments when compared to the number of officers holding a suitable qualification.

It is recognised that CAs may not have officers to authorise, and if they do, they may not have capacity to undertake additional activities. However, this proposal will provide CAs with additional flexibility to determine how to utilise officers who do not hold a suitable qualification and enable them to choose whether to extend the authorisations of officers who are competent.

To support CAs in determining whether officers are competent, the FSA provides a Competency Framework<sup>3</sup> against which competency can be assessed. This means public health is not undermined by this proposal, as officers would still need to be able to demonstrate they are competent before being authorised to undertake any additional activities.

## **Proposal 4: Clarification in approach to interventions at food business establishments that fall into risk category E for food hygiene**

### **Current approach**

The current Code provides that the lowest risk establishments for food hygiene (those with an intervention rating of E) must, as a minimum, be subject to an intervention by a CA, which could be in the form of an AES, every three years. The Code also makes clear that CAs must ensure that where AES is used that establishments continue to be subject to official controls, and that their strategy must devise how official controls will be conducted at these establishments.

AES is defined in the Code as, ‘methods by which low risk establishments are monitored to ensure their continued compliance with food law.’ Examples of AES provided in the PG include making use of questionnaires, surveys, project-based inspections and

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<sup>2</sup> This figure includes Trading Standards professionals in England and Wales.

<sup>3</sup> The Competency Framework is currently being reviewed and it is anticipated that it will be relaunched in the summer.



intelligence gathering visits. Where CAs choose to use AES, the Code provides that they must set out their AES in their service plan or enforcement policy.

The PG advises that where AES is being used by CAs, that establishments are to have received an initial inspection and be risk rated before determining that AES is appropriate at that establishment. The PG also advises that, a CAs strategy allow interventions to be undertaken at establishments subject to AES, for example, where a consumer complaint has been received, and that a random percentage of establishments are subject to inspection.

The flexibility to use AES does not prevent CAs from using other methods and techniques, such as inspections or audits at these establishments, if that is the CAs preferred option. Additionally, AES cannot be used at establishments subject to approval under Regulation (EC) No 853/2004, as these establishments must receive an official control.

AES can also be used for food standards, with the Code providing that for the lowest risk establishments, any method and technique of official control could be used, as long as effective and appropriate in the circumstances, which could include remote interventions, or AES.

## Proposed approach

It is proposed that, as currently, the lowest risk establishments for food hygiene (those with an intervention rating of E) receive an intervention every three years, but the frequency at which official controls are undertaken is clarified.

This would mean that establishments would continue to receive an intervention every three years, but this intervention would alternate between an official control and a non-official control.

The official control could, as currently, be any method and technique, and may be undertaken physically or remotely, provided it is effective and appropriate in the circumstances and verifies compliance with relevant food law.

The non-official control could be any activity which maintains contact with an establishment but does not verify compliance with relevant food law. This could also be undertaken physically or remotely.

This approach would mean that the term AES is removed from the Code and PG.

In relation to food standards, it is proposed that reference to AES is removed, but as currently, CAs would still be able to use any method and technique of official control at the lowest risk establishments, including those undertaken remotely.

## Rationale for change

The current approach to interventions at category E establishments, with the flexibility to use AES, has caused some confusion in how interventions are being undertaken by CAs. It has also led to inconsistencies in the frequencies at which category E establishments receive official controls.

Article 9 of Regulation (EU) 2017/625, and the Code, provides that CAs shall perform official controls on all operators regularly, on a risk basis and with appropriate frequency.

To provide clarity and consistency in the frequency at which category E establishments receive official controls, and the methods and techniques that are appropriate, it is proposed that CAs would alternate between official controls and non-official controls every three years.

The proposed approach would, as currently, provide CAs with the flexibility to choose any method and technique of official control, including those undertaken remotely, and clarifies that an establishment is subject to an official control at least every 6 years. The proposed approach would also mean that CAs are no longer required to have an AES set out in their service plan or enforcement policy.

Currently, the Code provides that official controls at higher risk and/or non-compliant businesses, or those that are likely to be high-risk, take priority over official controls at those which are lower risk and/or compliant. Therefore, as currently, CA resources will continue to be focused towards the highest risk and/or non-compliant establishments.

The proposed approach is not anticipated to impact FHRS. As currently, a new (or updated) food hygiene intervention risk rating, and FHRS rating, would only be provided following a physical inspection or audit. If other methods and techniques of official controls or non-official controls are used, the FHRS rating would not be updated. This is consistent with the current approach where an FHRS rating is not updated following AES.

## Proposal 5: Removal of the specific number of hours required for continuing professional development (CPD)

### Current approach

The current Code provides that CAs must ensure officers undertaking official controls receive a minimum of 20 hours CPD a year, relevant to the activities they are authorised to undertake. These 20 hours are then split between 10 hours relating to subject matters set out in Chapter 1 of Annex II of [Regulation \(EU\) 2017/625](#), and 10 hours on other professional matters which supports an officer's role but is not necessarily food related.

Although currently the number of hours of CPD to undertake a year is 20, this is a minimum number, and it is recognised that some officers may need to undertake extra

hours depending on the experience of individual officers, their areas of authorisation and any specific training needs they may have.

Additionally, officers not holding a suitable qualification, such as regulatory support officers, do not have to undertake a minimum number of CPD hours, but are still required to receive relevant training that is appropriate to the activities they undertake.

## Proposed approach

It is proposed that officers, including those that do not hold a suitable qualification, undertake CPD and training which is relevant to their role and the activities they are authorised to undertake. However, a minimum number of CPD hours is not specified. Instead, it is proposed that the amount of training and CPD officers receive is:

- proportionate to their role and the activities they are authorised to undertake
- informed by the officer's competency assessment
- reviewed and updated on an annual basis

It would be expected that CAs are able to demonstrate how they have assessed the CPD requirements of each officer, including the CPD and training that has been made available in response to the officer's learning and development needs.

## Rationale for change

The current approach to CPD, and prescribing a minimum number of hours, does not recognise that every officer differs, and that to maintain or improve their competency, some officers may need more training and CPD than others. For example, the training and CPD needs of an officer undertaking official controls at lower risk establishments is likely to differ from an officer undertaking official controls at high-risk establishments.

We also have anecdotal evidence that the current approach has led to officers attending training courses solely to achieve the 20 hours CPD, even though the training may not be relevant to their role or needed to maintain their competence.

The proposed approach provides flexibility for CAs to determine the amount and type of training and CPD that each officer requires to be competent to undertake their role and the activities they are authorised for. This approach means that CAs can consider officers on an individual basis to ensure they receive the training and CPD they require.

It is recognised that, as currently, the proposed approach may mean that some officers undertake more than 20 hours training and CPD a year, but there may also be instances where officers receive less depending on their role, the activities they are authorised to undertake, and their competency.

## Proposal 6: Other amendments to reflect legislative change, provide clarity, improve consistency and keep pace with current practices

There have been some other proposed changes to the Code and PG as detailed in Annexes A and B of this consultation package. Examples include:

- providing, in the PG, examples of where the additional score of 22 for vulnerable risk groups as set out in the food hygiene intervention rating scheme would not apply, to increase consistency in the use of this score
- providing more explicit reference and descriptors, regarding food safety culture, in part 3 of the food hygiene intervention rating scheme. Guidance has also been included in the draft PG. The purpose is to provide clarification and consistency in the assessment of food safety culture under confidence in management scoring, which reflects the legal obligations for FBOs to establish, maintain and provide evidence of an appropriate food safety culture in accordance with annex II of Regulation (EC) No 853/2004
- clarifying in the PG, where allergen cross-contamination is considered within the food hygiene intervention rating scheme, to increase consistency in how this is taken into account when risk rating establishments
- moving guidance on parts two and three of the food hygiene intervention rating scheme from the FHRS Statutory Guidance to the PG
- adding the [Trading Standards Professional Apprenticeship](#), depending on the modules completed, as a suitable qualification for food standards

This qualification was [endorsed](#) by the FSA in May 2023 and will widen the cohort of professionals that can undertake official food standards controls.

- adding the following qualifications to the list of suitable qualifications for food hygiene and food standards:
  - Degree in Environmental Health awarded by the Dublin Institute of Technology (awarded from June 2012 onwards)
  - Degree in Environmental Health awarded by the Technological University Dublin
- amending terminology in the Code and PG so that it is consistent throughout. This includes consistent use of 'must' to highlight a legal obligation which CAs must follow, and 'should' to highlight statutory guidance that provides clarification and guidance on legal obligations, which CAs must have due regard to
- moving some provisions from the Code to the PG and vice versa to align with the terminology changes
- removing references to the Competency Framework from the Code, but retaining references to it in the PG. This is to enable the Competency Framework, following appropriate engagement/consultation with stakeholders, to be updated in a more agile manner
- clarifying in the Code the guidance on appropriate competency assessments

- removing references to the PG from the Code to enable the PG, following appropriate engagement/consultation with stakeholders, to be updated in a more agile manner
- removing references to the [Framework Agreement](#), as the relevant provisions from the Framework Agreement were already included within the Code and PG. It is anticipated that the Framework Agreement would be disapplied for food and feed controls in the future, when the Feed Code in England and Wales has been reviewed.
- Removing the section on ‘departure from the Code’, as although CAs must have regard to the Code, it does not prevent them from taking an alternative approach, as long as they meet their legal obligations. Taking this into account, this section was considered unnecessary
- removing references to simple cautions to take into account the [Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022](#) which removes use of term ‘simple caution’ and does not appear to include CAs as authorities who can serve diversionary or community cautions

Annexes A and B of this consultation package provide an overview of the changes and provides details of the provisions that have moved from the Code to the PG and vice versa.

## Impacts

### Costs

#### Costs to district councils

The economic costs that arise from the changes to the Code are described below.

#### Familiarisation costs

CA officers who deliver food hygiene and food standards official controls will have to familiarise themselves with the policy changes to the Code, and PG and any amendments to provide clarity and consistency which have been detailed in Annexes A and B of this consultation package.

In line with our standard methodology on the appraisal of new guidance, we have estimated the one-off familiarisation time by dividing the total word count of the amended sections of the Code and PG, where amendments to the FHDM and other policy changes have been made, along with the text in the summary of changes table at Annex A and B of this consultation pack (in total 17,124 words), by the average number of words a person can read per minute. For the amended sections of the Code and PG where there are policy changes, an average reading rate for technical text of 75 words per minute has been used. While for Annexes A and B we used an average reading rate for prose text of 275 words per minute. This generates a total familiarisation time of 1.77 hours.

In Northern Ireland, there are 11 CAs, and 203 qualified officers engaged in delivering food hygiene and standards controls<sup>4</sup>.

We anticipate that one lead food officer from each CA will read and familiarise themselves with the new changes (1.77 hours). It is also assumed that these officers would spend two hours to prepare and disseminate the information to other officers, via the appropriate channels.

It is then also assumed that all other food hygiene and standards officers would spend one hour reading the relevant changes. Additionally, they would receive one hour of cascade training to familiarise themselves with the changes.

One caveat is that there may have been some double counting between the number of officers undertaking food hygiene and the number of officers undertaking food standards official controls. This would potentially result in an overestimation of the familiarisation cost.<sup>5</sup>

Familiarisation costs are quantified by multiplying the wage cost of the relevant officers, with the time spent on familiarisation. For lead food officers we assume that their salary would be higher than for other authorised officers, for whom the wages of Health Services and Public Health Managers have been used. According to the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2023 data, the median hourly wage cost is £32.40 for a manager and £26.67 for a food officer (including a 22% uplift for overheads<sup>6</sup>).

Multiplying the time spent on familiarisation, the number of officers in Northern Ireland and their respective wages generates a total cost of familiarisation of £11,586.

### Local authority officer training costs

We anticipate that one lead food officer per CA would attend remote training to understand the proposed changes and to ensure consistent implementation. Therefore, we assume that 11 lead officers will spend approximately 1.25 hours each attending the training.

This training will be provided by the FSA remotely after the publication of the Code. The training will be recorded and become available to all other officers as part of their continuing professional development plan.

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<sup>4</sup> Data based on End of Year Survey 2023/24 received by CAs

<sup>5</sup> The FSA Local Authority Monitoring Team has completed data accuracy checks, and any additional corrections will be updated in the analysis.

<sup>6</sup> Uplift based on Regulatory Policy Committee [guidance](#)

Training costs are quantified by multiplying the number of officers undertaking the training with their relevant wage cost (£32.40) and the time spent on training. This generates a total training cost of £446.

### **Updating procedures costs**

As the proposals introduce changes to how CAs manage and deliver interventions, we expect that CAs will need to update their procedures and paperwork to reflect the proposed approach to initial official controls. The cost associated with this will also depend on the number of CAs that choose to utilise the flexibilities described in the proposals. However, we don't have evidence to indicate how many CAs will adopt these flexibilities and how long it might take to update procedures.

## **Costs to industry**

### **Impact of proposal to amend timescales for undertaking initial official controls**

The proposed risk-based approach in relation to the prioritisation and timescales for undertaking initial official controls may mean that lower-risk establishments do not receive an initial FHRS rating for up to 3 months and 28 days, compared to 28 days currently. Although this would not legally prevent these establishments from trading, it could impact their ability to trade on at some marketplaces and online platforms. The reason for this is that the policies of these marketplaces and online platforms may require establishments to have an FHRS rating before allowing them to trade at their market or on their platform. However, based on analysis of FHRS data between April 2023 and March 2024, the average waiting time for an initial FHRS rating across Northern Ireland was just under 2 months. We have also provided advice in the PG that, CAs may consider undertaking an initial official control as a priority where the business is unable to trade until the official control has been undertaken.

### **Impact of proposal for approach to low-risk establishments**

The proposed approach to low risk establishments is not anticipated to have an impact on businesses.

The proposed approach would mean that the lowest risk establishments would receive an intervention every three years, which alternates between an official control and a non-official control.

The current approach also means that these low-risk establishments receive an intervention every three years, and although currently, this intervention can be AES, these establishments are still required to be subject to official controls.

Similarly, the flexibility to decide what methods and techniques of official controls to use is not anticipated to have a significant impact on businesses. CAs already have flexibility to determine the type of intervention to undertake at low-risk establishments and this will



continue to be limited when the CA is required to provide a food hygiene rating to those establishments within scope of the FHRS scheme.

## Benefits

### Benefits to district councils

#### Enables the most effective use of resources

The majority of the key proposals enable CAs to make the most effective use of their resources.

The proposal to introduce a risk-based approach to the prioritisation and timescales for undertaking initial official controls will enable CAs to use their resources effectively while ensuring that establishments are subject to official controls within appropriate timescales. Additionally, officers not holding a 'suitable qualification' for food hygiene and/or food standards, but who are competent, could undertake the initial desktop assessment of new food business establishments.

Similarly, the proposal to extend the activities that officers not holding a 'suitable qualification' for food hygiene and/or food standards can, if competent, undertake will allow CAs to deploy a wider cohort of officers, which the current Code restricts. This could potentially further enable the effective use of CA resources.

As detailed above, based on data provided by CAs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, to the FSA for the year 2023-2024, there were 305 officers (4 in NI) in relation to food hygiene and 209 officers (3 in NI) in relation to food standards, employed by CAs who did not hold a suitable qualification. If CAs choose to use the flexibility, these officers could, if competent, be authorised to undertake a wider range of activities, including official controls at lower risk establishments.

The proposed flexibility to undertake certain official food hygiene controls remotely, where appropriate, could also help officers save time and travel costs, leading to more effective use of CA resources, as they won't need to travel to the business premises to undertake the official control. Due to less travelling, we also anticipate an environmental benefit due to a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions. However, we cannot quantify this benefit, as we don't know to what degree individual CAs will avail of these flexibilities. Officers may also continue to carry out onsite official controls due to the overlapping nature of other CA functions that they have responsibility for which necessitate an onsite visit.

Additionally, the inclusion of additional suitable qualifications for food hygiene and food standards would enable CAs to recruit, and authorise, officers from a wider cohort of individuals.



Lastly, the proposed approach to training and CPD will provide CAs with the flexibility to determine the number of hours of training and CPD that each officer needs to undertake. This provides more flexibility for officers to engage in relevant and meaningful CPD tailored to their competency needs as opposed to meeting a prescriptive number of hours.

## Benefits to consumers

### Improve the quality and consistency of food control activities

The proposals are anticipated to improve the quality and consistency of food control activities and ensure CA resources are being used effectively, as well as prioritising resources on the highest risk establishments. This means that consumers will benefit from enhanced consumer protection through more efficient allocation of resources.

## Engagement and consultation process

Widespread engagement activities have taken place throughout the development of these proposals.

Work to modernise the FHDM in Northern Ireland, England and, Wales commenced in September 2021. We established an LA/FSA Working Group to provide a mechanism for working collaboratively across the three countries to modernise the model. The Group helped to critically review and inform our thinking on the proposed developments.

The engagement with the LA/FSA Working group was supplemented by nine LA engagement events across the three nations and an online webinar during 2023. We also attended some industry group meetings. In parallel, we held a 12-week written consultation on the proposed developments, covering [Northern Ireland](#), [England](#) and [Wales](#).

As a result of that engagement and consultation, we have refined and further developed the proposals, which are the subject of this consultation.

At the end of this consultation period, the FSA will analyse the responses and make any relevant amendments to the Code. Within three months of the consultation ending, we aim to publish a summary of the responses received and provide a link to it on our website.

## Questions asked in this consultation

To enable us to fully understand your responses and adequately take account of them, please explain, and where possible evidence, any answers to the questions we have included in this consultation. Please complete the consultation response form (see Responses section below).

## Questions in relation to proposals 1 to 6

1. In relation to proposal 1, an updated risk-based approach to the prioritisation and timescales for undertaking initial official controls of new food establishments:
  - a. do you consider that the approach will provide CAs with the ability to deploy current resources more effectively? If not, why not? (Please specify any aspects of the proposal which require further consideration, and why).
  - b. it is proposed that, for food hygiene, timescales are provided for initial official controls of all establishments. For food standards, timescales are currently only provided for the highest risk establishments in the Code, with timescales for lower risk establishments provided in separate guidance. Would you agree or disagree with moving the food standards timescales into the Code in the future, so all timescales are in one document? Please describe the main reasons for your answer.
  - c. proposal 1 relates to the timescales for initial official controls. No changes to the timescales for due official controls are proposed as part of this consultation, these will remain, as currently, at 28 days for all establishments. However, to assist us in planning future policy in relation to the timescales for due official controls, do you agree or disagree with keeping the timescales at 28 days? Please describe the main reasons for your answer.
2. In relation to proposal 2, enabling, in certain circumstances, an establishments food hygiene intervention rating to be amended following a wider range of official control method and techniques including those undertaken remotely:
  - a. do you consider that the proposal will enable CAs to deploy current resources more effectively? If not, why not? (Please specify any aspects of the proposal which require further consideration, and why).
  - b. if responding on behalf of a CA, would you, if implemented, utilise the flexibility to undertake some methods and techniques remotely? If not, why not?
3. In relation to proposal 3, extending the activities that officers, who do not hold a 'suitable qualification' for food hygiene or food standards, can, if competent, undertake:

- a. do you consider that the flexibilities will enable CAs to deploy resources more effectively? If not, why not? (Please specify any aspects of the proposal which require further consideration, and why).
  - b. if responding on behalf of a CA, would you, if implemented, utilise this flexibility and authorise officers, if competent, to undertake additional activities, and if so, how many officers would you anticipate authorising? If not, why not?
4. In relation to proposal 4, a clarification in approach to interventions at food business establishments that fall into risk category E for food hygiene, do you consider that the proposed approach will provide clarity and consistency in the frequency of official controls at these establishments? If not, why not? (Please specify any aspects of the proposal which require further consideration, and why).
5. In relation to proposal 5, removal of the prescriptive number of hours required for continuing professional development, do you consider that the approach will provide CAs with greater flexibility to determine appropriate levels of CPD and training that officers undertake? If not, why not? (Please specify any aspects of the proposal which require further consideration, and why).
6. In relation to proposal 6 - other amendments to reflect legislative change, provide clarity, improve consistency and keep pace with current practices:
  - a. do you consider that the examples of where the additional score of 22 for vulnerable risk groups would not be used, provides further clarity and will improve consistency in the application of the score? If not, why not? (Please specify any aspects of the proposal which require further consideration, and why)
  - b. do you agree that the inclusion of additional descriptors, regarding food safety culture, in part 3 of the food hygiene intervention rating scheme, will provide clarification in the assessment of food safety culture? If not, why not? (Please specify any aspects of the proposal which require further consideration, and why)
  - c. do you consider that the clarification within the food hygiene intervention rating scheme about how allergen cross-contamination is taken into account will improve consistency? If not, why not? (Please specify any aspects of the proposal which require further consideration, and why)
  - d. do you consider that moving the guidance on parts two and three of the food hygiene intervention rating scheme from the FHRS Statutory Guidance to the PG will improve clarity as to where the guidance can be

found? If not, why not? (Please specify any aspects of the proposal which require further consideration, and why)

e. do you have any objections to the inclusion of the following qualifications within the Code:

- Trading Standards Professional Apprenticeship with the food module as a suitable qualification for food standards
- Degree in Environmental Health awarded by the Dublin Institute of Technology (awarded from June 2012 onwards)
- Degree in Environmental Health awarded by the Technological University Dublin

If you do have any objections, please provide reasons for these. (Please specify any aspects of the proposal which require further consideration, and why)

f. do you consider that the amendments to the terminology in the Code and PG has improved clarity and consistency between the documents? If not, why not? (Please specify which sections and any aspects of the proposal that require further consideration, and why)

g. do you agree or disagree with the proposal to remove references to the Competency Framework from the Code but retain references to it in the PG to enable the revised approach to competency assessment as set out in the draft Code? Please describe the main reasons for your answer. (Please specify any aspects of the proposal which require further consideration, and why)

h. do you agree or disagree with the removal of references to the PG and Framework Agreement from the Code? Please describe the main reasons for your answer. (Please specify any aspects of the proposal which require further consideration, and why)

### **Additional comments and suggestions**

7. Do you have any additional relevant comments or suggestions regarding the draft Code and Practice Guidance?

### **Questions in relation to impacts**

8. In relation to impacts:

a. do you agree or disagree with our assessment of the impacts on CAs and our assumptions on familiarisation and training resulting from the

proposed changes to the Code? Please describe the main reasons for your answer.

- b. do you agree or disagree with our assessment of the impacts on CAs in relation to changes to procedures? Please describe the main reasons for your answer.
- c. If responding on behalf of a CA, how long would you estimate that it will take to update local policies and procedures if the proposals were implemented? If providing an estimate, please explain which proposal (or proposals) it relates to.
- d. Do you foresee any other impacts from the implementation of the main proposals detailed beyond those we have identified? Where possible, please explain your views, which proposal (or proposals) they relate to, and provide quantifiable evidence (for example, costs associated with updating your administration systems, existing procedures, the benefits of greater flexibility to allocate staff to activities).

## Potential future developments

The Official Control Regulations requires CAs to have access to a sufficient number of suitably qualified and experienced officers. The ‘suitable qualification’ requirement is currently referenced in the Code as statutory guidance and the list of FSA endorsed qualifications in the Code provide examples of the qualifications we currently consider equate to “suitably qualified”.

To inform future policy development we are seeking early stakeholder views on potential options regarding how we manage and where we publish the list of FSA endorsed qualifications.

One of the options that we are seeking views on would transfer the list of qualifications from the Code to the PG. There would be published governance procedures for how this process would be managed. More detail on this option is outlined in [Annex C](#).

We are seeking to understand stakeholders’ views on perceived advantages, disadvantages and impacts of this option and whether any other options should be considered.

### Questions in relation to future potential developments

- I. Do you consider that moving the list of FSA endorsed qualifications to the PG could provide flexibility to recognise new qualifications more expediently without reducing the professional standards subject to an agreed and published governance procedure being in place? If not, please provide your reasons and evidence of the impact you think this will have.
- II. What do you perceive to be the advantages, disadvantages and impacts if we move the list of qualifications from the Code to the PG?
- III. Is there an alternative way that we could more expediently update the list of FSA endorsed qualifications from the one presented?

## Other relevant documents

- [Draft Food Law Code of Practice \(Northern Ireland\)](#)
- [Draft Food Law Practice Guidance \(Northern Ireland\)](#)

## Responses

Responses are required by 23:59 on 19 May 2025. Please state in your response whether you are responding as a private individual or on behalf of an organisation/company (including details of any stakeholders your organisation represents).

Please use the consultation response form to provide your comments.

[Consultation response form](#)

To enable us to fully understand your responses and adequately take account of them, please explain, and where possible evidence, any answers to support your feedback.

The consultation response form should then be emailed

[CodeReviewResponses@food.gov.uk](mailto:CodeReviewResponses@food.gov.uk).

For information on how the FSA handles your personal data, please refer to the [privacy notice for consultations](#) on the FSA website.

## Further information

If you require a more accessible format of this document, please contact us by emailing [CodeReviewResponses@food.gov.uk](mailto:CodeReviewResponses@food.gov.uk) and your request will be considered.

This consultation has been prepared in accordance with [HM Government consultation principles](#).

Thank you on behalf of the Food Standards Agency for participating in this public consultation.

Yours faithfully,

Louise Connolly  
Local Authority Policy and Delivery Lead

## Annex A: Summary of changes to the Food Law Code of Practice

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Reference	Current Code	Draft Code	Record of change to the Code
COP 1	Chapter 1	Chapter 1	Terminology amended and updated with regard to the Windsor Framework and Northern Ireland Retail Movement Scheme.
COP 2	Section 2.1	Section 2.1	Terminology amended.
COP 3	Section 2.2	Section 2.2	Provisions relating to having regard to the Code, and who the Code applies to removed, as duplicated guidance in chapter 1 of the draft Code. Provisions relating to datasets amended for clarity.
COP 4	Section 2.3	N/A	Provisions relating to departure from the Code removed, due to potential concerns around sub-delegation.
COP 5	Section 2.4	Section 2.3	Terminology amended. References to Framework Agreement and PG removed in line with proposal 6.
COP 6	Section 2.4.1	Section 2.3.1	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to documented procedures moved from section 2.4 of the current PG. References to Framework Agreement and other guidance removed in line with proposal 6.
COP 7	Section 2.4.2	Section 2.3.2	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to documented policies moved from section 2.5 of the current PG. References to Framework Agreement and other guidance removed in line with proposal 6.
COP 8	Section 2.4.3	Section 2.3.3	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to documented plans, programmes, and strategies moved from sections 2.6 and 2.7 of the current PG. References to Framework Agreement and other guidance removed in line with proposal 6.



Reference	Current Code	Draft Code	Record of change to the Code
COP 9	N/A	Section 2.4	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to delegation of official controls and other official activities moved from section 3.2.2.2 of the current Code.
COP 10	Section 2.5	N/A	Title amended and provisions relating to designation of CAs for food moved to section 2.4.4 of the draft PG.
COP 11	Section 2.6.1	Section 2.5 Section 2.5.1	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to liaison arrangements split into two sections. References to Framework Agreement and other legislation removed in line with proposal 6.
COP 12	Section 2.6.2	Section 2.5.2	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to responding to referrals removed as covered by other provisions in this section.
COP 13	Section 2.6.3	Section 2.5.4	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to regional and local liaison groups moved to section 2.4.5 of the draft PG.
COP 14	Section 2.6.4	Section 2.5.3	Terminology amended.
COP 15	Section 2.7.1 Section 2.7.2 Section 2.8	N/A	Provisions relating to Primary Authority, Home Authority and provision of discretionary services moved to sections 2.7.1, 2.7.2 and 2.8 of the draft PG.
COP 16	Section 2.9	Section 2.6.1	Terminology amended. Reference to Framework Agreement removed in line with proposal 6.
COP 17	Section 2.10	Section 2.6	Terminology amended.
COP 18	Section 2.11	Section 2.5.2.1	Terminology amended.

Reference	Current Code	Draft Code	Record of change to the Code
COP 19	Section 2.12.1	N/A	Provisions relating to registration and approval requirements moved to section 2.6.2 of draft Code.
COP 20	Section 2.12.2	Section 2.6.2	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to food establishment lists moved from section 2.14.1 of the current PG.
COP 21	N/A	Section 2.6.3	Provision relating to information to record about each food business establishment moved from section 2.14.3 of the current PG and terminology amended.
COP 22	Section 2.12.2.1	Section 2.6.4	Terminology amended. Provision relating to maintaining an up-to-date list of establishments moved to section 2.6.2 of the draft Code. Provision relating to data protection moved to section 2.5.1.1 of the draft PG.
COP 23	Section 2.12.2.2	Section 2.6.5	Terminology amended. Provision relating to maintaining an up-to-date list of approved establishments moved to section 2.6.2 of the draft Code.
COP 24	Section 2.13.1	Section 2.7.1	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to supplying relevant approval information and considering all activities for which approval is required moved to section 2.3.1 of the draft Code.
COP 25	Section 2.13.2	Section 2.7.2	Terminology amended.
COP 26	Section 2.13.3	Section 2.7.3	Terminology amended. Reference to the Framework Agreement removed in line with proposal 6.
COP 27	Section 2.13.4	N/A	Provisions relating to refusal of approval moved to section 2.7.3 of the draft Code.
COP 28	Section 2.13.5	N/A	Provisions relating to change of activities and ownership removed as duplicated details in approval guidance.

Reference	Current Code	Draft Code	Record of change to the Code
COP 29	Section 2.13.6	N/A	Provisions relating to establishments thought to be engaged in activities requiring approval moved to section 2.7.1 of the draft Code.
COP 30	Section 2.14	N/A	Provisions relating to timescales for retaining records moved to section 2.6.3 of the draft Code. Provisions relating to where longer retention of documents moved to section 2.5.2 of the draft PG.
COP 31	Section 3.1	Section 3.1	Amended to reflect content of chapter, and Competency Framework transition period removed.
COP 32	Section 3.2 Section 3.2.1 Section 3.2.2 Section 3.2.2.1	N/A	Provisions relating to delegation of official controls and other official activities moved to section 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 of the draft PG.
COP 33	Section 3.2.2.2	N/A	Provisions relating to delegation of certain tasks of the CAs moved to section 2.4 of the draft Code.
COP 34	Section 3.3	N/A	Section heading removed.
COP 35	Section 3.3.1	Section 3.2	Terminology amended. Provision relating to engaging experts moved to section 3.2.2 of the draft Code.
COP 36	Section 3.3.2	Section 3.2.2	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to authorisation being in writing moved to section 2.3.1 of the draft Code. Provisions relating to officer competency moved to section 3.2.4 of the draft Code.
COP 37	Section 3.3.3	N/A	Provisions relating to authorised officers removed due to proposal 3, which proposes to remove use of the term 'regulatory support officer'.

Reference	Current Code	Draft Code	Record of change to the Code
COP 38	Section 3.3.4	Section 3.2.1	Terminology amended. Provision relating to notifying FSA of lead officer details moved to section 3.2.1 of the draft PG.
COP 39	Section 3.3.5	N/A	Provisions relating to regulatory support officers removed due to proposal 3, which proposes to remove use of the term 'regulatory support officer'.
COP 40	Section 3.4	Section 3.2.3	Section heading amended. Provisions relating to the activities that officers not holding a suitable qualification can, if competent, be authorised to undertake moved to this section, from section 3.3.5 of current Code, and amended to reflect proposal 3.
COP 41	Section 3.4.1	Section 3.2.3.1	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to qualifications with restrictions moved to section 3.2.3.3 of draft Code. Footnote removed. Degree in Environmental Health awarded by Dublin Institute of Technology (awarded from June 2012 onwards) and Degree in Environmental Health awarded by Technological University Dublin included in the list of suitable qualifications for food hygiene.
COP 42	N/A	Section 3.2.3.3	Provisions relating to qualifications with restrictions moved from section 3.4.1 of current Code.
COP 43	Section 3.4.2	Section 3.2.3.2	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to restricted qualifications moved to section 3.2.3.3 of draft Code. Footnote removed. Provisions relating to quality assurance systems removed. The following included as a suitable qualification for food standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trading Standards Professional apprenticeship, with the food standards module</li> <li>Degree in Environmental Health awarded by Dublin Institute of Technology (awarded from June 2012 onwards)</li> </ul>

Reference	Current Code	Draft Code	Record of change to the Code
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Degree in Environmental Health awarded by Technological University Dublin</li> </ul>
COP 44	Section 3.4.3	Section 3.2.3.4	Terminology amended. Guidance on relevant professional awarding bodies moved to section 3.2.3.3 of the draft PG.
COP 45	N/A	Section 3.2.3.5	New section added relating to notification of new qualifications.
COP 46	Section 3.5	Section 3.4	Section heading and terminology amended.
COP 47	Section 3.5.1	Section 3.4.1	Terminology amended.
COP 48	Section 3.5.2	Section 3.4.2	Terminology amended.
COP 49	Section 3.6	Section 3.2.4	Terminology and section heading amended. Provisions relating to competency assessment moved from section 3.3.2 of current Code and provisions relating to definition of competency is moved from section 3.4 of the current PG. Reference to Competency Framework moved to section 3.2.4 of draft PG.
COP 50	N/A	Section 3.2.4.1	New section added. Provisions relating to competency assessment moved from section 3.4.6 of the current PG.
COP 51	Section 3.7	N/A	Section heading removed.
COP 52	Section 3.7.1	Section 3.3	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to officers receiving appropriate training moved to section 3.2 of draft Code, while other provisions relating to records moved to section 3.2.2 of the draft Code. Amendments to provisions relating to CPD as detailed in proposal 5.
COP 53	Section 3.7.2	N/A	Terminology amended and included in section 3.3 of the draft Code.
COP 54	Section 4.1	Section 4.1	Terminology amended. Footnote removed.

Reference	Current Code	Draft Code	Record of change to the Code
COP 55	Section 4.2	Section 4.4	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to frequency of controls moved to section 4.2 of the draft Code, other provisions relating to performing official controls moved from section 4.2.2 of current Code. Some provisions relating to businesses being aware of purpose of official control moved from section 4.2.2 of the current PG.
COP 56	Section 4.2.1	N/A	Provisions relating to prior notification incorporated into section 4.4 of draft Code.
COP 57	Section 4.2.2	N/A	Provisions relating to carrying out official controls moved to section 4.4 of the draft Code and terminology amended. Provision relating to recording sufficient information about findings moved to section 4.6 of the draft Code. Provisions relating to Primary Authority removed, as included in section 2.7.1 of the draft PG.
COP 58	Section 4.2.3	Section 4.6	Terminology and section heading amended. Provisions relating to records and what should be included in the records moved from section 4.3.4 of the current PG.
COP 59	Section 4.2.4	Section 4.2.3	Terminology and section heading amended. Clarification of establishments not covered by this section added.
COP 60	N/A	Section 4.2.3.1	New section added relating to initial desktop assessment. Provisions relating to desktop assessment moved from section 4.2.4.2 of the current Code.
COP 61	Section 4.2.4.1	Section 4.2.3.2	Terminology amended. Approach to initial official controls amended to reflect proposed policy changes detailed in proposal 1.
COP 62	Section 4.2.4.2	Section 4.2.3.3	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to desktop assessment moved to section 4.2.3.1 of draft Code. Examples of prioritisation moved to section 4.2.3.2 of the draft PG.

Reference	Current Code	Draft Code	Record of change to the Code
COP 63	N/A	Section 4.2	Provisions relating to frequency of official controls moved from section 4.2 of the current Code. Terminology amended.
COP 64	Section 4.3	N/A	Section heading removed.
COP 65	Section 4.3.1	Section 4.2.4	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to information or intelligence suggesting the nature of a business's activities has changed moved from sections 4.3.2 of current Code. Provisions relating to using full range of scores and consideration of information supplied by others moved to section 4.2.5 of the draft Code.
COP 66	Section 4.3.2	Section 4.2.5	Provisions relating to consideration of information supplied by others moved from section 4.3.1. Provisions relating to revision of intervention ratings moved from sections 4.3.2.1 and 4.3.2.2 of current Code and amended to reflect the proposed flexibilities as to methods and techniques that can be used, detailed in proposal 2. Terminology amended.
COP 67	Section 4.3.2.1	N/A	Provisions relating to revision of intervention ratings moved to section 4.2.5 of the draft Code.
COP 68	Section 4.3.2.2	N/A	Provisions relating to revision of intervention ratings moved to section 4.2.5 of the draft Code.
COP 69	Section 4.3.3	N/A	Provisions relating to alternative enforcement strategy removed as a result of proposed policy changes to the approach to category E establishments – proposal 4.
COP 70	N/A	Section 4.3	New section providing details relating to proposed flexibilities as to methods and techniques of official controls, taking into account proposal 2.

Reference	Current Code	Draft Code	Record of change to the Code
COP 71	Section 4.4.1	Section 4.3.1	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to methods and techniques moved from sections 4.4.1.1, 4.4.1.2, 4.4.1.3 and 4.4.1.4 of current Code. Provisions relating to category E establishments amended to take into account proposal 4.
COP 72	Section 4.4.1.1 Section 4.4.1.2 Section 4.4.1.3 Section 4.4.1.4	N/A	Provisions relating to methods and techniques of official control moved to section 4.3.1 of the draft Code.
COP 73	Section 4.4.2	Section 4.3.2	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to methods and techniques of official controls moved from sections 4.4.2.1 and 4.4.2.2 of the current Code.
COP 74	Section 4.4.2.1 Section 4.4.2.2	N/A	Provisions relating to methods and techniques of official control moved to section 4.3.2 of the draft Code.
COP 75	Section 4.5	N/A	Provisions relating to sampling moved to section 4.3.3 of the draft PG.
COP 76	N/A	Section 4.3.3 Section 4.3.3.1 Section 4.3.3.2 Section 4.3.3.3	Provisions related to sampling moved from section 4.6 and relevant sub-sections of the current PG.
COP 77	N/A	Section 4.4.1 Section 4.4.1.1 Section 4.4.1.2 Section 4.4.1.3	Provisions relating to official controls undertaken on ships and aircraft moved from section 4.7 and relevant sub-sections of the current PG.



Reference	Current Code	Draft Code	Record of change to the Code
COP 78	N/A	Section 4.5	Provisions relating to non-official controls moved from section 4.2.7 of the current PG.
COP 79	Section 4.6.1	N/A	Provisions relating to nominated officer for imported food moved to section 4.7.1.4 of the draft PG.
COP 80	Section 4.6.2	N/A	Provisions relating to imported food controls forming part of official controls inland moved to section 4.4 of the draft Code.
COP 81	N/A	Section 4.7.1	Provisions relating to imported food procedures moved from section 4.5 of the current PG.
COP 82	Section 4.6.3	Section 4.7.2	No change.
COP 83	Section 4.6.3.1.	Section 4.7.2.1	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to consignments, records and facilities moved from section 4.5 of the current PG.
COP 84	Section 4.6.3.2	Section 4.7.2.2	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to risk based planned arrangements moved from section 4.5.9.2 of the current PG. Provisions relating to no permanent presence at a point of entry moved from section 4.6.5 of the current Code.
COP 85	Section 4.6.3.3	Section 4.7.2.3	No change.
COP 86	Section 4.6.4	Section 4.7.3	No change.
COP 87	Section 4.6.5	N/A	Provisions relating to no permanent presence at point of entry moved to section 4.7.2.2 of draft Code. Provisions relating to who to contact, moved to section 4.7.2.1 of the draft PG.

Reference	Current Code	Draft Code	Record of change to the Code
COP 88	N/A	Section 4.7.4	Provisions relating to liaison/referrals moved from section 4.7.4 of the current PG. Terminology amended.
COP 89	Section 5.1	Section 5.1	Terminology amended.
COP 90	Section 5.2	Section 5.2	No change.
COP 91	Section 5.2.1	Section 5.2.1	No change.
COP 92	Section 5.2.2	Section 5.2.2	No change.
COP 93	Section 5.3	Section 5.3	No change.
COP 94	Section 5.3.1	Section 5.3.1	No change.
COP 95	Section 5.3.2	Section 5.3.2	No change.
COP 96	Section 5.3.3	Section 5.3.3	No change.
COP 97	Section 5.3.3.1	Section 5.3.3	Sub-heading removed and duplicated wording removed.
COP 98	N/A	Section 5.3.4	Provisions relating to root cause analysis moved from 5.2.5 of current PG. Terminology amended.
COP 99	Section 5.3.4	Section 5.3.5	Terminology amended.
COP 100	Section 5.3.5	Section 5.3.6	Terminology amended.
COP 101	Section 5.3.6	Section 5.3.7	Terminology amended.
COP 102	Section 5.3.7	Section 5.3.8	Terminology amended.

Reference	Current Code	Draft Code	Record of change to the Code
COP 103	Section 5.4	Section 5.4	No change.
COP 104	Section 5.4.1	Section 5.4.1	Terminology amended.
COP 105	Section 5.4.2	Section 5.4.2	Terminology amended.
COP 106	Section 5.4.3	Section 5.4.3	Terminology amended.
COP 107	Section 5.4.4	Section 5.4.4	Terminology amended.
COP 108	Section 5.5	N/A	Section heading removed.
COP 109	Section 5.5.1	Section 5.5	No change.
COP 110	Section 5.6	Section 5.6	Terminology amended.
COP 111	Section 5.6.1	N/A	Provisions relating to notification of incidents regarding imported food removed as reference to the PG removed in line with proposal 6.
COP 112	Section 5.6.2	Section 5.6.1	Reference to the PG removed in line with proposal 6.
COP 113	Section 5.6.3	Section 5.6.2	Terminology amended.
COP 114	Section 5.6.4	N/A	Provisions relating to disclosure of information to countries outside the UK removed as reference to the PG removed in line with proposal 6.
COP 115	Section 5.6.5	Section 5.6.3	No change.
COP 116	Section 5.7	Section 5.7	Terminology amended.
COP 117	Section 6.1	Section 6.1	Terminology amended.

Reference	Current Code	Draft Code	Record of change to the Code
COP 118	Section 6.2	N/A	Provisions relating to enforcement action and consideration of enforcement policy moved to section 6.3.4 of draft Code. Provisions relating to Primary Authority Partnership and the Code for Prosecutors moved to section 6.3.3 of draft PG. Provision relating to considering nature of non-compliance and FBO past record moved to section 6.3.2 of the draft Code.
COP 119	N/A	Section 6.2	New section to provide information relating to powers of entry. Provisions relating to using powers within another Competent Authority area moved from section 6.6 of current Code. Terminology amended.
COP 120	Section 6.3	Section 6.3.4	Terminology amended. Examples of enforcement action moved to section 6.3.1 of draft PG. Provisions relating to a prioritising action moved to section 6.3.3 of the draft Code.
COP 121	Section 6.4	Section 6.3	Title amended.
COP 122	Section 6.4.1	Section 6.3.1	Terminology amended.
COP 123	Section 6.4.2	Section 6.3.2	Terminology amended and updated to include reference to enforcement action for non-compliance of goods produced to GB standards. Provisions relating to discussing advice with food business operators moved to section 6.3.3 of draft PG. Provision relating to resolution of non-compliances moved to section 6.3.4 of draft Code. Provisions relating to written notification of enforcement moved to section 6.3.5 of draft Code.
COP 124	N/A	Section 6.3.3	New section to provide information regarding prioritisation. Provisions relating to prioritising action moved from section 6.3 of current Code. Terminology amended.

Reference	Current Code	Draft Code	Record of change to the Code
COP 125	N/A	Section 6.3.5	New section to provide information regarding notification of enforcement action. Provisions relating to written notification moved from section 6.4.2 of current Code. Terminology amended.
COP 126	N/A	Section 6.4	New section to provide information regarding taking formal action and service of notices and avoidance of a dual hygiene regulatory system. Provisions relating to considerations when taking enforcement action and use of correct notices moved from section 6.6.2 of current PG. Terminology amended.
COP 127	Section 6.5	Section 6.4.1	Title amended. Terminology amended. Provisions relating to resolution of non-compliance moved to section 6.3.4 of draft Code. Provisions relating to timing of action moved to section 6.4.1.1 of draft Code.
COP 128	Section 6.5.1	Section 6.4.1.1	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to timing of action moved from section 6.5 of current Code.
COP 129	Section 6.5.2	N/A	Section heading removed as provisions relating to food standards revisits now included under section 6.4.1 header of draft Code.
COP 130	Section 6.5.2.1	Section 6.4.1.2	Title amended. Terminology amended.
COP 131	Section 6.5.2.2	Section 6.4.1.3	Title amended. Terminology amended.
COP 132	N/A	Section 6.4.2	New section to provide information relating to checks on compliance with formal enforcement action. Provisions relating to checking remedial work moved from section 6.6.14 and 6.6.15 of current PG. Terminology amended.
COP 133	Section 6.6	N/A	Provisions relating to operating in another Competent Authority's area removed as provisions moved to section 6.2 of draft Code.

Reference	Current Code	Draft Code	Record of change to the Code
COP 134	Section 7.1	Section 7.1	Terminology amended.
COP 135	N/A	Section 7.2	New section to provide information relating to registration of shellfish gatherers.
COP 136	Section 7.2	Section 7.3	Title amended. Terminology amended.
COP 137	Section 7.3	Section 7.4	Title amended.
COP 138	Section 7.3.1	Section 7.4.1	Title amended. Terminology amended.
COP 139	Section 7.3.2	Section 7.4.2	Title amended. Terminology amended.
COP 140	Section 7.3.3	Section 7.4.3	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to checking registration documents and contacting other Competent Authorities moved from section 7.3.1 of the current Code.
COP 141	Section 7.3.4	N/A	Provisions relating to approvals of purification centres removed as duplicated guidance available in other FSA approvals guidance.
COP 142	Section 7.3.5	N/A	Provisions relating to sampling as part of the inspection removed as duplicated details in other FSA sampling and live bivalve mollusc guidance.
COP 143	Section 7.4	N/A	Provisions relating to production and relaying areas moved to section 7.3.1 of the draft PG. Terminology amended.
COP 144	Section 7.4.1	N/A	Terminology amended and moved to section 7.3.1 of the draft PG.
COP 145	Section 7.4.2	Section 7.7	Terminology amended.
COP 146	Section 7.5	Section 7.5	Title amended. Terminology amended.

Reference	Current Code	Draft Code	Record of change to the Code
COP 147	N/A	Section 7.6	New section to provide information relating to live bivalve molluscs and other shellfish which fail to satisfy requirements. These provisions have been moved from section 7.1.14 of current PG. Terminology amended.
COP 148	Annex 1	Annex 1	Terminology amended. Additional descriptors included in part 3 of the food hygiene intervention rating scheme relating to food safety culture.
COP 149	Annex 2	N/A	Annex removed due to end of new food standards delivery model transition period.

## Annex B: Summary of changes to the Food Law Practice Guidance

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 1	Chapter 1	Chapter 1	Terminology amended and updated with regard to the Windsor Framework and Northern Ireland Retail Movement Scheme.
PG 2	Section 2.1	Section 2.1	Terminology amended and updated.
PG 3	Section 2.2	N/A	Provisions listing datasets removed.
PG 4	Section 2.3	N/A	Provisions relating to departure from the Code removed to align with removal of this provision in the draft Code.
PG 5	Section 2.4	Section 2.2	Section heading title amended.
PG 6	Section 2.4.1	Section 2.2.5	Terminology amended. Additional provisions included in relation to and recording date registration form received.
PG 7	Section 2.4.2	Section 2.2.1	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to approvals procedure moved to section 2.3.1 of the draft Code. Link to approvals guidance added.
PG 8	Section 2.4.3	N/A	Provisions relating to food business establishment database procedure moved to section 2.3.1 of the draft Code.
PG 9	Section 2.4.4	Section 2.2.2	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to maintaining a control verification procedure, steps to address performance and demonstrating consistent application moved to section 2.3.1. of the draft Code.



Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 10	Section 2.4.4.1	Section 2.2.2.1	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to quantitative and qualitative monitoring and records of monitoring moved to section 2.3.1 of the Code.
PG 11	Section 2.4.4.2	Section 2.2.2.2	Terminology amended.
PG 12	Section 2.4.4.3	Section 2.2.2.3	Terminology amended. Provision relating to addressing non-compliances in a timely and effective manner moved to section 2.3.1 of the draft Code.
PG 13	Section 2.4.4.4	Section 2.2.2.4	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to issues that may be identified through monitoring of management information systems removed as duplicated guidance in other sections of the PG.
PG 14	Section 2.4.5	N/A	Provisions relating to authorisation procedure moved to section 2.3.1 of the draft Code.
PG 15	Section 2.4.6	Section 2.2.6	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to food incidents and alerts procedure moved to section 2.3.1 of the draft Code.
PG 16	Section 2.4.7	Section 2.2.7	Terminology amended.
PG 17	Section 2.4.8	Section 2.2.8	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to what a food complaints procedure should cover, referral arrangements, receipt of complaints and their investigation moved to section 2.3.1 of the draft Code.
PG 18	Section 2.4.9	N/A	Provisions relating to sampling procedure moved to section 2.3.1 of the draft Code.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 19	Section 2.4.10	Section 2.2.9	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to identification of equipment and measures taken for unsatisfactory in-service checks of equipment moved to section 2.3.1. of the draft Code.
PG 20	Section 2.4.11	Section 2.2.4	Terminology amended.
PG 21	Section 2.4.12	N/A	Provisions relating to official food controls procedure moved to section 2.3.1. of the draft Code.
PG 22	Section 2.4.13	Section 2.2.10	Terminology amended.
PG 23	Section 2.4.14	Section 2.2.3	Terminology amended.
PG 24	Section 2.4.15	Section 2.2.11	Terminology amended.
PG 25	N/A	Section 2.2.4	Provisions relating to identifying and rectifying inaccuracies in published information moved from section 2.4.4 of the current PG.
PG 26	Section 2.5	N/A	Section heading removed.
PG 27	Section 2.5.1	Section 2.2.13	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to setting out general approach to food sampling, including unsatisfactory samples within the sampling policy moved to section 2.3.1. of the draft Code.
PG 28	Section 2.5.2	Section 2.2.14	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to approval of enforcement policies moved to section 2.3.1. of the draft Code.
PG 29	Section 2.5.3	Section 2.2.15	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to approach to receiving complaints and what complaints policy covers moved to section 2.3.1. of the draft Code.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 30	Section 2.6	N/A	Section heading removed.
PG 31	Section 2.6.1	2.2.18	No change.
PG 32	Section 2.6.1.1	Section 2.2.18.1	Terminology amended.
PG 33	Section 2.6.1.2	Section 2.2.18.2	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to period service plan covers, and its approval moved to section 2.3.1. of the draft Code. Provisions relating to development of the service plan moved to section 2.2.18.3 of the draft PG.
PG 34	N/A	Section 2.2.18.3	Provisions relating to development of service plan moved from section 2.6.1.2 of the current PG. Terminology amended.
PG 35	2.6.1.3	Annex 1	Terminology amended.
PG 36	Section 2.6.2	Section 2.2.16	Terminology amended.
PG 37	Section 2.7	N/A	Section heading removed.
PG 38	Section 2.7.1	Section 2.2.19	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to departure from Code removed to align with approach taken in Code.
PG 39	Section 2.7.2	Section 2.2.20	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to what a sampling programme should consider moved to section 2.3.1. of the draft Code.
PG 40	Section 2.7.3	Section 2.2.17	Terminology amended. Additional point on training programmes being informed by officer competency assessments included.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 41	Section 2.7.4	NA	Provisions removed in line with proposal 4.
PG 42	NA	Section 2.3	Provision relating to delegation of official controls moved from section 3.2 of the current Code.
PG 43	NA	Section 2.3.1	Provisions relating to delegation to authorising officers moved from section 3.2.1 of the current Code. Terminology amended.
PG 44	NA	Section 2.4.2 Section 2.3.2	Provisions relating to delegation to other CAs moved from section 3.2.2 of the current Code. Terminology amended.
PG 45	Section 2.8	Section 2.4	No change.
PG 46	Section 2.8.1	Section 2.4.1	Terminology amended.
PG 47	N/A	Section 2.4.2	Provisions relating to liaison with FSA moved from section 2.6.2 of the current Code.
PG 48	Section 2.8.2	Section 2.4.3	Terminology amended.
PG 49	N/A	Section 2.4.4	Provisions relating to division of responsibilities moved from section 2.13.1 of the current PG.
PG 50	N/A	Section 2.4.5	Provisions relating to regional and local liaison groups moved from section 2.6.3 of the current Code.
PG 51	Section 2.9	Section 2.7	Section heading title amended.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 52	Section 2.9.1	Section 2.7.1	Terminology amended. Links to guidance provided. Provisions relating to the FSA being a supporting regulator moved from section 2.9.4 of the current PG.
PG 53	N/A	Section 2.7.2	Provisions relating to home authority moved from section 2.7.2 of the current Code. Terminology amended.
PG 54	Section 2.9.2	N/A	Provisions relating to inspection plans removed from PG as duplicated details in Primary Authority guidance provided by OPSS. Links to this guidance provided.
PG 55	Section 2.9.3	N/A	Provisions relating to compliance issues and enforcement actions where a business has a primary authority removed from PG as duplicated details in Primary Authority guidance provided by OPSS. Links to this guidance provided.
PG 56	Section 2.9.4	N/A	Provisions relating to the FSA being a supporting regulator moved to section 2.7.1 of the draft PG.
PG 57	Section 2.10	N/A	Provisions relating to facilities and equipment removed as duplicated guidance included in section 2.6 of the draft Code.
PG 58	Section 2.11	N/A	Provisions relating to enforcement e-mail addresses removed as duplicated section 2.5.2.1 of the draft Code.
PG 59	Section 2.12	Annex 2	Section heading title amended.
PG 60	Section 2.12.1	N/A	Provisions moved to the glossary in the draft Code.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 61	Section 2.12.2	A2.1.1	Terminology amended. Definition of food business operator moved to glossary in the draft Code and the draft PG.
PG 62	Section 2.12.3	A2.1.2	Terminology amended.
PG 63	Section 2.12.4	A2.1.3	Terminology amended.
PG 64	Section 2.12.5	A2.1.4	No change.
PG 65	Section 2.12.5.1	A2.1.5	No change.
PG 66	Section 2.12.6	A2.2	No change.
PG 67	Section 2.12.6.1	A2.2.1	Terminology amended.
PG 68	Section 2.12.6.2	A2.2.2	No change.
PG 69	Section 2.12.6.3	A2.2.3	Provision relating to small quantities of primary products removed as duplicated guidance in section 8.7 of the draft PG.
PG 70	Section 2.12.6.4	A2.2.4	Terminology amended.
PG 71	Section 2.12.7	A2.2.5	Terminology amended.
PG 72	Section 2.12.8	A2.2.6	Terminology amended.
PG 73	Section 2.12.9	A2.2.7	Terminology amended.
PG 74	Section 2.12.10	A2.2.8	Terminology amended. Additional provision included relating to whether anything has changed at the food business establishment or whether it is solely an administrative change.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 75	Section 2.12.11	A2.4	No change.
PG 76	Section 2.12.11.1	A2.4.1	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to approved establishments removed as duplicated guidance in the approval of establishments guidance.
PG 77	Section 2.12.11.2	A2.4.2	Terminology amended.
PG 78	Section 2.12.11.3	A2.4.3	Terminology amended.
PG 79	Section 2.12.11.4	A2.4.4	Terminology amended.
PG 80	Section 2.12.12	A2.5	No change.
PG 81	Section 2.12.12.1	A2.5.1	Terminology amended.
PG 82	Section 2.12.12.2	A2.5.2	Terminology amended.
PG 83	Section 2.12.12.3	A2.5.3	Terminology amended.
PG 84	Section 2.12.12.4	A2.5.4	Terminology amended.
PG 85	Section 2.12.12.5	N/A	Section removed.
PG 86	Section 2.12.12.6	N/A	Section removed.
PG 87	Section 2.12.13	A2.6	No change.
PG 88	Section 2.12.13.1	A2.6.1	Terminology amended.
PG 89	Section 2.12.13.2	A2.6.2	Terminology amended.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 90	Section 2.12.13.3	A2.6.3	Terminology amended.
PG 91	Section 2.12.13.4	A2.6.4	Section heading title amended. Terminology amended.
PG 92	Section 2.12.13.5	A2.6.5	Terminology amended.
PG 93	Section 2.12.13.6	A2.6.6	Terminology amended.
PG 94	Section 2.12.13.7	A2.6.7	Provisions relating to sources of information on mobile food establishments removed from PG as duplicated other guidance.
PG 95	Section 2.12.13.8	A2.6.8	Terminology amended.
PG 96	Section 2.13	Section 2.6	Provision added with link to approvals guidance.
PG 97	Section 2.13.1	N/A	Provisions relating to division of responsibilities between local authorities and FSA moved to section 2.4.4. Some detail removed as duplicated guidance in the approval of establishments guidance.
PG 98	Section 2.13.2	N/A	Reference to exemptions from approval removed moved to section 8.3.3 of the draft PG and provisions removed as duplicated guidance in the approval of establishments guidance.
PG 99	Section 2.13.3	Section 2.6.1	Terminology amended.
PG 100	Section 2.13.4	N/A	Provisions relating to applications for approval of more than one product removed as duplicated guidance in the approval of establishments guidance.



Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 101	Section 2.13.5	N/A	Provisions relating to determination of approval removed as duplicated guidance in the approval of establishments guidance.
PG 102	Section 2.13.6	N/A	Provisions relating to conditional approval removed as duplicated guidance in the approval of establishments guidance.
PG 103	Section 2.13.7	N/A	Provisions relating to appeals removed as duplicated guidance in the approval of establishments guidance.
PG 104	Section 2.13.8	N/A	Provisions relating to change of activities, ownership or details removed as duplicated guidance in the approval of establishments guidance.
PG 105	Section 2.13.9	N/A	Provisions relating to notification of approval status removed as duplicated guidance in the approval of establishments guidance.
PG 106	Section 2.13.10	Section 2.6.2	Terminology amended.
PG 107	Section 2.13.11	N/A	Provisions relating to identification marks removed as duplicated guidance in the approval of establishments guidance.
PG 108	Section 2.13.12	N/A	Provisions relating to template forms removed as duplicated guidance in the approval of establishments guidance.
PG 109	Section 2.13.13	N/A	Provisions relating to further guidance removed as duplicated guidance in the approval of establishments guidance, and link to the guidance provided in section 2.6 of the draft PG.
PG 110	Section 2.14	N/A	Section heading removed.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 111	Section 2.14.1	NA	Provisions relating to list of registered food business establishments moved to section 2.6.2 of the draft Code.
PG 112	Section 2.14.2	Section 2.5.1	Terminology amended.
PG 113	Section 2.14.3	Section 2.5.2	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to information on size and scale of a business and the activities they undertake moved to section 2.6.3 of the draft Code.
PG 114	N/A	Section 2.5.3	Provisions relating to retention of records moved from section 2.14 of the current Code.
PG 115	Section 2.14.3.1	Section 2.5.3.1	Terminology amended. Link to guidance removed.
PG 116	Section 2.15	Section 2.4.2.1	Terminology amended.
PG 117	N/A	Section 2.8	Provision relating to the provision of discretionary services moved from section 2.8 of the current Code. Terminology amended.
PG 118	Section 3.1	Section 3.1	Terminology amended.
PG 119	Section 3.2	N/A	Section heading removed.
PG 120	Section 3.2.1	Section 3.2	Terminology amended.
PG 121	Section 3.2.2	Section 3.2.1	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to lead officer details moved from section 3.3.4 of the current Code.
PG 122	Section 3.2.3	N/A	Provisions relating to authorisation procedure moved to section 2.3.1 of the draft Code.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 123	Section 3.2.4	Section 3.2.2	Provisions relating to authorisation procedure moved to sections 3.2.2.1 and 3.2.2.2 of the draft PG.
PG 124	N/A	Section 3.2.2.1	New section on guidance relating to appropriate supervision of officers.
PG 125	N/A	Section 3.2.2.2	Provisions relating to legislation under which officers are authorised moved from section 3.2.4 of the current PG. Terminology amended.
PG 126	Section 3.3	N/A	Section heading removed.
PG 127	Section 3.3.1	N/A	Section heading removed.
PG 128	Section 3.3.1.1	Section 3.2.3.2	Terminology amended and tables merged to avoid duplication.
PG 129	Section 3.3.1.2	N/A	Section removed as duplicated information in section 3.2.3.3 of draft Code.
PG 130	Section 3.3.2	Section 3.2.	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to awarding bodies and non-UK qualifications moved from section 3.4.3 of the current Code.
PG 131	N/A	Section 3.2.3.1	New section added to provide reference back to Code in relation to qualifications with restrictions.
PG 132	Section 3.4	N/A	Section heading removed.
PG 133	Section 3.4.1	Section 3.2.4	Terminology amended. Provision relating to definition of competency moved to section 3.2.4 of the draft Code. Provision relating to competency assessment tools moved to section 3.2.4.1 of the draft

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
			PG. Provisions relating to the Competency Framework removed, as duplicated guidance in the Competency Framework.
PG 134	Section 3.4.2	Section 3.2.4.2	Terminology amended.
PG 135	Section 3.4.3	Section 3.2.3	Terminology amended. Additional activities included to align with proposal 3.
PG 136	Section 3.4.4	Section 3.4	Terminology amended
PG 137	Section 3.4.5	Section 3.2.4.1	Terminology amended.
PG 138	Section 3.4.6	Section 3.2.4.1	Provision relating to assessing officer competency moved to section 3.2.4.1 of the draft Code. Provisions relating to evidence of competency moved from section 3.4.6 of current PG. Terminology amended.
PG 139	Section 3.4.7	Section 3.2.4.3	Terminology amended.
PG 140	Section 3.5	N/A	Section heading removed.
PG 141	Section 3.5.1	Section 3.3	Terminology amended. Provision relating to the training programme being included in authorisation procedure removed as duplicated provisions in section 2.2.17 of the draft PG.
PG 142	Section 3.5.2	N/A	Section removed and links to relevant training resources has been included in section 3.3 of the draft PG.
PG 143	Section 3.6	N/A	Section heading removed.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 144	Section 3.6.1	Section 3.3.1	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to professional body CPD removed as not directly applicable to delivery of official controls.
PG 145	Section 3.6.2	Section 3.3.1.1	Provisions relating to minimum number of CPD hours removed in line with proposal 5. Terminology amended.
PG 146	Section 3.6.3	Section 3.3.1.2	Terminology amended.
PG 147	Section 3.6.4	Section 3.3.1.3	Terminology amended.
PG 148	Section 4.1	Section 4.1	Terminology amended.
PG 149	N/A	Section 4.2	New section heading.
PG 150	Section 4.2	Section 4.2.1	Provision relating to choosing interventions moved to section 4.3 of the draft Code. Terminology amended.
PG 151	N/A	Section 4.2.1.1	New section, provisions relating to sources of information moved from section 4.3.1 of the current Code.
PG 152	N/A	Section 4.2.2.1	New section providing guidance on use of vulnerable risk group score.
PG 153	N/A	Section 4.2.2.2	New section providing guidance for food safety culture scoring.
PG 154	N/A	Section 4.3	New section, provisions relating to using other methods and techniques moved from section 4.4.1 of the current Code.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 155	Section 4.2.1	Section 4.3.1	Table of different methods and techniques removed. Flowchart added to reflect flexibilities in draft Code in relation to food hygiene methods and techniques.
PG 156	N/A	Section 4.3.2	New section, providing guidance on use of remote methods and techniques.
PG 157	N/A	Section 4.3.2.1	New section, providing guidance on use of questionnaires.
PG 158	Section 4.2.2	Section 4.3.4	Provisions relating to making food business operator aware of purpose of official control and discussions around non-compliances moved to section 4.4 of the draft Code. Remaining provisions moved to sections 4.3.4.1, 4.3.4.2 and 4.6.2 of the draft PG.
PG 159	N/A	Section 4.3.4.3	New section, provisions relating to concluding an inspection moved from section 4.2.2 of the current PG.
PG 160	Section 4.2.3	N/A	Provisions relating to factory and fishing vessels moved to section 4.4.1.8 of the draft PG.
PG 161	Section 4.2.4	N/A	Provisions relating to verification removed from PG as duplicated details in data returns guidance.
PG 162	Section 4.2.5	N/A	Provisions relating to monitoring and surveillance removed from PG as duplicated details in data returns guidance.
PG 163	Section 4.2.6	N/A	Provisions relating to sampling visits removed from PG as duplicated details in data returns guidance.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 164	N/A	Section 4.5	New section heading.
PG 165	Section 4.2.7	Section 4.5.1	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to suspected non-compliances moved to section 4.5 of the draft Code. Provisions relating to recording of advice and education visits removed from PG, as duplicated details in data returns guidance.
PG 166	Section 4.2.8	N/A	Provisions relating to information and intelligence gathering removed from PG as duplicated details in data returns guidance.
PG 167	Section 4.2.9	N/A	Provisions relating to revisits removed as duplicated provisions in section 6.4.1 of the draft Code.
PG 168	Section 4.3	N/A	Section heading removed.
PG 169	Section 4.3.1	Section 4.4	Terminology and section heading amended. Additional examples provided of where notification may be necessary and duly justified.
PG 170	N/A	Section 4.6.2	Provisions relating to template forms moved from section 4.2.2 of the current PG.
PG 171	Section 4.3.2	N/A	Provisions relating to initial inspection of new establishments removed as duplicate provisions in section 4.2.3 of the draft PG.
PG 172	N/A	Section 4.2.4	New section added to align with proposals for initial official controls. Provision relating to information collected through communication with food business operator moved from section 4.2.4.1 of the current Code.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 173	Section 4.3.2.1	Section 4.2.4	Terminology amended. Provision relating to where an initial official control may be undertaken as a priority moved from section 4.2.4 of the current Code.
PG 174	N/A	Section 4.2.3.	New section added to align with proposal for initial official controls (proposal 1).
PG 175	N/A	Section 4.2.4	New section added to align with Code. Provision relating to seasonal business closures moved from section 4.3.1 of the current Code.
PG 176	Section 4.3.3	N/A	Section heading removed.
PG 177	Section 4.3.3.1	Section 4.3.4.1	Terminology amended.
PG 178	Section 4.3.3.2	Section 4.2.2	Terminology amended.
PG 179	Section 4.3.3.3	Section 4.3.4.2	Terminology amended.
PG 180	Section 4.3.4	Section 4.6	Terminology amended. Provision relating to multi-site businesses moved to section 4.6.1 of the draft PG. Provision relating to updating management information systems moved to section 4.6 of the draft Code.
PG 181	N/A	Section 4.6.1	New section. Provisions relating to multi-site businesses from moved from section 4.3.4 of the current PG.
PG 182	Section 4.4	Section 4.4.2	Provision relating to recital 15 of Regulation (EC) 852/2004 moved to section 4.4.2.1 of draft PG. Provision relating to food safety management systems providing assurances moved from section



Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
			4.4.1.2 of current PG. Provisions relating to graduated approach removed as duplicated details in section 6.3.3 of the draft PG.
PG 183	Section 4.4.1	Section 4.4.2.1	Provisions relating to what compliance means in practice removed as duplicated details in Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) flexibilities guidance.
PG 184	Section 4.4.1.1	N/A	Provisions relating to seven principles of HACCP removed as duplicated details in HACCP flexibilities guidance.
PG 185	Section 4.4.1.2	Section 4.4.2.2 Section 4.4.2.3	Provisions relating to the role of the CA moved to sections 4.4.2.2 and 4.4.2.3 of draft PG.
PG 186	Section 4.5	N/A	Section heading removed.
PG 187	Section 4.5.1	N/A	Provisions relating to effective arrangements moved to section 4.7 of the draft PG. Provisions referencing legislation moved to section 4.7.3.1 of draft PG. Provision about purpose of PG removed as duplicated details in chapter 1 of the draft PG.
PG 188	Section 4.5.1.1	Section 4.7	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to effective arrangements moved from section 4.5.1 of current PG. Provisions relating to external transit storage facilities (ETSFs) removed as duplicated details in inland enforcement guidance. Provisions relating to risk-based arrangements moved to section 4.7.2.2 of the draft Code.
PG 189	Section 4.5.2	Section 4.7.3	Provisions relating to foods not of animal origin moved from section 4.5.9 of current PG.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 190	Section 4.5.2.1	Section 4.7.3.1	Provisions relating to Regulation (EU) 2017/625 and enforcement arrangements moved from section 4.5.1 of current PG. Terminology amended.
PG 191	Section 4.5.2.2	Section 4.7.3.2	Terminology amended.
PG 192	Section 4.5.2.3	Section 4.7.3.3	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to food of emerging risk removed as duplicated details in inland enforcement guidance.
PG 193	Section 4.5.2.4	N/A	Provisions relating to UK safeguard measures removed as duplicated details in inland enforcement guidance.
PG 194	Section 4.5.2.5	Section 4.7.3.4	Terminology amended.
PG 195	Section 4.5.3	Section 4.7.1.3	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to communication between CAs and to reference inland enforcement guidance removed as duplicated details in section 4.7 of the draft PG. Provision relating to BCPs authorised for higher risk commodities moved to section 4.7.2.1 of the draft Code. Provision relating to officers having access under the Aviation and Maritime Security Act 1990 moved to section 4.7.2 of draft PG.
PG 196	N/A	Section 4.7.2	New section. Provisions relating to monitoring of consignments moved from sections 4.5.3, 4.5.1.1 and 4.5.9.2 of current PG.
PG 197	N/A	Section 4.7.2.1	Provisions relating to carrying out regular checks moved from section 4.6.5 of the current Code.
PG 198	Section 4.5.4	N/A	Section heading removed.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 199	Section 4.5.4.1	Section 4.7.1.1	Terminology amended. Provision relating to identifying and recording importers moved to section 4.7.1 of the draft Code.
PG 200	Section 4.5.4.2	Section 4.7.2.2	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to maintaining information on food consignments moved to section 4.7.2.1 of the draft Code.
PG 201	Section 4.5.4.3	N/A	Provisions relating to arrangements for points of entry without a permanent CA presence removed as duplicated details section 4.7 of the draft PG.
PG 202	Section 4.5.5	N/A	Section heading removed.
PG 203	Section 4.5.5.1	Section 4.7.1.4	Provisions relating to information to be provided about nominated officers moved from section 4.6.1 of the current Code. Terminology amended.
PG 204	Section 4.5.5.2	Section 4.7.1.5	Terminology amended. Provisions on providing data on imported food enforcement activity removed as duplicated details in inland enforcement guidance.
PG 205	Section 4.5.5.3	N/A	Provisions relating to notification of incidents removed as duplicated details in section 5.2.1 of the draft PG.
PG 206	Section 4.5.5.4	N/A	Provisions relating to notification of illegal imports removed as duplicated details in inland enforcement guidance.
PG 207	Section 4.5.5.5	N/A	Provisions relating to prohibitions removed as duplicated details in inland enforcement guidance.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 208	Section 4.5.6	Section 4.7.4	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to referring matters to inland CAs and points of entry moved to section 4.7.4 of the draft Code.
PG 209	Section 4.5.7	Section 4.7.1	Terminology amended. Provision relating to all businesses that import food being within official control programme moved to section 4.7.1 of the draft Code. Provision relating to inland enforcement guidance removed as duplicated details in section 4.7 of draft PG.
PG 210	Section 4.5.7.1	N/A	Provisions relating to deferred examination inland removed as duplicated details in inland enforcement guidance.
PG 211	Section 4.5.8	N/A	Section heading removed.
PG 212	Section 4.5.8.1	N/A	Provisions relating to considerations for sampling of imported food removed as duplicated details in inland enforcement guidance.
PG 213	Section 4.5.9	N/A	Provisions relating to official controls on food not of animal origin moved to section 4.7.3 of the draft PG.
PG 214	Section 4.5.9.1	Section 4.7.1.2	Terminology amended. Provision relating to checking manifests moved to section 4.7.1 of the draft Code.
PG 215	Section 4.5.9.2	N/A	Provisions relating to examination removed as duplicated details in inland enforcement guidance.
PG 216	Section 4.5.9.3	N/A	Provisions relating to deferred examinations removed as duplicated details in inland enforcement guidance.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 217	Section 4.5.10	N/A	Provisions relating to onward transportation removed as duplicated details in inland enforcement guidance.
PG 218	Section 4.5.11	N/A	Provisions relating to fees moved to section 4.7.2.1 of the draft Code.
PG 219	Section 4.5.12	N/A	Provisions relating to retention of import documentation moved to section 4.7.2.1 of the draft Code.
PG 220	Section 4.5.13	N/A	Provisions relating to enforcement at points of entry and inland removed as duplicated details in inland enforcement guidance.
PG 221	Section 4.5.14	N/A	Section heading removed.
PG 222	Section 4.5.14.1	N/A	Provisions related to imported food legislation removed as duplicated details in inland enforcement guidance.
PG 223	Section 4.5.14.2	N/A	Provisions relating to the Trade in Animals and Related Products Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011 removed as duplicated details in inland enforcement guidance.
PG 224	Section 4.5.14.3	N/A	Provisions relating to having arrangement to deal with illegally introduced products of animal origin (POAO) moved to section 4.7.1 of the draft Code. Other provisions removed as duplicated details in inland enforcement guidance.
PG 225	Section 4.5.14.4	N/A	Provisions relating to reporting of illegally imported POAO removed as duplicated details in inland enforcement guidance.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 226	Section 4.6	Section 4.3.3	Provision relating to function of sampling moved from section 4.5 of current Code. Provisions relating to procuring samples moved to section 4.3.3.1 of draft PG. Provisions relating to what section covers and receipts for samples moved to section 4.3.3 of the draft Code.
PG 227	N/A	Section 4.3.3.1	Provisions relating to procurement of samples moved from section 4.6 of current PG. Terminology amended.
PG 228	Section 4.6.1	Section 4.3.3.5	Terminology amended.
PG 229	N/A	Section 4.3.3.8	Provisions relating to list of official laboratories moved from section 4.6.3 of current PG. Terminology amended.
PG 230	Section 4.6.2	Section 4.3.3.9	Provisions relating to samples which present difficulties in dividing into parts moved from section 4.6.6 of current PG. Terminology amended. Provision relating to use of single sample approach moved to section 4.3.3.2 of the draft Code.
PG 231	Section 4.6.3	Section 4.3.3.10	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to nature and quantity of sample and national sampling protocols moved to section 4.3.3.2 of the draft Code.
PG 232	Section 4.6.4	Section 4.3.3.11	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to suitable containers, sealing and labelling of samples moved to section 4.3.3.2 of the draft Code.
PG 233	Section 4.6.5	Section 4.3.3.12	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to storage and transport and submission of samples moved to section 4.3.3.2 of the draft Code.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 234	Section 4.6.6	N/A	Provisions relating to samples presenting difficulties in dividing into parts moved to section 4.3.3.9 of draft PG.
PG 235	Section 4.6.7	N/A	Provisions relating to notification of formal sampling activity moved to section 4.3.3.2 of the draft Code.
PG 236	Section 4.6.8	N/A	Provisions relating to certificate of analysis moved to section 4.3.3.2 of the draft Code.
PG 237	Section 4.6.9	Section 4.3.3.13	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to notification of results moved to section 4.3.3.2 of the draft Code.
PG 238	Section 4.6.10	Section 4.3.3.14	Terminology amended.
PG 239	Section 4.6.11	Section 4.3.3.2	Terminology amended.
PG 240	N/A	Section 4.3.3.3	Provisions relating to continuity of evidence by CAs moved from section 4.6.12 of the current PG.
PG 241	Section 4.6.12	Section 4.3.3.4	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to continuity of evidence by CAs moved to section 4.3.3.3 of draft PG. Provisions relating to continuity and proof of postage moved to section 4.3.3.1 of the draft Code.
PG 242	Section 4.6.13	Section 4.3.3.15	No change.
PG 243	Section 4.6.14	Section 4.3.3.16	Terminology amended. Provision relating to quantity of sample moved to section 4.3.3.3 of the draft Code.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 244	Section 4.6.15	Section 4.3.3.17	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to containers, handling and transport of samples moved to section 4.3.3.3 of the draft Code.
PG 245	Section 4.6.16	Section 4.3.3.19	Terminology amended. Provision relating to specimens being transported as soon as possible moved to section 4.3.3.3 of the draft Code.
PG 246	Section 4.6.17	N/A	Provisions relating to notification of formal sampling activity (examination) moved to section 4.3.3.3 of the draft Code.
PG 247	Section 4.6.18	N/A	Provisions relating to certificates of examination moved to section 4.3.3.3 of the draft Code.
PG 248	Section 4.6.19	Section 4.3.3.18	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to notification of results moved to section 4.3.3.3 of the draft Code.
PG 249	Section 4.6.20	N/A	Provisions relating to requests for examination moved to section 4.3.3.3 of the draft Code.
PG 250	Section 4.6.21	Section 4.3.3.6	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to requests from manufacturers or importers moved to section 4.3.3.1 of the draft Code.
PG 251	Section 4.6.22	N/A	Provisions relating to sampling of goods via distance communication moved to section 4.3.3.1 of the draft Code.
PG 252	Section 4.6.23	Section 4.3.3.7	Terminology amended. Provision relating to the right to a second opinion moved to section 4.3.3.1 of the draft Code.



Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 253	N/A	Section 4.3.3.20	Provisions relating to scientific investigation of food complaint samples moved from section 6.3.3 of the current PG. Terminology amended.
PG 254	Section 4.7	N/A	Section heading removed.
PG 255	Section 4.7.1	Section 4.4.1	Provisions relating to legislation moved to section 4.4.1.1 of draft PG. Provisions relating to questionnaire moved to section 4.4.1.17 of draft PG.
PG 256	N/A	Section 4.4.1.1	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to applicable legislation moved from section 4.7.1 of the current PG.
PG 257	Section 4.7.2	Section 4.4.1.2	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to obtaining relevant information from airlines moved to section 4.4.1.3 of the draft Code. Provisions relating to service of notices moved to section 4.4.1.1 of the draft Code. Provisions relating to inspection reports moved to section 4.4.1.2 and 4.4.1.3 of the draft Code.
PG 258	Section 4.7.3	N/A	Provisions relating to catering waste removed as provisions the same for all establishments.
PG 259	Section 4.7.4	Section 4.4.1.3	Terminology amended. Provision relating to landfill sites removed as not relevant to undertaking official controls of ships or aircraft.
PG 260	N/A	Section 4.4.1.4	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to relevant information moved from section 4.7.8.6 of the current PG.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 261	Section 4.7.5	Section 4.4.1.5	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to security clearance moved to section 4.4.1.1 of the draft Code. Provisions relating to the frequency of official controls moved section 4.4.1.2 of the draft Code. Provisions relating to serving notices moved from section 4.7.2 of current PG. Provisions such as enforcement action being carried out in accordance with an enforcement policy removed as duplicated same for all establishments and covered elsewhere in draft PG.
PG 262	Section 4.7.6	Section 4.4.1.6	Terminology amended.
PG 263	Section 4.7.7	Section 4.4.1.7	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to contact details removed as no longer correct.
PG 264	Section 4.7.8	N/A	Section heading removed.
PG 265	Section 4.7.8.1	Section 4.4.1.8	Terminology amended. Provision relating to ship's master being aware of purpose of official control and determination of scope of activities moved to section 4.4.1.2 of the draft Code. Provisions relating to duties under the International Health Regulations 2005 moved from section 4.7.8.8 of current PG.
PG 266	Section 4.7.8.2	Section 4.4.1.9	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to training yachts moved from section 4.7.8.3 of the current PG. Provisions relating to criteria for determine whether an official control is appropriate moved from section 4.7.8.7 of current PG. Provisions relating to decision on whether to undertake official controls of vessels moved to section 4.4.1.2 of the draft Code.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 267	Section 4.7.8.3	Section 4.4.1.10	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to training yachts moved to section 4.4.1.9 of the draft PG. Provision relating to consideration of available documentation moved from section 4.7.8.1 of current PG.
PG 268	Section 4.7.8.4	Section 4.4.1.11	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to action taken by recipients of information and sending copies of reports to other CAs moved from section 4.7.8.6 of current PG. Provisions relating to action to take on conclusion of an inspection, including discussion of findings moved to section 4.4.1.2 of the draft Code.
PG 269	Section 4.7.8.5	Section 4.4.1.12	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to FHRS moved to section 4.4.1.13 of draft PG.
PG 270	N/A	Section 4.4.1.13	Provisions relating to FHRS moved from section 4.7.8.5 of current PG.
PG 271	Section 4.7.8.6	Section 4.4.1.14	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to action taken by recipients of information and sending copies of reports to other CAs moved to section 4.4.1.11 of draft PG. Provisions relating to examples of relevant documentation moved to section 4.4.1.4 of draft PG.
PG 272	Section 4.7.8.7	N/A	Provisions relating to risk criteria moved to section 4.4.1.9 of draft PG.
PG 273	Section 4.7.8.8	N/A	Provisions relating to the International Health Regulations 2005 moved to section 4.4.1.8 of draft PG.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 274	Section 4.7.9	N/A	Section heading removed.
PG 275	Section 4.7.9.1	Section 4.4.1.15	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to decision to board an aircraft moved to section 4.4.1.3 of the draft Code. Provisions relating to information to obtain moved from section 4.7.9.2 of current PG. Provisions relating to adopting codes of practice moved from section 4.7.9.5 of the current PG. Provisions relating to how information obtained is used to determine whether to board an aircraft moved to section 4.4.1.16 of draft PG.
PG 276	Section 4.7.9.2	Section 4.4.1.16	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to how information obtained is used to determine whether to board an aircraft moved from section 4.7.9.1 of current PG. Provisions relating to information to obtain moved to section 4.4.1.15 of draft PG. Provision relating to liaison with airlines moved to section 4.4.1.3 of the draft Code.
PG 277	Section 4.7.9.3	Section 4.4.1.17	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to items to consider during an official control, other issues to consider and use of questionnaires moved from sections 4.7.9.4, 4.7.9.5 and 4.7.1 of current PG. Provisions relating to uncertainty in information provided moved to section 4.4.1.3 of the draft Code.
PG 278	Section 4.7.9.4	N/A	Provisions relating to items to consider during an official control moved to section 4.4.1.17 of draft PG.
PG 279	Section 4.7.9.5	N/A	Provisions relating to other issues to consider during an official control moved to section 4.4.1.17 of draft PG. Provision relating to flights in transit moved to section 4.4.1.3 of the draft Code.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 280	N/A	Section 4.4.1.18	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to primary authority and home authority moved from sections 4.7.9.1 and 4.7.9.2 of current PG.
PG 281	Section 4.7.9.6	N/A	Provisions relating to action to take on conclusion of an official control moved to section 4.4.1.3 of the draft Code.
PG 282	Section 5.1	Section 5.1	Terminology amended.
PG 283	Section 5.2	Section 5.2	No change.
PG 284	Section 5.2.1	Section 5.2.1	Terminology amended.
PG 285	Section 5.2.2	Section 5.2.2	No change.
PG 286	Section 5.2.3	Section 5.2.3	Terminology amended.
PG 287	Section 5.2.4	Section 5.2.4	Terminology amended.
PG 288	Section 5.2.5	Section 5.2.5	Terminology amended. Provision relating to undertaking a root cause analysis moved to section 5.3.4 of the draft Code.
PG 289	Section 5.3	Section 5.3	No change.
PG 290	Section 5.3.1	Section 5.3.1	Contact details updated.
PG 291	Section 5.3.2	Section 5.3.2	No change.
PG 292	Section 5.4	Section 5.4	Terminology amended.
PG 293	Section 5.4.1	Section 5.4.1	No changes

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 294	Section 5.4.2	Section 5.4.2	Terminology amended.
PG 295	Section 5.4.3	N/A	Provision relating to trans-border matters removed, as only provided that the section was under review.
PG 296	Section 5.4.4	Section 5.4.3	Section heading renamed. Terminology amended.
PG 297	Section 5.4.5	Section 5.4.4	Terminology amended.
PG 298	N/A	Section 5.5	New section regarding the National Food Crime Unit added.
PG 299	Section 6.1	Section 6.1	Terminology amended.
PG 300	Section 6.2	Section 6.2	Heading amended.
PG 301	Section 6.2.1	N/A	Provision relating to powers to carry out official food controls removed. Provision relating to entering a premises moved to section 6.2.1 of draft PG. Terminology amended.
PG 302	Section 6.2.2	N/A	Provision relating to powers to carry out official food controls removed. Provision relating to entering a premises moved to section 6.2.1 of draft PG. Terminology amended.
PG 303	Section 6.2.3	N/A	Provision relating to powers to carry out official food controls removed. Provision relating to entering a premises moved to section 6.2.1 of draft PG. Terminology amended.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 304	Section 6.2.4	N/A	Provision relating to powers to carry out official food controls removed. Provision relating to entering a premises moved to section 6.2.1 of draft PG. Terminology amended.
PG 305	Section 6.3	N/A	Provision relating to food complaints removed as not specifically relevant to the enforcement chapter.
PG 306	Section 6.3.1	N/A	Provision relating to food complaints removed as not specifically relevant to the enforcement chapter.
PG 307	Section 6.3.2	N/A	Provision relating to food complaints removed as not specifically relevant to the enforcement chapter. Provision regarding involvement of other Competent Authorities duplicated in section 2.5.1 of draft Code and PG.
PG 308	Section 6.3.3	N/A	Provisions relating to food samples removed as sampling provisions available in section 4.3.3 of draft PG.
PG 309	Section 6.4	Section 6.3	Title amended.
PG 310	Section 6.4.1	Section 6.3.1	Title amended. Terminology amended. Provision relating to enforcement action taken removed as duplicated in section 6.3.4 of draft Code. Provision relating to providing advice moved to section 6.3.2 of draft PG. Provision relating to determining appropriate action moved to section 6.3.3 of draft PG.
PG 311	N/A	Section 6.3.2	New section to provide information relating to advice and education. Provisions moved from section 6.4.1 of current PG. Terminology amended.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 312	N/A	Section 6.3.3	New section to provide information relating to determining appropriate enforcement action. Provision relating to determining appropriate action moved from section 6.4.1 of current PG. Provisions relating to Primary Authority moved from sections 4.2.2 and 6.2 of current Code. Provisions relating to the Code for Prosecutors moved from section 6.2 of current Code. Provision regarding discussing decisions moved from section 6.4.2 of current Code. Terminology amended.
PG 313	Section 6.4.2	N/A	Provision relating to enforcement information removed as provisions duplicated in section 2.3 of draft Code.
PG 314	Section 6.4.3	Section 6.9.3	Terminology amended.
PG 315	Section 6.5	Section 6.2	Title amended.
PG 316	Section 6.5.1	Section 6.2.1	Table added with provisions relating to powers of entry from sections 6.2.1 – 6.2.4 of current PG. Provision relating to regulation 33 of TARP included. Terminology amended.
PG 317	Section 6.5.2	N/A	Provisions relating to powers to stop vehicles removed due to risk the guidance goes beyond powers of entry provided in legislation.
PG 318	Section 6.5.3	Section 6.2.2	No change.
PG 319	Section 6.6	Section 6.4	No change.
PG 320	Section 6.6.1	Section 6.4.1	No change.



Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 321	Section 6.6.2	N/A	Provisions relating to considerations when issuing a notice moved to section 6.4 of draft Code. Provisions relating to enforcement policy and hierarchy of enforcement duplicated in section 6.3.4 of draft Code. Terminology amended.
PG 322	Section 6.6.3	Section 6.4.2	Terminology amended
PG 323	Section 6.6.4	Section 6.4.3	Terminology amended.
PG 324	Section 6.6.5	Section 6.4.4	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to content of a notice removed as duplicated guidance in sections 6.3.5 and 6.4 of draft Code. Provisions relating to time limits removed as guidance on time limits available in section 6.4.5 of draft PG.
PG 325	Section 6.6.6	Section 6.4.5	Terminology amended.
PG 326	Section 6.6.7	Section 6.4.6	Terminology amended.
PG 327	Section 6.6.8	Section 6.4.7	Terminology amended.
PG 328	Section 6.6.9	Section 6.4.7.1	Provisions relating to service of notice removed as duplicated provisions in section 6.4 of draft Code.
PG 329	Section 6.6.10	N/A	Sub-heading for service of notices removed.
PG 330	Section 6.6.10.1	Section 6.4.8	Terminology amended.
PG 331	Section 6.6.11	Section 6.4.9	Terminology amended.
PG 332	Section 6.6.12	Section 6.4.10	Terminology amended.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 333	Section 6.6.13	Section 6.4.11	Terminology amended.
PG 334	Section 6.6.14	Section 6.4.12	Terminology amended. Provision relating to checking work moved to section 6.4.2 of draft Code.
PG 335	Section 6.6.15	Section 6.4.13	Terminology amended.
PG 336	Section 6.6.16	Section 6.4.14	Terminology amended.
PG 337	Section 6.6.17	Section 6.4.15	Information regarding other guidance moved to new section 6.4.16 in draft PG.
PG 338	N/A	6.4.16	New section with information regarding other guidance moved from section 6.4.17 of the current PG.
PG 339	Section 6.7	Section 6.5	Terminology amended.
PG 340	Section 6.7.1	Section 6.5.1	Terminology amended.
PG 341	6.7.2	Section 6.5.2	Terminology amended.
PG 342	Section 6.7.3	Section 6.5.3	Terminology amended.
PG 343	Section 6.7.4	Section 6.5.4	No change.
PG 344	Section 6.7.5	Section 6.5.5	No change.
PG 345	Section 6.7.6	Section 6.5.6	No change.
PG 346	Section 6.8	Section 6.6	No change.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 347	Section 6.8.1	Section 6.6.1	Terminology amended.
PG 348	Section 6.8.1.1	Section 6.6.2	Terminology amended.
PG 349	Section 6.8.1.2	Section 6.6.3	Terminology amended.
PG 350	Section 6.8.2	Section 6.6.4	Terminology amended.
PG 351	Section 6.8.2.1	Section 6.6.4.1	Terminology amended.
PG 352	Section 6.8.2.2	N/A	Terminology amended.
PG 353	Section 6.8.3	Section 6.6.5	Terminology amended.
PG 354	Section 6.8.3.1	Section 6.6.5.1	Section heading amended. Terminology amended.
PG 355	Section 6.8.3.2	Section 6.6.5.2	Section heading amended. Terminology amended.
PG 356	Section 6.8.3.3	Section 6.6.5.3	Section heading amended. Terminology amended
PG 357	Section 6.8.4	Section 6.6.6	Terminology amended.
PG 358	Section 6.8.5	Section 6.6.7	Terminology amended.
PG 359	Section 6.8.6	Section 6.6.8	Terminology amended.
PG 360	Section 6.8.6.1	Section 6.6.8.1	Terminology amended.
PG 361	Section 6.8.7	Section 6.6.9	Terminology amended.
PG 362	Section 6.8.7.1	Section 6.6.9.1	Terminology amended.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 363	Section 6.8.7.2	Section 6.6.9.2	Terminology amended.
PG 364	Section 6.8.7.3	Section 6.6.9.3	Terminology amended.
PG 365	Section 6.8.7.4	Section 6.6.9.4	Terminology amended.
PG 366	Section 6.9	Section 6.6.10	No change
PG 367	Section 6.9.1	Section 6.6.10.1	Terminology amended. Link to HEPN added.
PG 368	Section 6.9.2	Section 6.6.10.26	No change.
PG 369	Section 6.9.3	Section 6.6.11	Terminology amended.
PG 370	Section 6.10	Section 6.6.12	Terminology amended.
PG 371	Section 6.11	Section 6.6.13	No changes.
PG 372	Section 6.11.1	Section 6.6.13.1	Terminology amended. Link added.
PG 373	Section 6.11.2	Section 6.6.13.2	Terminology amended.
PG 374	Section 6.11.3	Section 6.6.13.3	Terminology amended.
PG 375	Section 6.12	Section 6.6.14	Terminology amended. Reference to legislation moved from text to footnote.
PG 376	Section 6.13.	Section 6.7	No change.
PG 377	Section 6.13.1	Section 6.7.1	Terminology amended.
PG 378	Section 6.13.2	Section 6.7.2	Terminology amended.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 379	Section 6.13.2.1	Section 6.7.2.1	Terminology amended.
PG 380	Section 6.13.2.2	Section 6.7.2.2	Terminology amended.
PG 381	Section 6.13.2.3	Section 6.7.2.3	Terminology amended.
PG 382	Section 6.13.3	Section 6.7.3	Terminology amended.
PG 383	Section 6.13.3.1	Section 6.7.4	Terminology amended.
PG 384	Section 6.13.4.1	Section 6.7.5	Terminology amended.
PG 385	Section 6.13.4.1	Section 6.7.5.1	Terminology amended.
PG 386	Section 6.13.4.2	Section 6.7.5.2	Terminology amended.
PG 387	Section 6.13.4.3	Section 6.7.5.3	Terminology amended.
PG 388	Section 6.13.5	Section 6.7.6	No change.
PG 389	Section 6.13.5.1	Section 6.7.6.1	Terminology amended.
PG 390	Section 6.13.5.2	Section 6.7.6.2	Terminology amended.
PG 391	Section 6.13.5.3	Section 6.7.6.3	Terminology amended.
PG 392	Section 6.13.5.4	Section 6.7.6.3	Terminology amended and more information provided.
PG 393	Section 6.13.6	Section 6.7.7	Terminology amended.
PG 394	Section 6.14	Section 6.8	No change.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 395	Section 6.14.1	Section 6.8.1	Terminology amended.
PG 396	Section 6.14.2	Section 6.8.2	Terminology amended.
PG 397	Section 6.14.3	Section 6.8.3	Terminology amended.
PG 398	N/A	Section 6.9	New section including provisions moved from section 6.4 of current PG. Terminology amended.
PG 399	N/A	Section 6.10	New section on follow-up checks including provisions moved from section 4.2.9 of current PG.
PG 400	Section 6.15	Section 6.11	No change.
PG 401	Section 6.15.1	Section 6.11.1	No change.
PG 402	Section 6.15.2 Section 6.15.3	N/A	Section 6.15.2 and 6.15.3 of current PG removed due to duplication of information in approvals guidance. Link to approvals guidance included in section 6.11.1 of draft PG.
PG 403	Section 6.15.4	Section 6.11.2	Terminology amended.
PG 404	Section 6.15.5	Section 6.11.3	Terminology amended.
PG 405	Section 6.15.6	Section 6.11.4	Terminology amended.
PG 406	Section 6.15.6.1	Section 6.11.5	No change.
PG 407	Section 6.16	Section 6.12	No change.
PG 408	Section 6.16.1	Section 6.12.1	Terminology amended.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 409	Section 6.16.1.1	Section 6.12.1.1	No change.
PG 410	Section 6.16.1.2	Section 6.12.1.1	Terminology amended.
PG 411	Section 6.16.1.3	Section 6.12.1.3	Terminology amended.
PG 412	Section 6.16.1.4	Section 6.12.1.4	Terminology amended.
PG 413	Section 6.16.1.5	Section 6.12.1.5	Terminology amended.
PG 414	Section 6.16.1.6	Section 6.12.1.6	Terminology amended.
PG 415	Section 6.16.1.7	Section 6.12.1.7	Terminology amended.
PG 416	Section 6.16.2	Section 6.12.2	Terminology amended.
PG 417	Section 6.16.3	Section 6.12.3	Terminology amended.
PG 418	Section 6.17	Section 6.13	Terminology amended.
PG 419	Chapter 7	Chapter 7	Chapter title changed.
PG 420	Section 7.1	Chapter 7	Section title changed to Chapter title
PG 421	Section 7.1.1	Section 7.1	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to classifying production and relaying areas, classification categories and monitoring removed as duplication with FSA live bivalve mollusc (LBM) guidance.
PG 422	Section 7.1.2	Section 7.2	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to allowances for small quantities moved from section 7.1.2.1 of current PG.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 423	Section 7.1.2.1	N/A	Section header removed as provisions relating to allowances for small quantities of LBM moved to section 7.2 of draft PG.
PG 424	Section 7.1.4	N/A	Provisions regarding permitted treatment methods removed due to duplication with other FSA LBM and/or approvals guidance.
PG 425	Section 7.1.5	Section 7.4	Terminology amended. List of local and national organisations FSA should liaise with extended.
PG 426	Section 7.1.6	N/A	Provisions relating to classification requirements removed due to duplication with other FSA LBM guidance. Provision relating to a list of classified LBM production and relaying areas moved to section 7.3.1 of draft PG.
PG 427	Section 7.1.7	Sections 7.4.1 - 7.4.3	Provisions relating to the examination, monitoring and verification of registration documents merged into sections 7.4.1, 7.4.2 and 7.4.3 of draft PG.
PG 428	Section 7.1.8 to 7.1.12		Sections removed as they related to FBO requirements/advice and or duplicate other FSA advice.
PG 429	Section 7.1.8	N/A	Provision relating to sampling of LBM by FBOs removed due to duplication with other FSA LBM guidance.
PG 430	Section 7.1.9	N/A	Provision relating to laboratories used removed due to duplication with other FSA LBM guidance.
PG 431	Section 7.1.10	N/A	Provision relating to testing of LBM removed due to duplication with other FSA LBM guidance.



Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 432	Section 7.1.11	N/A	Provision relating to marine biotoxins removed due to duplication with other FSA LBM guidance.
PG 433	Section 7.1.12	N/A	Provision relating to sampling removed due to duplication with other FSA LBM guidance.
PG 434	Section 7.1.13	Section 7.7	Terminology amended.
PG 435	Section 7.1.14	N/A	Provisions relating to LBM which fail to satisfy requirements moved to section 7.6 of draft Code.
PG 436	N/A	Section 7.3	New section providing information relating to production and relaying areas.
PG 437	N/A	Section 7.3.1	New section providing information relating to classification and monitoring of production and relaying areas. Provisions relating to a list of classified areas moved from section 7.1.6 of current PG.
PG 438	Section 7.1.15	Section 7.3.2	Relocated
PG 439	N/A	Section 7.5	New section providing information relating to action following a non-compliant sample.
PG 440	Section 7.1.16	Section 7.5.1	Title amended. Terminology amended. Provisions relating to notification and display of Closure Notices moved from section 7.5 of current Code.
PG 441	Section 7.1.17	Section 7.6	Terminology amended.
PG 442	Section 7.1.18	Section 7.8	Terminology amended.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 443	Section 7.1.19	Section 7.9	Terminology amended.
PG 442	N/A	Section 8.1	New section to provide information relating to content of the chapter and link to FSA approvals guidance.
PG 445	Section 7.2	Section 8.2	No change.
PG 446	Section 7.2.1	Section 8.2.1	No change.
PG 447	Section 7.2.2	Section 8.2.2	No change.
PG 448	Section 7.2.3	Section 8.2.3	No change.
PG 449	Section 7.2.4	Section 8.2.4	No change.
PG 450	Section 7.2.5	Section 8.2.5	No change.
PG 451	Section 7.2.6	Section 8.2.6	No change.
PG 452	Section 7.2.7	Section 8.2.7	Title amended. Terminology amended. Provision relating to Seafish guidance provided.
PG 453	Section 7.3	Section 8.3	No change.
PG 454	Section 7.3.1	N/A	Provision regarding meat diary removed.
PG 455	Section 7.3.2	Section 8.3.1	Terminology amended. Provision relating to approvals guidance removed as duplicated in section 8.1 of draft PG.
PG 456	Section 7.3.3	Section 8.3.2	Terminology amended.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 457	Section 7.3.3.1	Section 8.3.2.1	Terminology amended.
PG 458	Section 7.3.3.2	Section 8.3.2.2	Terminology amended.
PG 459	Section 7.3.3.3	N/A	Provision relating to cold stores removed due to duplication with FSA approvals guidance.
PG 460	Section 7.3.3.4	Section 8.3.2.3	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to wild game amended due to duplication with other FSA wild game guidance and link provided.
PG 461	Section 7.3.3.5	N/A	Provision relating to edible co-products removed due to duplication with FSA approvals guidance. Provisions relating to separate guidance removed as no separate guidance available.
PG 462	Section 7.3.4	Section 8.3.3	Terminology amended.
PG 463	Section 7.3.4.1	N/A	Provisions relating to exemptions from approval removed due to duplication with FSA approvals guidance.
PG 464	Section 7.3.4.2	N/A	Provisions relating to exemptions from approval removed due to duplication with FSA approvals guidance.
PG 465	Section 7.3.4.3	N/A	Provisions relating to exemptions from approval removed due to duplication with FSA approvals guidance.
PG 466	Section 7.3.4.4	N/A	Provision relating to wild game removed due to duplication with FSA approvals and wild game guidance.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 467	Section 7.3.4.5	Section 8.3.3.1	Terminology amended.
PG 468	Section 7.3.5	Section 8.3.4	No change.
PG 469	Section 7.3.6	Section 8.3.5	Title amended. Terminology amended.
PG 470	Section 7.3.7	N/A	Provision relating to wild game sector removed due to duplication with FSA wild game guidance.
PG 471	Section 7.3.8	Section 8.3.6	No change.
PG 472	Section 7.3.9	Section 8.3.7	No change.
PG 473	N/A	Section 8.3.8	New section on transport of meat above temperature added.
PG 474	Section 7.4	Section 8.4	No change.
PG 475	Section 7.4.1	Section 8.4.1	No change.
PG 476	Section 7.4.2	Section 8.4.2	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to enforcement activities moved from section 7.4.3 of current PG.
PG 477	Section 7.4.3	Section 8.4.3	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to enforcement activities moved to section 8.4.2 of draft PG.
PG 478	Section 7.4.4		Section removed.
PG 479	Section 7.4.5		Section removed.
PG 480	Section 7.4.6	Section 8.4.4	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to heat treatment removed due to duplication with section 8.4.8 of draft PG.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 481	Section 7.4.7	Section 8.4.5	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to time and temperature for treated milk moved to section 8.4.6 of draft PG.
PG 482	Section 7.4.8	Section 8.4.6	Terminology amended. Provisions relating to time and temperature for treated milk moved from section 7.4.7 of current PG.
PG 483	Section 7.4.9	Section 8.4.7	Terminology amended.
PG 484	Section 7.4.10	Section 8.4.8	No change.
PG 485	Section 7.4.11	Section 8.4.9	No change.
PG 486	Section 7.4.11.1	Section 8.4.9.1	Terminology amended.
PG 487	Section 7.4.11.2	Section 8.4.9.2	No change.
PG 488	Section 7.4.11.3	N/A	Provision relating to summary of legislative background for raw milk and dairy products removed as the referenced guidance 'Milk Hygiene on the Dairy Farm Guide' is archived.
PG 489	Section 7.4.11.4	Section 8.4.9.3	Terminology amended. Additional provisions relating to actions to be taken on stocks of raw milk-based products following loss of OFT status added.
PG 490	Section 7.4.11.5	N/A	Section removed.
PG 491	Section 7.4.11.6	Section 8.4.9.4	Terminology amended.
PG 492	Section 7.5	Section 8.5	No change.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 493	Section 7.5.1	Section 8.5.1	No change.
PG 494	Section 7.5.2	Section 8.5.2	No change.
PG 495	Section 7.5.3	Section 8.5.3	Terminology amended. New provision added.
PG 496	Section 7.5.4	Section 8.5.4	Terminology amended.
PG 497	Section 7.5.5	N/A	Provision relating to assurance schemes removed as provisions not relevant to regulations within section 8.5.1 of draft PG.
PG 498	Section 7.6	Section 8.6	No change.
PG 499	Section 7.6.1	Section 8.6.1	No change.
PG 500	Section 7.6.2	Section 8.6.2	No change.
PG 501	Section 7.6.3	Section 8.6.3	No change.
PG 502	Section 7.6.4	Section 8.6.4	No change.
PG 503	Section 7.6.5	Section 8.6.5	No change.
PG 504	Section 7.6.6	Section 8.6.6	Title amended. No change.
PG 505	Section 7.6.7	Section 8.6.7	No change.
PG 506	Section 7.6.8	Section 8.6.8	No change.
PG 507	Section 7.6.9	Section 8.6.9	No change.
PG 508	Section 7.6.10	Section 8.6.10	Terminology amended.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 509	N/A	Section 8.7	New section providing information relating to small quantities.
PG 510	N/A	Section 8.7.1	New section providing information relating to small quantities of primary products.
PG 511	Section 7.7	Section 8.8	Title amended. Terminology amended. Provisions relating to food for specific groups removed due to duplication with DHSC guidance.
PG 512	Section 7.7.1	N/A	Provisions relating to food for specific groups removed due to duplication with DHSC guidance.
PG 513	Section 7.7.2	N/A	Provisions relating to food for specific groups removed due to duplication with DHSC guidance.
PG 514	Section 7.7.2.1	N/A	Provisions relating to food for specific groups removed due to duplication with DHSC guidance.
PG 515	Section 7.7.2.2	N/A	Provisions relating to food for specific groups removed due to duplication with DHSC guidance.
PG 516	Section 7.7.3	N/A	Provisions relating to food for specific groups removed due to duplication with DHSC guidance.
PG 517	Section 7.7.4	N/A	Provisions relating to food for specific groups removed due to duplication with DHSC guidance.
PG 518	Section 7.7.5	N/A	Provisions relating to food for specific groups removed due to duplication with DHSC guidance.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 519	Section 7.7.6	N/A	Provisions relating to food for specific groups removed due to duplication with DHSC guidance.
PG 520	Section 7.7.7	N/A	Provisions relating to food for specific groups removed due to duplication with DHSC guidance.
PG 521	Section 7.7.8	N/A	Provisions relating to food for specific groups removed due to duplication with DHSC guidance.
PG 522	Section 7.8	Section 8.9	No change.
PG 523	Section 7.8.1	Section 8.9.1	Terminology amended.
PG 524	Section 7.8.2	Section 8.9.2	Terminology amended.
PG 525	Section 7.8.3	Section 8.9.3	Terminology amended.
PG 526	Section 7.8.4	Section 8.9.4	Terminology amended.
PG 527	Section 7.8.5	Section 8.9.5	Terminology amended.
PG 528	Section 7.8.6	Section 8.9.6	Terminology amended.
PG 529	Section 7.8.7	Section 8.9.7	Terminology amended.
PG 530	Section 7.8.8	Section 8.9.8	Terminology amended.
PG 531	Section 7.8.9	Section 8.9.9	Terminology amended.
PG 532	Section 7.8.10	Section 8.9.10	Terminology amended.



Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 533	Section 7.8.11	Section 8.9.11	Terminology amended.
PG 534	Section 7.8.12	Section 8.9.12	Terminology amended.
PG 535	Section 7.9	Section 8.10	No change.
PG 536	Section 7.9.1	Section 8.10.1	Terminology amended.
PG 537	Section 7.9.2	Section 8.10.2	Title amended. Terminology amended. Provisions relating to bottled water removed due to duplication with Defra guidance.
PG 538	Section 7.9.3	Section 8.10.3	Provisions relating to natural mineral waters removed due to duplication with Defra guidance. Links provided.
PG 539	Section 7.9.4	Section 8.10.3.1	Provisions relating to natural mineral waters removed due to duplication with Defra guidance. Links provided.
PG 540	Section 7.9.5	N/A	Provisions relating to natural mineral waters removed due to duplication with Defra guidance.
PG 541	Section 7.9.6	N/A	Provisions relating to natural mineral waters removed due to duplication with Defra guidance.
PG 542	Section 7.9.7	N/A	Provisions relating to bottled water removed due to duplication with Defra guidance.
PG 543	N/A	Section 8.10.4	New section added regarding the Windsor Framework.
PG 544	Section 7.10	Section 8.11	No change.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 545	Section 7.10.1	Section 8.11.1	Terminology amended.
PG 546	N/A	Section 8.11.2	New section providing information relating to catering waste. Provisions moved from section 4.7.3 of current PG. Terminology amended.
PG 547	Section 7.10.2	Section 8.11.3	Title amended. Terminology amended.
PG 548	Section 7.10.3	Section 8.11.4	Terminology amended. Provision relating to 'Industry Guide to Edible co-products and Animal By-products' guidance removed as link unavailable.
PG 549	Section 7.10.4	Section 8.11.5	Terminology amended.
PG 550	Section 7.10.5	Section 8.11.6	No change.
PG 551	Section 7.10.6	Section 8.11.7	Terminology amended.
PG 552	Section 7.10.7	Section 8.11.8	Terminology amended.
PG 553	Section 7.11	Section 8.12	No change.
PG 554	Section 7.11.1	Section 8.12.1	Provision relating to location of seller moved from section 7.11.2 of current PG. Terminology amended. Provisions relating to legislation and central UK Competent Authority moved from 7.11.5 of current PG. Terminology amended.
PG 555	Section 7.11.2	N/A	Provision relating to location of seller moved to section 8.12.1 of draft PG.

Reference	Current PG	Draft PG	Record of change to the PG
PG 556	Section 7.11.3	Section 8.12.2	Terminology amended.
PG 557	Section 7.11.4	Section 8.12.3	Terminology amended.
PG 558	Section 7.11.5	N/A	Title amended. Terminology amended. Provisions relating to legislation and central UK Competent Authority moved to section 8.12.1 of draft PG.
PG 559	Section 7.11.6	Section 8.12	Terminology amended.
PG 560	Section 7.12	Section 8.13	No change.
PG 561	Glossary	Glossary	Terminology amended. Definitions for terms not used in PG removed.

## Annex C: Potential future developments

This annex outlines future potential developments that we are seeking early stakeholder views on.

### Qualifications

To address feedback from LA engagement events held in April/May 2024, the FSA has done some early thinking about the management of qualifications that we endorse as 'suitable' qualifications.

We would like to seek views from stakeholders to inform our options appraisal and policy development at this early stage. It is envisaged that once we gather views via this consultation, that further stakeholder engagement and consultation will be undertaken to inform any final decision.

### Current approach

The Official Control Regulations requires CAs to have access to a sufficient number of suitably qualified and experienced officers. The 'suitable qualification' requirement is currently referenced in the Code and defined as statutory guidance via the list of FSA endorsed qualifications.

Existing or prospective CA officers who do not hold one of these qualifications but who may have a range of qualifications, additional training and experience that together indicate their competence can request an 'equivalency assessment' from a relevant professional or awarding body and fees may be payable. These are carried out on an individual basis and the professional body should inform the FSA.

To make changes to the Code, such as when a new qualification is endorsed, the FSA must follow a prescribed administrative process. This includes undertaking a formal consultation (usually 12 weeks) and seeking Ministerial approval for the changes.

We do not currently have formal procedures or governance in place for the FSA to consider and endorse new qualifications and are currently working to develop these.

### What we are seeking views on

One of the options that we are considering, would involve changing where the FSA endorsed list of qualifications is published. The option that we are seeking views on would retain the requirement in the Code that officers are suitably qualified.

The list of endorsed qualifications would then be removed from the Code and published in the PG. We are seeking to understand stakeholders' views on perceived advantages, disadvantages and impacts of this option.

## Introduction of governance procedures for qualifications

It is clear from our research and engagement with stakeholders to date, that there are gaps in our governance of qualifications. These need to be addressed.

FSA officials have been drafting governance procedures for how existing and future qualifications will be considered, assessed and endorsed by the FSA as being suitable. The draft procedures will be agreed across the three nations and ensure engagement with key experts in this process including local authorities, education providers, relevant professional bodies and relevant government departments.

Our aim is that the final governance procedures will provide sufficient scrutiny and stakeholder engagement to ensure that:

- there are defined criteria that any qualification must adhere to in order to be endorsed by the FSA
- the content of proposed new qualifications meets and maintains professional standards
- there is a procedure to assess qualifications which are not yet listed as 'suitable' for example if a new qualification is developed or LAs want to check a qualification that is not already included in the list
- we have a consistent approach to decision making when assessing new qualifications and routinely reviewing existing qualifications which takes into account input from expert stakeholders
- the syllabus content of courses keeps pace with the demands of the regulatory landscape

It is anticipated that these procedures, once finalised, will be published on the FSA's website and will apply to new and existing qualifications regardless of whether they remain published in the Code or transferred to the PG.

We also anticipate that this governance procedure, when developed, would include an expert panel of stakeholders with representation from across the four nations as required. This panel would review and assess new qualifications for their fitness for purpose before deciding if the FSA should endorse these qualifications.

## Rationale for considering moving the endorsed list of suitable qualifications from the Code to the Practice Guidance

In November 2023, the FSA published [research into LA Capacity and Capability](#).

One of the findings of this research was that the current qualifications framework is too restrictive, and a recommendation was made that we seek to introduce more flexible and modular routes to qualification.

During LA stakeholder engagement events across England, Northern Ireland and Wales in April/May 2024, three options were presented to local authorities. These ranged from maintaining the status quo, moving to a fully competency only model or maintaining lists

of qualifications but introducing more flexibility and modularity. We also asked an open question to identify other options that we had not considered.

During the LA engagement events, some CAs highlighted that they had applications for jobs from people who they thought were likely to have the skills and competencies required to deliver Official Food and Feed Controls. However, because their qualifications were not listed as suitable in the Code, their HR teams did not give them permission to employ them. This was perceived as an unnecessary barrier.

We have also been approached by two professional bodies in the last year to recognise new qualifications as suitable and did not have an existing mechanism to consider these which led to a longer than necessary lead in time for us to consider and endorse the qualifications.

The list of FSA endorsed suitable qualifications is currently published in the Code. If we need to update the Code, the FSA must follow a prescribed administrative process. This includes undertaking a formal statutory consultation (usually a minimum of 12 weeks) and seeking Ministerial approval for the changes to the Code. The Minister does not scrutinise specific qualifications and relies on the FSA to advise them of their suitability.

To manage FSA resources, we currently brigade a number of changes to the Code together for the purposes of consultation. This means that when we want to update the list of qualifications, we have to wait until the next review of the Code. This can delay updates to the list of qualifications. Due to the cyclical nature of updates to the Code, it could mean that a suitable qualification is available for a number of years before it could be included in the Code.

In contrast, the PG can be amended subject to stakeholder engagement but does not require the same level of administrative process as a statutory consultation. However, similar to the Code, FSA currently brigade changes to the PG together to manage FSA resources and burdens on stakeholders and the PG is also updated in a cyclical nature.

The option being considered would propose that if the qualification governance panel was satisfied that a qualification should be endorsed, that the PG would be updated to reflect a revised list of FSA endorsed qualifications. This would allow for a more expedient update of the list compared to updating the Code, as no formal consultation would be required. However, improvements in expediency will be dependent upon the effective revision of the FSA processes for updating the PG. The intention is that the agreed process would ensure that we would not arrive in a position where an existing qualification could be removed from the list in a way that would mean existing authorised officers no longer hold a 'suitable qualification'.

Feedback from professional bodies, LAs and industry (who employ apprentices) is that they will not sponsor a route to qualification unless they have full confidence that the FSA will formally recognise it. The delays associated with our current process of updating

qualifications in the Code could affect the flow of new entrants into the profession and becomes a barrier to addressing the shortage of qualified food officers and recruitment challenges faced by some LAs.

Unclassified

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## ITEM 8

### Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	14 May 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community and Culture
Date of Report	28 March 2025
File Reference	CDV55
Legislation	The Local Government Act (NI) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Mae Murray Foundation Partnership
Attachments	

A partnership arrangement between Ards and North Down Borough Council and the Mae Murray Foundation resulted in the development of the first inclusive beach in the Ards and North Down area at Groomsport, where people of differing physical abilities can take part in activities independently. The unique specialised equipment loan scheme and purpose-built changing room facilities enable people who live with mobility challenges to experience the Groomsport Beach freely alongside people of all ability.

To access the equipment at the Inclusive Beach, pre booking is required and can be accessed via Mae Murray Foundation. A trained member of staff is also at hand upon the arrival of the user.

#### Season 2024 overview

The programme attracted over 600 people in total attending the Groomsport inclusive beach. In addition, there were a series of family fun days during June to September 2024, which the Mae Murray Foundation delivered, funded by ANDBC through the Events and Festival Fund.



Not Applicable

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Numerous schools and organisations visited the inclusive beach in 2024, including:

- Clifton School
- Everton Day Centre
- Sydenham Court
- Gateway organisation

### **Operation for 2025**

The initiative is now moving into its third year and will operate for the season from Friday 30 May 2025 to Sunday 24 August 2025. There will be some adjustments to the schedule based on lessons learned from previous seasons.

The specialised loan equipment scheme will be available on Fridays and Sundays from 11am until 5.00pm. The ANDBC Community Development section provides funding to allow for two staff members both trained directly by the Mae Murray Foundation. In previous years the service was available on Saturday and Sundays from 9.30am until 5.30pm. The change follows a review of last year's attendance, which demonstrated limited public interest on Saturdays. There were also older people homes that expressed an interest in being able to visit the beach during the working week.

Additional dates will be available this year during July. The service will extend to cover six additional days ensuring greater accessibility during the peak holiday periods:

Tuesday 8 July, Wednesday 9 July, Thursday 10 July, Tuesday 15 July, Wednesday 16 July and Thursday 17 July 2025.

### **Opening Season 2025**

The season for 2025 will be launched on Friday 30 May 2025 with press coverage, to raise awareness of the Inclusive Beach initiative at Groomsport and encourage community participation. Mae Murray Foundation representatives will be in attendance and there will be activities for young people and families to enjoy including the full range of equipment out on the sand ready for use.

The Groomsport inclusive beach is advertised widely using social media platforms, Mae Murray Foundation website, ANDBC website, and Visit Ards and North Down – tourism.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council notes the report.

Unclassified

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## ITEM 9

### Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	14 May 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community & Culture
Date of Report	18 April 2025
File Reference	GREL 424
Legislation	Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Good Relations Annual Report 2024-2025
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Good Relations Annual Report 2024-2025

Attached is the Good Relations Annual Report for 2024-2025 outlining the work of the section in delivering the Good Relations Action Plan for 2024-2025.

The Good Relations section is normally externally funded 75% from The Executive Office (TEO) and 25% by Council. However, the total Good Relations budget from TEO was reduced in 2024-2025 to £110,534.72.

The Good Relations Strategy (2022-2025) informed an annual action plan, which is submitted to The Executive Office for assessment. The Action Plan is based on the four key themes of the Executive's strategy, Together Building United Communities:

- Children and Young People
- Shared community
- Safe Community
- Cultural Expression

Not Applicable

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The Good Relations section works closely with PCSP, PEACE and Community Development sections to avoid duplication and ensure a cohesive delivery of programmes to the community.

### RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes this report.



# **Ards and North Down Borough Council Good Relations**

## **Annual Report**

**2024 – 2025**

Contents

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Cultural Expression	19
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## Foreword

Ards and North Down Borough Council's Good Relations (GR) section sits within the Councils Community and Wellbeing Directorate. The District Councils GR Programme is delivered by the GR team in accordance with an annual Action Plan, which is approved by the Council and The Executive Office. Normally the section receives financial assistance of 75% of the total cost of the GR Programme from The Executive Office and Council contributes 25% of the total cost however financial assistance from The Executive Office for 2024-2025 was reduced to £110,534.72 due to budget cuts. This effected the overall delivery of the full GR Action Plan.

The report on the Action Plan details a programme of activities to promote and deliver improved GR in the Council area in accordance with the aims and objectives outlined in the Together: Building a United Community Strategy (T:buc) and prioritised needs and issues identified in the 2022-2025 GR Audit.

Ards and North Down Borough Council are committed to building on previous GR work across the Borough by delivering a comprehensive programme of events, training and initiatives that work proactively to deliver a shared and better future for all. The section works closely with the community to bring this vision forward and continues to support local groups to build on their good practice, so that a variety of exciting and innovative projects can take place locally.

Through commitment to GR and community development work, groups and individuals from different political, racial, and religious traditions have been enabled to engage with one another in ways which develop understanding, trust, equality and fairness and build confidence and inclusion.

ANDBC's GR Action Plan for 2024 – 2025 was delivered to meet the aims and strategic outcomes of the four key themes of: -

1. Children and Young People
2. Safe Community
3. Shared Community
4. Cultural Expression

The action plan activities and outcomes are included under these four key themes within the following report. All programmes continued to be delivered using an outcome-based approach (OBA). An outcome-based approach is a standardised requirement of The Executive Office (TEO) for the delivery of all GR programmes to enable ease and consistency for reporting. Questions are predetermined and issued to GR by TEO under the 4 themes. The online information from pre and post evaluations is collated by TEO and percentage results calculated. Unfortunately, not all pre and post evaluations are returned and can adjust the percentages significantly.

In addition to the following programmes the GR team: - Offers support to local groups through regular Interagency meetings. - Supports the Intercultural Forum, refugees and asylum seekers and other statutory agencies. - Manages the budget for dispersal funding specifically aimed at those seeking asylum locally.

## Children and Young People

### Aim

To continue to improve attitudes amongst our young people and build a community where they can play a full and active role in building GR.

### Strategic Outcomes

1.1 Improving attitudes of children from different backgrounds.

1.2 Young people engaging in bringing the community together.

### AND01 Shared Education

Due to cuts in the budget the cross community Shared Education Programme that would normally take young people to battlefield sites in France and Belgium, demonstrating the joined effort of all community backgrounds was unable to go ahead. Instead, the programme was amended to deliver a 3-day educational initiative held over three weeks, designed to provide **224 students** with a comprehensive understanding of Northern Ireland 's role in the First World War, particularly focusing on the Battle of the Somme. The programme aimed to foster cross-community relationships and promote friendships among young people from a diverse mix of Primary schools across the borough.

#### Participating Schools:

- Millisle Primary School
- Castle Gardens Primary School
- Portaferry Integrated Primary School
- Ballyvester Primary School
- Comber Primary School
- Bangor Central Primary School

Young people engaged with a local historian, visited the Somme Museum, and explored Clandeboye Estate. These activities deepened their historical understanding, fostered critical thinking, and built better understanding.

**Outcomes and Impact - Cross-Community Collaboration:** The programme successfully united students from diverse schools, fostering friendships that extend beyond the programme.

- **Educational Value:** The programme provided a unique blend of historical learning and interactive experiences, deepening students' understanding of the First World War.
- **Friendship Building:** Shared experiences helped students develop cross-community friendships, promoting social cohesion.

The Shared Education Programme provided an enriching educational experience, promoting historical understanding and cross-community interaction. The programme's blend of expert sessions, museum visits, and hands-on learning created lasting impacts on students' knowledge and relationships.

### Have you ever been to a Good Relations project before?

	No. of participants	% of participants
Yes	8	4%
No	135	61%
Don't know	80	36%
Total	223	100%

### Which one of the following describes you best?

	No. of participants	% of participants
Boy	114	51%
Girl	106	47%
Neither	0	0%
I don't want to say	4	2%
Total	224	100%

### Did you enjoy taking part in the project?

Yes	193	88%
No	27	12%
Total	220	100%



Clandeboyne Estate



## AND02 Shared Voices

A programme co-designed with GR staff and volunteers from different ethnic backgrounds to address racism awareness in primary schools. It introduces children and young people to diversity and similarities between cultures within ANDBC.

Schools involved included:

1. Model Primary School
2. Clandeboyne Primary School
3. Castle Gardens Primary School
4. Westwinds Primary School
5. Loughries Primary School

Cross Council departmental working with Community Development and the Shared Voices programme was delivered to **210 children** in the Council's summer schemes across Holywood, Portavogie, West Winds, Ballygowan, Donaghadee and Bangor.

Outcomes and impact - show a positive increase in young people who know and understand about different religions, cultures, and backgrounds and have more respect and understanding of people from different cultures, religions, and races.

*Quantitative Feedback from Model Primary School –*

Have you ever been to a Good Relations project before?		
	No. of participants	% of participants
Yes	2	4%
No	26	54%
Don't know	20	42%
Total	48	100%

Which one of the following describes you best?		
	No. of participants	% of participants
Boy	23	48%
Girl	23	48%
Neither	0	0%
I don't want to say	2	4%
Total	48	100%

Did you enjoy taking part in the project?		
Yes	44	96%
No	2	4%
Total	46	100%

### AND03 Community Cup

No activity due to budget cuts

### AND04 Building Young Peoples Resilience

This transformative four-week programme engaged **40 college-aged students** at SERC Bangor, using art to explore critical societal issues –

1. Identity Exploration
2. Unconscious Bias
3. Hate Crime Awareness.

This programme was aimed to empower students with tools for social change through artistic expression, fostering personal reflection and collective awareness.

Outcomes and Impact - One of the most impactful outcomes was the personal growth and emotional development of students. For instance, a student shared a heartfelt message about how the programme allowed him to reflect on identity and unconscious bias. The student expressed gratitude for the space to openly discuss his experiences, noting that, for the first time, he felt seen beyond racial or cultural stereotypes. His reflection highlighted the transformative power of creating non-judgmental, empathetic spaces in which students could share their personal stories. His message also revealed the challenges he faces, including the need to mask his identity to avoid judgment. Yet, he emphasised how he had shifted from self-doubt to self-acceptance, showcasing the programme's role in empowering students to embrace their true selves.

This example underscores the programme's success in fostering understanding, empathy, and personal growth.

#### Cease-fire Babies –

"The Ceasefire Babies" a play written by Fiona Doyle explores the intergenerational trauma of a war-torn community in Belfast, Northern Ireland. The play has two timelines - the present and 1971 during The Troubles. In the past timeline, a group of teenagers witness a riot breaking out and go to check it out. In the present, two boys, Casey and Shay, discuss the past violence until Mikey, a feared local, returns home. The play examines how conflict can still impact a community long after peace is established.

A free performance of the play took place in the Queen's Hall, Newtownards with estimated **100** attendees from the community.

The play was well received and a post-show Q&A session with the cast explored ideas and thought-provoking topics.



*Ceasefire Babies Flyer*

## AND05 Community Relations Through Sport

The *Game of 3 Halves* is a cross-community sports initiative designed to bring young people from diverse communities together through sport. This event allowed children to explore new sports, some traditionally associated with different communities, fostering inclusivity and breaking down barriers.

This year, we were pleased to welcome

1. St. Paul's GAC (Gaelic Football)
2. Hollywood Rugby club

Offering young people, the chance to engage in sports such as Football, Gaelic Football and Rugby.

Participants were divided into mixed teams and took part in skill-building workshops before competing in mini-games.

The 3rd Half of the event consisted of a good relations workshop, delivered by Peaceplayers NI, focusing on diversity, inclusion, and teamwork.

**Outcomes and Impact - The Game of 3 Halves** successfully engaged **80 participants** from across various communities, creating opportunities for cross-community interaction and the chance to try new sports. The event promoted teamwork and collaboration, with children working in mixed teams, which enhanced their athletic skills and social integration.

The good relations workshop, delivered by Peaceplayers NI, emphasised values of diversity and inclusion, ensuring participants not only learned physical skills but also gained a deeper understanding of teamwork in a community context.

Feedback from participants, parents, and coaches was overwhelmingly positive.

The day ended with a celebratory closing ceremony, attended by Mayor Cathcart, where participants were awarded medals, boosting their confidence and sense of achievement. The ceremony underscored the event's emphasis on teamwork, sportsmanship, and community spirit.

Overall, the event not only provided an active and enjoyable day for the children but also played a key role in fostering stronger community bonds and promoting a culture of inclusivity. The high turnout and positive atmosphere marked the Game of 3 Halves as a highly successful initiative, making a lasting impact on all those involved.



*Game of 3 Halves*

## Sports Changes Life – Twinning Programme

Multi-sport team building programme delivered to four primary schools across ANDBC with a celebration event at Londonderry Park on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2024. **150** participants across 4 schools.

The 6-week twinning programmes were delivered in 2024 with the following schools –

- St. Finian’s Primary & Westwinds Primary
- Clandeboy Primary & Kilcooley Primary School

The Twinning Programme, led by Sport Changes Life, was a six-week initiative designed to foster positive relationships between the twinned schools

The programme focused on using sports as a tool for promoting good relations, teamwork, and understanding between the two schools. Over the six weeks, pupils from both schools engaged in a variety of sports and team-building activities, which aimed to break down social barriers, improve communication, and encourage mutual respect.

Through shared experiences, the programme seeks to strengthen ties between the schools, create lasting friendships, and empower the young participants to become ambassadors for unity and inclusion in their communities.

In week 3, the pupils from both schools were brought together for the first twinning day. This was the first time the school pupils met coming together at one of the schools. The day consisted of a range of team building activities and fun sports to allow the pupils to engage with each other and create friendships. The day also allowed the pupils to come out of their comfort zone in a relaxed environment. All pupils took part in Icebreaker activities which consisted of different games that encouraged them to work together to complete challenges and to get to know one another. On the day the pupils also took part in games of dodgeball. This allowed for a fun environment with the children mixing and enjoying the different rules and variations. The workshop activity the children completed was ‘The Iceberg’. The iceberg workshop allows the pupils to get to know each other by identifying things people may know about you (top of the iceberg that you can see out of the water) and things people may not know about you (Bottom of the iceberg in the water that you can’t see). Pupils can share any part of their icebergs if they feel comfortable. This workshop teaches the pupils that like an iceberg, we only usually see a small part of a person and to not judge people by what we see on the outside – there is often more going on beneath the surface.

Week 6 was the final week of the programme where the pupils came together once again for their celebration, this time in the other school. The day consisted of more team building activities and Olympic themed games with pupils mixing in together and deciding which country they wanted to represent. They finished off the activities with basketball and handball. In the workshop session, the pupils had to work together to discover fun ways of communication through the game ‘Colour run’. Pupils were in small teams of 3-4 and had to come together to decide the correct

answers using the different coloured cards. This was another fun way to get them working together and share opinions while moving too.

Have you ever been to a Good Relations project before?		
	No. of participants	% of participants
Yes	22	25%
No	46	52%
Don't know	20	23%
Total	88	100%

Which one of the following describes you best?		
	No. of participants	% of participants
Boy	47	53%
Girl	37	42%
Neither	1	1%
I don't want to say	3	3%
Total	88	100%

Did you make any new friends at the project?		
	No. of participants	% of participants
Yes	61	73%
No	22	27%
Total	83	100%

Did you enjoy taking part in the project?		
	No. of participants	% of participants
Yes	84	99%
No	1	1%
Total	85	100%

## Girls Football

Working in conjunction with our Council's Sports Development team a Girls football initiative programme was delivered in early 2025.

A 6 – week programme promoting girls' involvement in football, team building and co-operation. 8 Primary schools in the Borough took part:

- Ballywalter Primary
- Kirkistown Primary
- Portavogie Primary
- St. Patricks, Ballygalget
- St. Mary's, Portaferry
- Millisle Primary



- St. Mary's, Kircubbin
- Kircubbin Integrated Primary

The Good Relations teams delivered a Good Relations workshop at each school covering topics such as Diversity, Inclusion, Stereotypes and Finding common ground.

A finale is planned for delivery in early summer 2025.

## Our Shared Community

### Aim

To create a community where division does not restrict the life opportunities of individuals and where all areas are open and accessible to everyone.

### Strategic Outcomes

2.1 Increased use of shared space and services

2.2 Shared space accessible to all

### AND06 Allsorts

The “Allsorts” programme is an internal awareness-raising initiative designed to educate and train Council staff on how Good Relations (GR) and equality issues impact their roles within the Council. Two key events were held as part of this programme, providing valuable insights into critical social issues.

#### Speakers and Topics:

1. Domestic and Sexual Violence / Lyndsay Harris
2. Asylum & Refugee Rights / Denise Wright

The events featured expert speakers who guided **120 attendees** through the complexities of these important topics, promoting understanding, empathy, and better practices for supporting diverse communities.

The successful delivery of the programme was well-received by attendees, who left with a deeper understanding of how to engage with and support individuals from various backgrounds and experiences.

### AND07 Living History

The Living History Programme is a 6-week educational initiative designed to offer participants a series of rural and urban visits to historical sites within Northern Ireland and beyond. The programme aims to help individuals understand their shared history, break down barriers, and encourage learning about different cultural and historical perspectives.

This programme encouraged **53 participants** from diverse community backgrounds to come together, providing a platform for deeper understanding and engagement

with different histories and cultures. It is open to all faiths and community backgrounds and was widely advertised to ensure a diverse group of participants.

- Week 1: Downpatrick Gaol
- Week 2: Siege Museum / Free Derry Museum
- Week 3: Coiste / Epic
- Week 4: Ulster Museum
- Week 5: History of Terror Walking Tour
- Week 6: Evaluation and Discussion



### *Living history*

#### Participant comments:

- “I gained valuable knowledge of Irish history and became more confident in meeting people I don’t know.”
- “As an Orangeman and a member of the Black Preceptory, I was pleasantly surprised by how much I enjoyed visiting the monastery on Falls Road—something I never imagined I would do.”
- “I realised how insular I had been despite thinking I had a broad mix of people in my life. It made me see how little I had truly engaged with others.”
- “The project has sparked a greater interest in history and was a great way to hear different perspectives from both communities.”

Outcomes and Impact - The Living History Programme successfully fostered greater understanding between participants from different backgrounds and provided a meaningful platform for discussing shared history which is not always an easy task. The positive feedback and increased cultural awareness among participants highlight the programme’s role in improving good relations within the community.



### Have you ever been to a Good Relations project before?

	No. of participants	% of participants
Yes	30	57%
No	21	40%
Don't know	2	4%
Total	53	100%

### How would you describe your religion?

	No. of participants	% of participants
Catholic	15	31%
Protestant	17	35%
No Religion	14	29%
Other	2	4%
Total	48	100%

### What is your ethnic group?

	No. of participants	% of participants
White	47	96%
Irish Traveller	0	0%
Black	0	0%
Asian	2	4%
Mixed	0	0%
Other	0	0%
Total	49	100%

### How likely are you to recommend participating in a Good Relations programme to family and friends?

	No. of participants	% of participants
Unlikely (0-3)	0	0%
Neither unlikely or likely (4-6)	1	2%
Likely (7-10)	48	98%
Total	49	100%

### Satisfaction

	No. of participants	% of participants
Do you feel the programme has increased your confidence?		
Yes	42	89%

No	5	11%
Total	47	100%
Do you feel the programme has increased your skills?		
Yes	38	81%
No	9	19%
Total	47	100%
Do you feel you were treated well during the project?		
Yes	49	100%
No	0	0%
Total	49	100%
Do you feel this event has helped to bring people from different backgrounds together?		
Yes	39	91%
No	4	9%
Total	43	100%

- 78% of participants had a positive change in their knowledge of different cultural traditions and backgrounds
- 39% of participants had a positive change in their attitudes towards people from a different religious background
- 33% of participants had a positive change in their attitudes towards people from a different ethnic background
- 47% of participants had a positive change in whether they would attend an event in an area associated with another community.

## Our Safe Community

### Aim

To create a community where everyone feels safe in moving around and where life choices are not inhibited by fears around safety.

### Strategic Outcomes

- 3.1 Reduce the prevalence of hate crime and intimidation.
- 3.2 A community where places and spaces are safe for all.

## AND08 Holocaust Events

The 2025 Holocaust Memorial Day events provided an opportunity for the community to come together for education, remembrance, and reflection. The series of events allowed participants to honour the memory of Holocaust victims, hear survivor testimonies, and engage with meaningful educational exhibitions.

### Key Events:

1. Chamber Event – 22nd January 2025 (**Attendance: 100**)  
Held at Bangor City Hall, this formal gathering featured speeches from Mr.

Charles Warmington, a second-generation Holocaust survivor, a performance by Mr. Andrew McBride, and reflections from Millisle Primary School students. The event created a respectful atmosphere for reflection and remembrance.

2. Exhibition at Bangor Library – 21st January 2025 (**Attendance: 200**)  
A powerful exhibition was hosted at Bangor Library, displaying artwork, written reflections, and educational materials from local schools and community groups. The exhibition provided a comprehensive educational experience, allowing attendees to learn about the Holocaust and its enduring impact.
3. Local Schools Event – 22nd January 2025 (**Attendance: 240**)  
This event, held at Bangor Grammar, featured a presentation by Lu Lawrence, a second-generation Holocaust survivor. It was attended by several post primary schools from the borough, offering students a unique opportunity to learn about the Holocaust through personal family experiences, highlighting the importance of education and remembrance.

**Outcomes and Impact** - The 2025 Holocaust Memorial Day commemorations successfully honoured the victims of the Holocaust and reinforced the importance of remembrance. Each event – from the Chamber gathering to the Bangor Library exhibition and the school presentation – played a crucial role in educating and engaging the local community. The powerful survivor testimonies and the involvement of local schools and organisations were key strengths, ensuring that the memory of the Holocaust and its lessons continue to resonate across generations.



*Holocaust Memorial Exhibition*

### **AND09 Getting to know your Councillors.**

A programme designed to introduce young people and groups to their local councillors to raise issues that are important to them and their community.

**32 participants** engaged with local councillors on issues they felt were important to young people in the Borough.



*Youth Voice AND*

### **AND10 No Hate Here**

In celebration of Diwali, the Festival of Lights, Ards and North Down Borough Council's Good Relations team hosted an engaging and educational Diwali workshop. This workshop, held at St Malachys primary School (Bangor), was designed to introduce **80 participants** of primary school age to the cultural, historical, and spiritual significance of Diwali, through hands-on activities, art, and learning. The workshop aimed to foster greater cultural awareness, promote inclusivity, and engage the local community in the traditions and rituals associated with Diwali.

**Outcomes and Impact** - The Diwali workshop was a valuable initiative, promoting cultural understanding, creativity, and community engagement. It successfully brought together participants of various ages and backgrounds to celebrate the Festival of Lights in a meaningful and hands-on way.

This workshop not only helped preserve and celebrate Diwali's traditions but also played an important role in creating a more inclusive and culturally aware community. We look forward to continuing these workshops in future years, strengthening the cultural fabric of our community.

In 2025, Ards and North Down Borough Council's Good Relations team hosted a comprehensive Indian Culture Workshop aimed at introducing participants to the



diverse and rich cultural heritage of India. The workshop, held at Comber Primary School, offered **29 children** an engaging and immersive experience designed to promote cultural awareness and appreciation among attendees from various backgrounds. Through a combination of activities, discussions, and performances, participants explored Indian culture, including its art, music, dance,

**Outcomes and Impact** - The Indian Culture Workshop was a highly successful initiative that introduced participants to the rich, vibrant heritage of India. The combination of hands-on activities, performances, and cultural discussions provided a well-rounded and engaging experience.

This event highlighted the importance of cultural education and the power of shared learning experiences in building an inclusive community. We look forward to continuing to celebrate and share Indian culture through future events and workshops.



*Indian Culture event*

## AND11 Intergenerational Programmes

The intergenerational programme was aimed to bring together the Millisle Health and Wellbeing Group, consisting mainly of older adults, and the P7 class at Millisle Primary School, **50 participants**. The initiative sought to promote intergenerational learning, foster relationships between different age groups, and encourage mutual understanding, while combating social isolation among older community members.

**Outcomes and Impact** –

- **Strengthened Community Bonds:** The programme successfully connected two generations, increasing intergenerational interactions and fostering a stronger community spirit.
- **Increased Awareness:** Students gained a deeper understanding of the past, developing an appreciation for the experiences of older generations.
- **Combatting Isolation:** Older participants reported feeling less isolated, while students gained a better understanding of the challenges faced by older individuals.
- **Improved Social Skills:** Both the students and older adults developed enhanced communication skills through storytelling, games, and collaborative projects.
- **Positive Feedback:** Both groups expressed enjoyment and interest in further intergenerational activities. Students were eager to engage with the older generation, and older participants appreciated the opportunity to share their knowledge.
- **Work Displayed in Millisle Primary School:** The art and craft projects created during the programme were displayed in Millisle Primary School, allowing the wider school community to celebrate the connections made and the creativity shared during the programme.

Overall, the programme successfully promoted intergenerational understanding, reduced social isolation, and strengthened community ties, leaving a lasting impact on both the older adults and students involved.

## Our Cultural Expression

### Aim

To create a community which promotes mutual respect and understanding, is strengthened by its diversity, and where cultural expression is celebrated and embraced.

### Strategic Outcomes

- 4.1 Increased sense of community belonging.
- 4.2 Cultural diversity is celebrated.

## AND13 – Cultural Expression

The Council's Cultural Expression (CE) programme supports inclusive local events and festivals, enabling communities and groups to celebrate their culture and identity through funding support.

**Funding and Support** - The programme is primarily funded through the Executive Office (75%) and the Council (25%). Support for events and festivals involving community bonfires is provided when communities agree to core conditions aimed at reducing the negative social and environmental impact of these bonfires.

**Site Management** - A total of **27 sites** were managed across the Ards and North Down Borough Council (ANDBC) area from April to July 2024. The Council

continues to collaborate with statutory agencies, including NIFRS, PSNI, NIHE, and EA, holding regular discussions to monitor and manage these sites effectively.

**Addressing Complaints** - During this period, complaints regarding bonfires, flags, graffiti, and other contentious issues were appropriately managed, ensuring that community concerns were addressed in a timely and efficient manner.

**Monitoring and Engagement** - Ongoing monitoring of the bonfire sites revealed a positive working relationship with local bonfire builders. Only a small number of sites raised concerns regarding safety and size. The overall management and coordination of these sites contributed to a more collaborative approach.

**Outcomes and Impact** - Evaluations of local festivals showed a notable improvement in participants' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours. Many attendees reported that the events played a significant role in bringing people from different cultural and community backgrounds together, fostering greater unity and understanding.

## AND14 - History Talks

### GRANDfest

On Saturday, 30 November 2024, the Good Relations Team hosted *GRANDFest 2024* at Queens Hall, Ards and North Down Borough. This vibrant celebration showcased the rich cultural diversity that strengthens and enriches our community. Residents and visitors alike were welcomed to explore a wide variety of music, arts,

Cultural Performances Included:

- Traditional Indian Music and Folk Dance
- Estonian Dance Ensemble
- Salsa Dancers
- African Music Performers

GRANDFest 2024 achieved its goal of promoting intercultural understanding and appreciation. The engaging programme of cultural performances, art displays, and culinary experiences allowed attendees to connect with and learn from the diverse cultures that call Ards and North Down home. Indian folk dances, Estonian and Salsa performances, and African music captivated audiences and highlighted the artistic vibrancy within our community.

The interactive arts and crafts stalls—from Polish papercraft to Colombian beadwork—invited **150 attendees** to engage directly with cultural traditions. The food station, a standout feature, allowed guests to enjoy flavours from around the globe.

**Outcomes and impact** - GRANDFest 2024 was a great success and a testament to the power of cultural celebration in fostering unity, respect, and mutual appreciation. It brought together individuals from various backgrounds, reinforcing the importance of inclusivity and shared community values. The Good Relations Team is proud to

have delivered an event that highlighted the many ways cultural diversity contributes to a vibrant, thriving borough.



*GrandFest 2024*

## International Women's Day

The 2025 International Women's Day celebration at Ards Art Centre successfully honoured women's voices, culture, and community. Hosted by the Good Relations Department at Ards and North Down Borough Council, the evening was dedicated to celebrating women's voices and fostering cultural understanding through the power of art and storytelling.

The event was highlighted by the captivating one-woman show, *Sausage Sodas and Onion Bhajis*, presented by writer and broadcaster Lata Sharma. This deeply personal narrative was told through the eyes of a teenage Indian girl growing up in East Belfast, navigating the complexities of sectarianism, racism, and cultural identity. The show poignantly explored the challenges faced by the daughter of Indian immigrants during a turbulent time, mixing humour with powerful emotional moments. Lata Sharma's performance resonated deeply with the audience, prompting reflection on belonging, identity, and cultural dynamics.

The performance was met with a highly positive reception, with **80 attendees** praising Lata's ability to blend humour with serious topics. The themes of community, cultural identity, and belonging struck a chord with the audience, many of whom



expressed how the performance sparked personal reflections on their own experiences within their communities.

Outcomes and impact - The event successfully brought together a diverse audience to celebrate women's voices and cultural heritage. It created a space for reflection and understanding, where stories of resilience, pride, and cultural challenges were shared. The evening not only entertained but also inspired attendees, leaving them with important insights into overcoming adversity and celebrating diverse voices.

## **Conclusion:**

The Good Relations (GR) team will continue its important work throughout 2025-2026, building on the successes and lessons learned from previous initiatives. As part of its commitment to continuous improvement, the team will focus on closely monitoring the impact and effectiveness of each programme. This includes gathering valuable feedback from participants and actively encouraging the submission of evaluations. By carefully reviewing these evaluations, the GR team will be able to assess the success of each initiative, identify areas for enhancement, and ensure that future programmes are even more impactful and relevant to the diverse needs of the community.

The team remains dedicated to fostering inclusion, promoting understanding, and creating spaces for meaningful dialogue across all its activities. Through these efforts, GR aims to continue its vital role in strengthening community bonds and supporting long-term social cohesion.

Unclassified

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## ITEM 10

### Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	14 May 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community and Culture
Date of Report	29 April 2025
File Reference	CW 159
Legislation	The Local Government Act (NI) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Funding Opportunities for St Vincent De Paul (SVP)
Attachments	

It was agreed by Council in March 2025 that officers bring forward a report to the Community and Wellbeing Committee that considers support and funding opportunities from Council to assist the work of St Vincent De Paul Ards and North Down.

#### Background to DfC Hardship Funding

Members will be aware the Council was awarded Hardship Funding for 2023–2024 from Department for Communities to the value of £344,027.

The purpose of this fund was to address hardship due to the then cost of living crisis, particularly the increases in energy and food costs. The Hardship Funding Programme was developed in recognition of the difficult financial circumstances which existed for communities.

The Hardship Funding invited applications for grants between £10,000 to £30,000 as an open call. The grants were advertised on the Council grants webpage, Council social media and sent to all contacts on the Community Development Database.

Not Applicable

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Following the call, Council approved 23 grants totalling £330,186.61 with SVP obtaining a grant of £20,100.

At the Community and Wellbeing Committee in November 2023, concern was expressed that one organisation had been able to avail of two grants due to citing two different areas of the Borough being covered and Members requested that the criteria be reconsidered in future to ensure this did not happen again.

During March 2024, the organisation concerned contacted the Head of Service to confirm it was unable to produce required receipts for the allocated funding of the two grants totalling £40,000 and therefore they were unable to claim the funding allocated. Subsequently a request was made to the Department of Communities to carry forward the funding of £40,000 to 2024–2025, in addition to a small underspend of £7,000.

At the Council meeting held on 28th August 2024, it was agreed that “Council writes to the Department for Communities to highlight our disappointment at their failure to provide Hardship Funding this year. Furthermore, that this Council asks The Department for Communities to commit to use funding in future monitoring rounds to provide hardship funding in 2024-2025”. A letter was sent to this effect on 17th September 2024.

A response dated 24th September 2024 was received from Colum Boyle, Permanent Secretary of Department for Communities stating that due to the financial constraints on the Department’s budget the Department was currently unable to provide any hardship funding for 2024-2025, and due to the continuing uncertainty in funding, it would not be possible to consider a recurrent funding model at this time.

The Community Development section launched a call in relation to the funding pot of £47,000 on 9 September 2024, with a deadline of 24 September 2024 for grants up to a maximum of £3,000 per group/organisation. The application process was amended to take account of Members concerns that the process should be fair and equitable. Application and guidance notes stated that only one application would be allowed per group/organisation.

The call was advertised on Council grants webpage, Council social media, sent to all contacts on the Community Development Database and also in the Newtownards Chronicle and Spectator Newspapers. 31 applications were received by the deadline. 22 applications met the pass mark which equated to the total value of £64,751.00 and each received a percentage of the total pot with SVP awarded £2,190.00.

As outlined by the Minister, Hardship funding would not be made available for the foreseeable future and therefore there will not be any further funding calls for Hardship grants at this time.

### **Alternative funding opportunities**

- Council’s Community Development section circulates a weekly newsletter via email to all those registered on the Community Development database outlining details of a number of funding opportunities. The Team conduct

Not Applicable

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“Grant Finder” searches on a daily and weekly basis to ensure all relevant funding opportunities are maximised within the Borough.

- Staff can also provide one to one advice on funding and support with applications, where required and upon request.
- All Council grant funding opportunities are advertised widely and open to all relevant sections of the community to apply.
- Council channels funding for two social supermarkets to cover the whole Borough and SVP are able to refer clients to the services.
- Foodbanks are also available throughout the Borough and SVP are able to access and signpost services to those in need.
- Contact has been made with representatives of each of the 6 conferences of SVP in the Borough to invite them to submit the required form to allow their details to be held on the database to ensure they are each made aware of all future funding opportunities.

### **Future Hardship funding**

Should Hardship funding be forthcoming from the Department in the future, updated guidance and an updated application form would be screened and brought to Committee for approval prior to the fund being advertised, in line with the updated Grants policy. Members would be able to determine at that time how they would wish the fund to be administered in the Borough.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council notes this report.

Unclassified

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## ITEM 11

### Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	14 May 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community and Culture
Date of Report	30 April 2025
File Reference	CDV54
Legislation	The Local Government Act (NI) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Community Development Annual Report
Attachments	Appendix 1 Community Development Annual Report

Please find attached the Community Development Annual Report for 2024-2025 outlining the work of the section throughout the year.

The Community Development section works closely with the PCSP, PEACEPLUS and Good Relations sections of the Community and Culture Department to avoid duplication and ensure a cohesive delivery of programmes to the community.

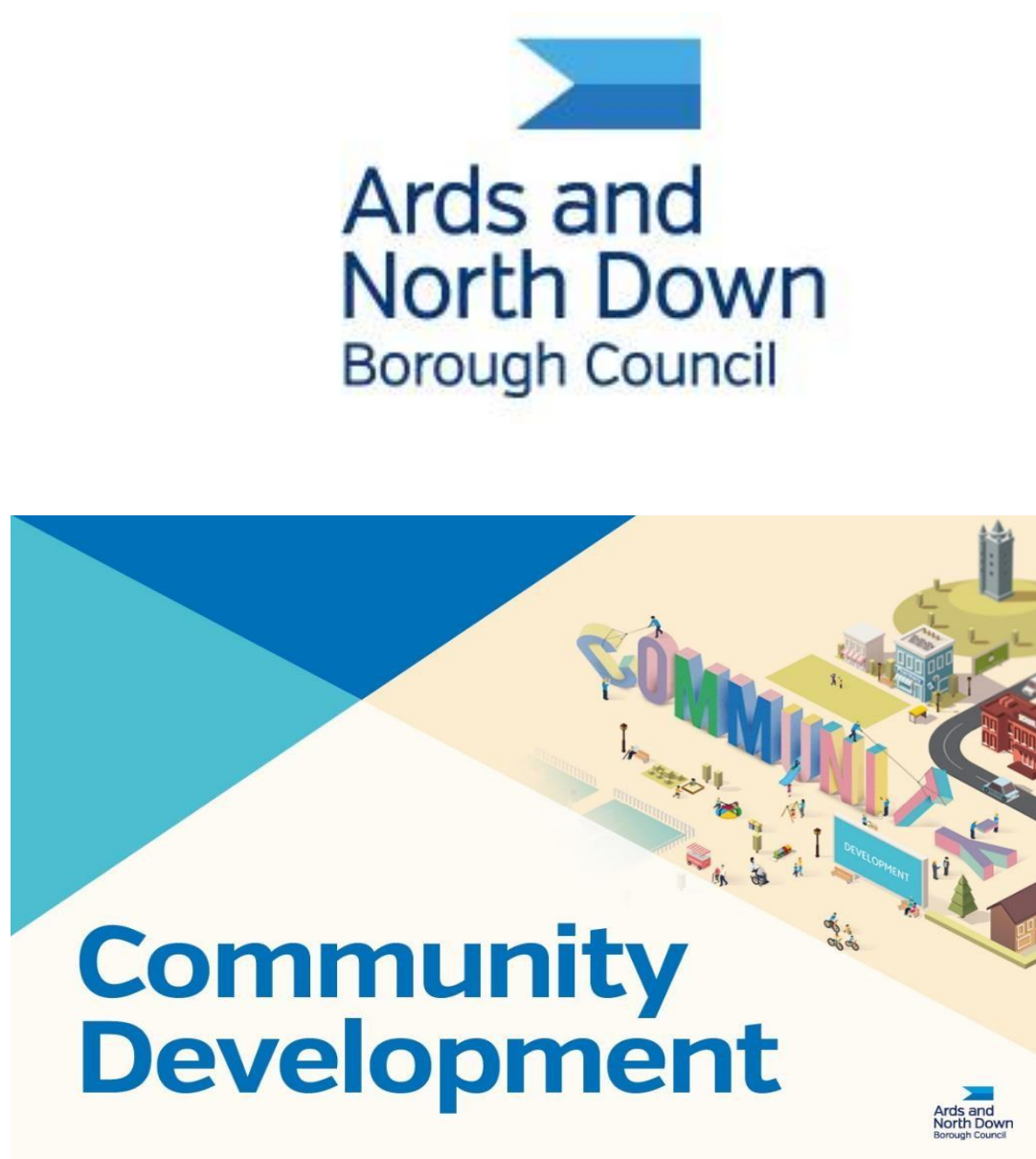
### RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes the report.

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Appendix 1.

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Community Development  
Annual Report  
April 2024 - March 2025

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## Community Development Overview

Ards and North Down Borough Council's Community Development section includes direct provision in the form of play clubs, additional needs disco, 50+ Club, Staffing, Neighbourhood Renewal, Christmas Festivals, Community Festivals, Youth Voice, support for three Networks via Service level Agreements and Community Advice Services. Community Development running costs includes salaries, training, room hire and Grantfinder subscription. The budget for 2024/2025 was a total of £1,022,100.

**Community Development Staff**

**Community Development Service Unit Manager** – Beverley Skillen

**Community Development Officers:** - Julia Harkness, Stephen Archibald and Linda McAllister.

**Community Development Grants and Funding Co-ordinator** – Nicola McClurg

**Community and Culture Assistant** – Sharon Murphy

**Neighbourhood Renewal Officer** – Lindzi Chevalier

**Administrative Officer** – Esther Reid

**Community Programme Co-ordinator** – Stuart Boyd

**Multiply Initiative Officer** – Conor Steele

The CD Team continued to deliver a high-quality range of direct provision clubs to communities within the Ards and North Down Area during 2024 - 2025. The Team assisted in the enablement and empowerment of community organisations and groups in the form of support and guidance with funding, governance, volunteer support, building relationships and connections within the groups and the community networks.

The Community Development Team continues striving to provide communities with opportunities to connect and engage, to enhance skills base, to participate in training relevant to the needs of the group, to avail of funding opportunities, to create and develop new groups, to enable strong sustainable communities, providing support and much needed services within the heart of the community. As a team we pride ourselves in following and delivering Community Development Values and Principles.

**Community Development Values**

Our Values	Our Promise
Honesty	We will always operate with integrity through our honest and transparent action.
Championing Empowerment	We will work with and support local communities to build their capacity to address their specific needs.
Openness	We will publish our yearly ‘Game Plan’ and demonstrate our performance against agreed targets.



Fairness	We will address imbalances and bring about positive change founded on social justice and inclusion.
Efficiency	We will work with other statutory and non-statutory organisations together with the community to ensure common goals are targeted and co-ordinated effectively

### Community Development Strategic Priorities 2024/2025

The ‘Game Plan’ outlines how the CD Team can support and enable communities and how the Plan related to ‘The Big Plan’ and the Corporate Plan.

#### Outcome 1: Partnership Solutions

***“Through the development of a collaborative process or through the development of collaborative processes our communities can work with us, and each other, to identify solutions that address local needs.”***

**Community Development Partners – Service Level Agreements – Budget Awarded £12,645.44 per network x 3 = £37,936.32. Slight increase in Letter of Offer from DfC and this was divided between the three networks.**

Community Development section is fortunate to work in partnership with the three Community Networks that cover the Borough, namely County Down Rural Community Network, Ards Development Bureau and Community Network and North Down Community Network. Through the SLA's the Networks are enabled to facilitate and support a wide range of community groups and associations in each of their areas of responsibility. In their quarterly reports they highlight the range of work they have undertaken, and any emerging themes or concerns present in the communities they serve. This year, due to a one-off uplift from the department, The Networks were awarded £37,936 split equally between the three Networks.

The Community Networks outcomes are outlined in the table below. This does not reflect the full extent of the work of the Networks but rather it covers elements of their work which we capture in the reviews of their SLAs.

ACTIVITY OF NETWORKS	NUMBERS
Groups/ Individuals Signposted to Appropriate Services/Support	8284
Groups/Individuals Supported Towards Identifying Appropriate Funding Opportunities	116
Groups / Individuals Supported Through Training Opportunities	639

**Bangor Neighbourhood Renewal area 2024 / 2025**

The Neighbourhood Renewal Programme (NRP) aims to reduce the social and economic inequalities which characterise the most deprived areas in Northern Ireland. The Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy ‘People and Place’ was published in June 2003 to close the gap between the quality of life for people in these neighbourhoods and the rest of society. The development of a new People & Place Strategic Framework is ongoing.

The Kilcooley Neighbourhood Partnership (KNP) was established in 2004/2005 to take forward the NRP in Bangor. The Partnership is defined as a non-constituted entity acting in an advisory capacity to Department for Communities on issues identified in the designated Bangor Neighbourhood Renewal Area (NRA). The Partnership comprises of members from the community/voluntary and statutory sectors.

The overall aim of the KNP is to engage in effective working partnerships with key stakeholders from all relevant sectors to pro-actively deliver priorities detailed in the Kilcooley Vision and Action Plan to improve the well-being and quality of life for residents.

The vision for Bangor NRA, (as re-defined in the initial Kilcooley Vision and Action Plan for 2024 - 2025) is:

‘Kilcooley is an attractive, inclusive and safe estate where the residents enjoy healthy, active lifestyles with access to opportunities.’

**Ards and North Down Borough Council – Kilcooley Technical Assistance**

The Neighbourhood Renewal Officer continues to facilitate the Kilcooley Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership, as well as the Health Improvement and Education subgroups.

Meetings April 2024 - March 2025	Number of meetings
Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership	8
Education Sub-Group	5
Health Improvement Group	9
Action Planning Days – Main Partnership	2
Joint events held	1

KNRP meetings are regularly held in person, with the online option available for those unable to make the meeting in person. This is working well for the Partnership and helps with attendance at each meeting.

The NRO remains in contact with Partners between meetings, sharing relevant information, where appropriate.

A new Kilcooley Neighbourhood Renewal Newsletter is planned with the Partnership, to share news, contacts, services and information with the community as well as act as a collaborative project between all partners. The first edition of this was launched digitally in December, a print edition for Spring is currently being compiled by the NRO with input from the Partnership.



A new Kilcooley NRP PVC banner was created with input from the partnership and is now in place at one of the main entrances to the estate. The banner clearly communicates the partnerships ethos, logos and contact details, helping to further the community's awareness of the partnership and its members.



The Health Improvement Subgroup are undertaking a collaborative project around Dementia awareness and care in the area, and NRO met with a representative from Alzheimer's Society, introducing them to the subgroup and inviting partners to consider their joining the partnership to further knowledge sharing and signposting opportunities.

The Health Improvement Subgroup are working together on a creative writing project, collecting stories, poems, prose etc from older people within the community, which they hope to collate and publish. ‘In My Own Words: A community creative writing collection.’

The NRO supported Kilcooley Community Forum in applying for the ANDBC In Bloom grant on behalf of the KNRP, with plans to replant the large wooden planter seats located in Kilcooley Square. They hope to replant these with plants known to be beneficial to emotional and mental wellbeing, such as lavender and sage. This application was successful, and the group are planning the replanting.

The Education subgroup is undertaking a collaborative project around bullying, and NRO has created surveys with input from the partnership to gather the youth perspective, the partnership are distributing this to their contacts along with an information sheet of bullying helplines and resources.

NRO identified a need for assistance with data and feedback gathering within the NRP area and developed a suite of evaluation forms for use for the partnership for programmes, groups and events.

**Community Advice Ards And North Down (CAAND)**

Ards and North Down Borough Council provide funding support to CAAND - £386,947.35 for 2024 to 2025. This support for Advice Services in the Borough is jointly funded by the Department for Communities and Council.

The provision of local advice services is an integral part of the Community Support Programme. The Department for Communities awards the “Advice Grant” in addition to the expenditure the Council sets aside for this purpose. To enable the Department’s contribution to be drawn down, the Council agreed to contribute to local advice provision from its own resources of at least £124,849.72 during the financial year 2024-2025.

**Community Development Support**

- Area 1 – Holywood and Bangor – Julia Harkness, Community Development Officer
- Area 2 – Ards, Comber and Ballygowan – Linda McAllister, Community Development Officer
- Area 3 – Donaghadee and Rural Villages – Stephen Archibald, Community Development Officer

Type of meetings	No	Type of meeting	No
Interagency Meetings	19	Steering Group	5
Support meetings	87	Programme development meetings	28
Partnership working meetings	19	Support for Housing Tenants	1
Internal working meeting	6	Inaugural / AGM	8
Staff support and development	4	Community Information Register	12



Board meetings	1	Volunteer development	3
Grant application Support	6	Promotion of Food banks	6
Service Level Agreement Review	22	Peer working	3
Delivery of Safeguard Training	4	Networking Events	3
Training	1	Consultations	2
Operational Partnership	3	Christmas & Community Events	14

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Community Development Officers have continued to provide support and guidance to community groups and attend meetings to enable the communities to share their achievements and any problems or concerns. Where a problem or concerns are the responsibility of Council, Officers report them to the relevant department for action. Officers are on hand to provide advice and support for third party funding applications and conduct searches on Grantfinder system for any specific funding requirements.

Officers offer support with volunteer support, enabling young people and adults to sign up as ANDBC Volunteers, advising of the policy and assisting volunteers through the process of registration.

Officers deliver safeguarding awareness training to Council staff and volunteers within community groups on an annual basis.

Officers Monitor Service Level Agreements and engage with the relevant agencies ensuring all information is collected, recorded, ensuring value for money, and working within budget.

### BookStart – Initiative 2024



The BookStart Initiative was launched in the Ards and North Down Borough by the Community Development Team in April 2024. Its aim was to provide every family the opportunity to avail of free books for their babies and emphasises the importance of sharing stories together from the earliest age. Working in conjunction with the Council Registration section the team has so far

placed **1175 BookStart baby packs** with families who are registering the birth of their child.

Each family received the following.

- An engaging book carefully chosen by independent panel of experts such as health visitors and librarians.
- A colourful finger puppet
- A fun and informative concertina leaflet for parents and carers about the benefits of sharing books with babies.

Council Registration department reported that the initiative had gained positive feedback from new parents with many hoping to encourage a love of reading in their child. This programme has now ended as books will now be issued via community midwives.

## Mae Murray Foundation

The Mae Murray Foundation is a registered charity, with a vision to bring fundamental change to environments so that people of restricted mobility are no longer excluded.

Making beaches accessible to all to enjoy together. A partnership with Council resulted in the creation of the first inclusive beach in the Ards and North Down area, where people of differing physical abilities are now able to take part in activities independently on Groomsport Beach.

The initiative is season based and is supported by council by providing staff to deliver the unique loan scheme of specialised equipment. 2024 marked the 2<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the programme attracting over 600 people in total attending the Groomsport inclusive beach and family fun days that Mae Murray Foundation delivered in addition to the service, funded by ANDBC via Events and Festival Fund.

Numerous schools and organisations visited the inclusive beach at Groomsport during the months of June to September 2024.

- Clifton School
- Everton Day Centre
- Sydenham Court
- Gateway organisation.

### Members Feedback

We recently attended the beach event at Groomsport. It was the first one that we had attended. It was incredible.... the rain certainly didn't dampen the fun

The ukulele band was fabulous, and we were able to chat with friends who we hadn't seen since Christmas!! Thank you! You are all wonderful and made such a difference to our little ones and us.

This is just such a great service and makes a huge difference to our lives

All four of our children could actually attend together for most of the event and were able to participate in the fun – they especially loved the bubbles. Our eldest boy only got out of the car when he realised there were giant bubbles floating over the car park.

It was great to be able to borrow a beach wheelchair so we could have a family picnic.

# Youth Voice AND

Community Development contribute £24,000 towards Youth Voice.

Youth Voice is an initiative delivered by the Education Authority. The organisation delivers a range of programmes / campaigns that are designed and chosen by the young people, identified from local needs and global issues affecting young people’s development.

The young people working together participate in activities and programmes that support leadership, citizenship and communication as well as enhance their skill base, confidence, and social engagement. Youth Voice aims are to provide young people with a voice; to enable young people to have a say on local issues, be a representative voice for young people within their areas, meet new people and build relationships, engage with key decision makers, and undertake accredited training to grow and develop skills.

Some of the highlights this year.

- Recruitment drive event with 12 new members.
- Over 50s intergenerational meetings with Youth – building connections.
- Meeting the Mayor and Local Councillors Event at Bangor City Hall to present campaign plans.
- Visit to Stormont Parliament Building
- Four-day study visit to Edinburgh.
- Consultation Real Event working in collaboration with PSNI and EAYS (regional assessment of need)
- Engaged in a policy review consultation with Department of Education.

Outcomes of first quarter -

More young people are empowered to become active citizens	Total number of Youth Voice members	Weekly Meetings	EA Engagements	Consultations
	22	11	168	2
More young people’s knowledge of leadership, citizenship, and communication	Number of sessions to support leadership	Number of sessions to support citizenship	Number of sessions to support communication	
	22	20	20	

Outcome 2: Start-up/Sustainable Support

***“Support - Local groups are sustainable and able to meet their own needs due to an empowering start-up and support process.”***

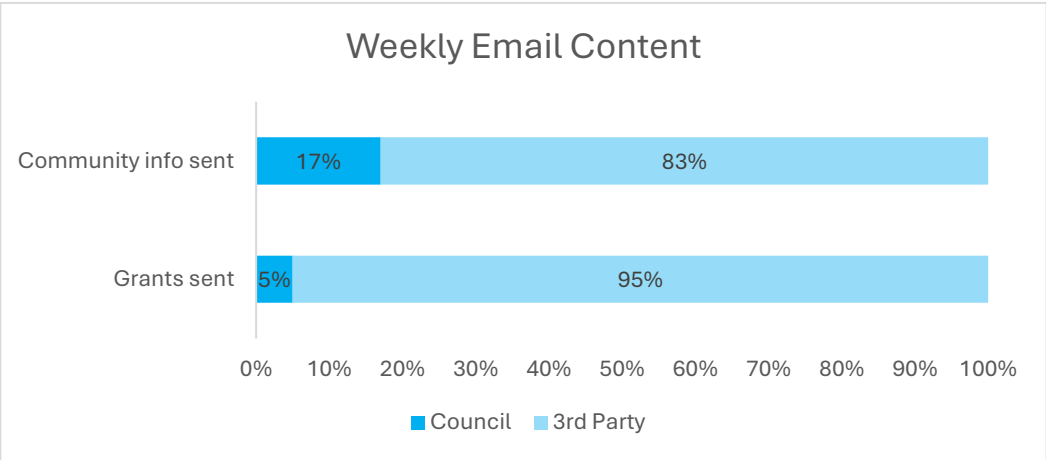
Community Information Register

The community register was created to convey information to a range of groups and organisations in a fast and efficient method. It enables the CD section to share information on both Council grants and third party grants available. This information is accompanied by community information. The Community Information Register currently contains 254 contacts - an increase of 84 new contacts in 2024/25, equating to a 49% increase.

Emails have been sent weekly on a Wednesday, (moving from Friday on the request of the community). 232 different grant and funding opportunities have been sent 2024/25. The CD team have also amended the layout of this weekly email to make it more user friendly and have had positive feedback from the community on these changes.

No. of council grants shared	No. of 3rd party grants shared	No. of council community info shared	No. of 3rd party community info shared
10	212	24	117

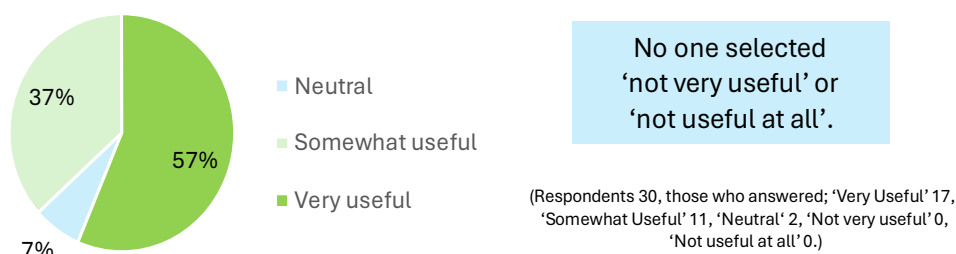
Community Development conduct a survey of those who avail of the community information database and the weekly email of funding opportunities and community news. Those on the community database were consulted so that the weekly email can develop to meet the needs of the customer/community. Results and feedback are shown below.



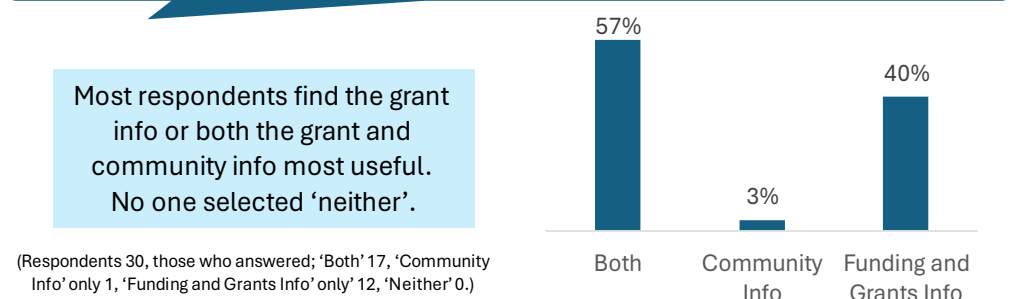


Community Register Weekly Email Survey Results Winter 2024

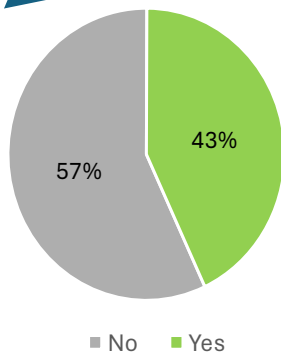
Overall, how useful do you find the weekly email from Ards & North Down Borough Council Community Development for you/ your organisation?



What aspect of the email do you find most useful to you/ your organisation?

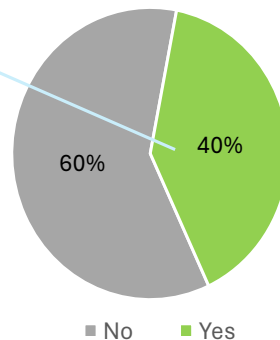


Have you / your organisation applied for a grant or funding opportunity that was shared with you in the emails?



(Respondents 30, those who answered; 'No' 17, 'Yes' 13.)

Were you/ your organisation successful in the application?



(Respondents 15 (those who replied 'Yes' to previous question) Those who answered; 'No' 9, 'Yes' 6.)

Community Register Weekly Email Survey Results Winter 2024

Please let us know some details about your successful application?

‘Ark Housing Funding  
A&ND Community Development Funding  
Asda Community Funding’

‘Live Here Love Here for zone 3 development of the (Group Project)’ for plants and materials’

‘micro grant, help with running cost, live here love here.’

‘ANDBC Tourism grant and ANDBC Heritage Grant The Council grants help to run events such as the annual (name of project)’.

The grants have enabled us to advertise, print leaflets, buy equipment, and pay fees to artists for workshops or lectures.

However, with the cost of living increasing all the time and grants becoming smaller, it is becoming more and more difficult to run events and keep within budget.’

‘Funding for a Tractor Run and Family Fun Day for the whole community. Bouncy Castles, Arts n Crafts, Tails of the Wild, EurekaSeekers. Running this event for our school and community wouldn’t have been possible.’

Is there any other feedback you would like to give on the weekly email?

‘Not all available grants are of interest to ( Group Name)’	‘Really valuable summary - much appreciated.’
‘The new version is muchmore concise and clear’	‘No , happy with what is presented’
‘Very useful for signposting local groups to relevant opportunities.’	‘Really valuable summary - much appreciated.’
‘It is helpful for me to share with other groups I work with in regards to funding and helpful for me and direct work with patients in terms of information re groups.’	‘Thank you for taking the time to create the emails. It is very helpful and saves small enterprises a lot of time.’
‘It contains the news and links to the most relevant up to date funding streams.’	‘As we are not a registered charity most funding doesn’t apply, which is a shame.’
‘Thank you for sending these out, they really are useful!!.’	‘Some guidance on applying for grants would be helpful.’
‘Unfortunately there are very few opportunities for a charity whose core object is to help, feed, care and rehabilitate unwanted animals. I have yet to see one come through in the past year that could be of help to us.’	‘Delighted with the weekly email keeps me in touch with what is going on in the borough ( I have a few hats I wear in the community and the information is invaluable please keep it coming ).’
‘Receiving this weekly information gives me the opportunity of seeing if there is anything available for constituents in my Comber DEA’	‘I distribute any relevant grant opportunities to other organisations in the town.’
‘Good resource and of interest.’	‘Great to get them very helpful.’
‘Find it very helpful.’	‘Keep them coming!.’
‘I have only been receiving the emails for a few weeks’	‘Keep going!.’

## Community Ezine

The Community Ezine is a digital publication that can be read and shared online using the web on phones and computers. It combines the ease and convenience of the Internet with the readability and versatility of magazines.

The purpose of the ezine is to ensure the information is engaging and consistent, GDPR compliant, to boost community engagement, build relationships with internal and external departments.

The editions are brought together with information from the Community and Culture department and other partners across Council:

- Community Development
- Good Relations
- Community Policing Community Partnership
- Community Safety Team
- Peace
- Age Friendly
- Parks
- Environmental Health
- Community Planning

Each edition shares the current / recent work delivered, showcasing achievements, events, high lights, and feedback from the users. Work with Community groups, young people, and families. Opportunities to participate in training and workshops, along with opportunities to apply for funding from across many departments.

To date there are 110 members registered and receive the information on a 6-8 weekly basis.

Community Development provide opportunities to Grant streams available, such as Community Development Running Costs that enable community group to operate.

The Community Register is added with a link for people to join and receive weekly information and grant schemes.

## Outcome 3: Volunteering

***“Communities are happy and healthy due to the opportunities available for people to maximise their skills and talents.”***

### Volunteering

A volunteer event is usually held at the end of March each year. The decision has been made to move the event to Volunteer Week in June, as groups are busy at the end of March with funding returns. This will be reported on in the 2025/2026 Annual Report.

## Outcome 4: Training and Development

***“Our communities are skilled, engaged and empowered through training and development opportunities.”***

Community Development Toolkit – available ANDBC website

The toolkit is also offered to all new groups, groups changing their management structure.

### Safeguarding

Safeguarding training is part of the compliance Council needs to meet annually. Council has 2 trainers who are trained and up skilled on a regular basis to comply and meet standards. This also involves reviewing policies and recommendations as part of a small group of officers (OD & HR, Equality and Safeguarding Officer, Leisure Service Manger (trainer) and Community Development Officer).

Training sessions delivered	4	2 Ballygowan and District, former East End CG (SG awareness raising), 1 x Agency staff (CPWs) 1 x Asylum Seekers
Upskilling training attended	0	Keeping Adults Safe, Designated Officer
Review group meetings	2	Policy reviews and recs
SG issue-based meetings/discussions on teams	6	Equality & SG Officer, Leisure Manager/SG trainer, Volunteer Now, other trainers outside council

### Food Hygiene Course

A food hygiene course was held on 25<sup>th</sup> March in Ballywalter Village Hall. The course provided a group of 20 older people with a basic understanding about the legal responsibility of food handlers for the safety of their food and how to avoid cross-contamination when providing food within the group for each other.

More importantly on a personal level it was a priority for each of them to understand how food poisoning occurs and what steps to take to avoid the risk of food poisoning, as well as personal and kitchen hygiene, foodborne bacteria and viruses, so that they keep themselves safe when preparing food in their own homes.

## Outcome 5: Clubs and Community Summer Schemes

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***“Needs are addressed through the delivery of quality programmes with relevant partners in shared spaces.”***

### Direct Council Provision

Ards and North Down Borough Council support a wide range of clubs offering opportunities for people to engage, learn and thrive together.

The Community Development section provides a range of clubs and activity schemes in the borough. These include Play Schemes, over 50's Activities and Activities for Adults with Additional Needs residents of the Borough. The majority of the Community Development direct service provision is currently in play work for children ages between 5 and 11 years.

The Location, type of provision and weekly attendance over a 30-week period from September to June is outlined in the table below.

LOCATION	ACTIVITY	NUMBERS ATTENDING
Redburn CC	Over 50s Club (Monday)	680
	Play Club (Tuesday)	180
Community Hub, Bangor	Additional Needs Disco (Monday)	1232 (+ carers)
Alderman George Green, Rathgill	Play Club (Monday)	328
Kilcooley CC	Play Club (Wednesday)	330
Green Road CC	Play Club (Thursday)	323
Skipperstone CC	Play Club (Friday)	420

### Over 50s Club

Some highlights of the year for the Over 50s Club included a visit to Stormont Parliament Buildings – meeting the MLAs and enjoying an educational tour, as well as being taking part in the Multiply initiative of engage mature learners.



## Tea Dances

The Over 50s tea dances are a cross-Council initiative supported by a number of departments including Community Development, Age friendly, Community Arts and PCSP. Tea dances offer numerous benefits, including social interaction, physical activity, and mental stimulation. Their popularity remains consistent with over 130 attending the last one in February providing a real sense of

community and belonging for those that attended. The dances are particularly valuable for older adults who are isolated or experiencing life changes as it gives a platform for older people to connect with others, build friendships, and combat loneliness. Feedback informs what dance is provided and the gentle exercise and movement involved helps improve mobility, balance, and flexibility and boost mood.

Overview of the evaluation results from the 11<sup>th</sup> February 2025 (76/130 responses – 58% response rate).

What did we learn:

- Refreshments - **72%** felt that the offering was very good/excellent
- Venue - **78%** felt an excellent/very good venue for the tea dance
- Atmosphere – **90%** felt it was good to excellent and providing a welcoming space
- Health checks - **68%** rated it good/very good/excellent
- Most enjoyed - included music and dancing, meeting people, company, the information, “the craic” and the social aspect
- Least enjoyed - parking, lack of seats at tables, not being taught the dances
- Comments - “More dances needed,” tea/coffee queue too slow and tuition should be available to those that want it.

### Feelings after event

- making new connection and felt happier – **51%**
- Increased confidence - over **20%**
- felt healthier or learnt or improved a dance. – over **20%**.

It is evident the tea dances continue to be contributing positively to the physical, emotional, and mental well-being of older adults in the Borough and the CD team are proud to be involved.



## The Hub

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The Hub holds a disco that provides a weekly social engaging opportunity for adults 18+ with additional needs to come together and enjoy music and activities. Recently the group held a social event in the form of a formal dance, where the members enjoyed a night of dancing in formal attire.



## Play Clubs

The play clubs operate on a term time basis and the programme content reflects many aspects of the world around us, national celebratory days such as Chinese New Year, St Patricks day, seasonal themed activities such as Easter, Halloween and Christmas, Health, and wellbeing. The aims of the programme are to ensure that the provision of the following elements is considered and input:

- Social interaction – making friends, team games, sharing our news.
- Physical play and learning sports and games.
- Environmental – world around us,
- Creative – art and crafts, drama, and dance, singing.
- Other – this can be visits from other departments within council such as the recycling team, environmental department litter picks and social responsibility, facilitators such as animal road shows, music bloom musical interaction, mini explorers – sensory and creative expression through art.

Play clubs continue to provide high quality programmes to children age P1-P7 sharing news of projects and achievements. Recently the clubs celebrated children's mental health week with art and craft projects with a visit from the Mayor.

Example of programme content

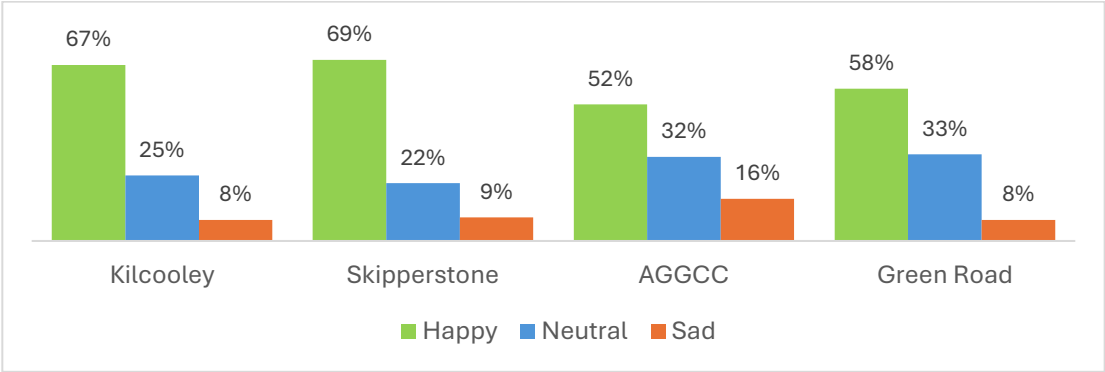
Activity	Health and Wellbeing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Themed pirates – making boats and masks.</li><li>Halloween Crafts and party – including optional costume dress.</li><li>National anti-bullying week and awareness</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Team building games.</li><li>Music games</li><li>Sharing news</li><li>Soft archery</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Cookery</li><li>Christmas crafts and party – Christmas crafts and songs, letter to Santa and visit</li><li>St Johns 1<sup>st</sup> Aid Taster Session</li><li>Recycling team visit – craft activity and interactive educational games</li><li>Music Bloom workshop</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Playground games</li><li>Pancake day</li><li>Games of yesterday</li></ul>

Play Club Feedback Summary

The children were asked ‘How did you feel **before** the club today?’ and ‘How did you feel **after** the club today?’

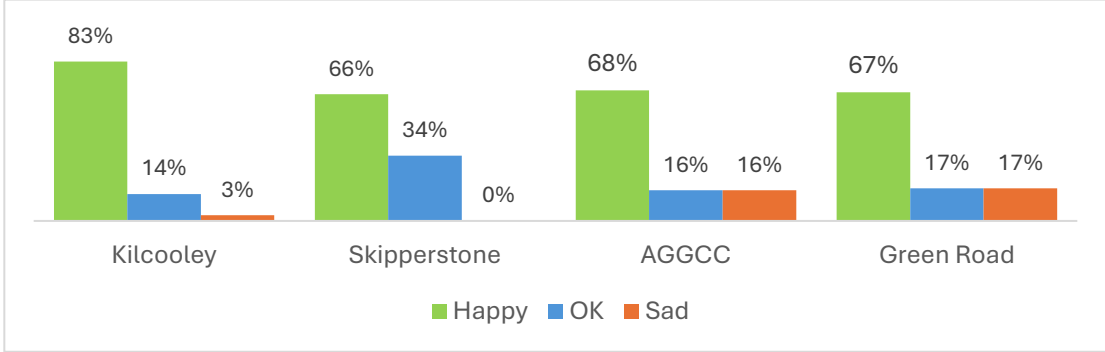
The results for the winter term are below.

Children were asked ‘How did you feel before the club today?’



(Responses: Kilcooley 36, Skipperstone 32, Green Road 12, AGGCC 25)

Children were asked, ‘How did you feel after the club today?’



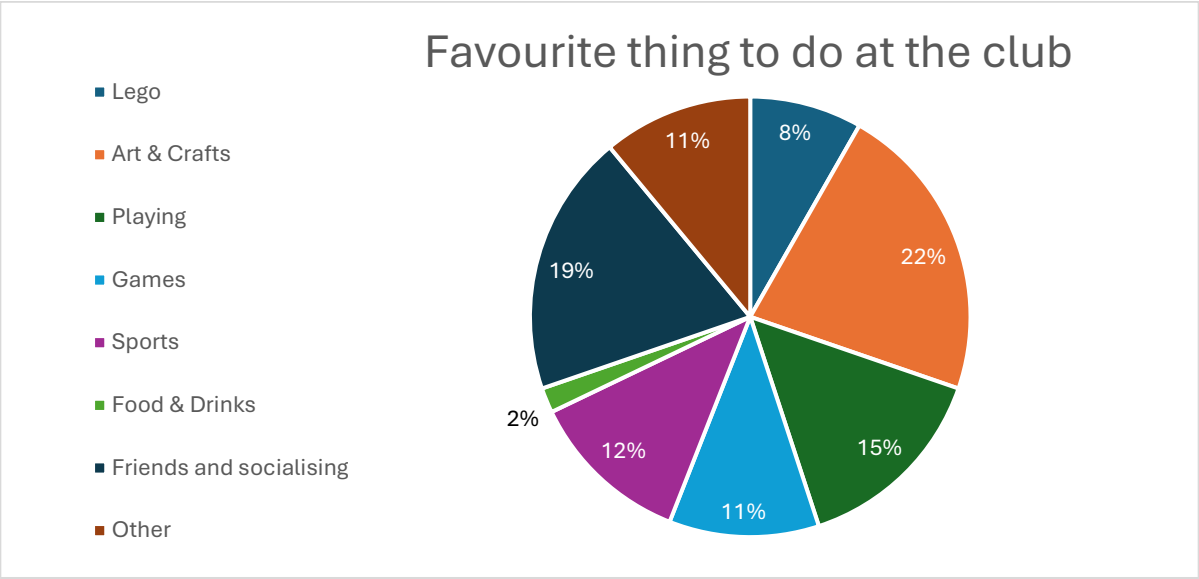


(Responses: Kilcooley 36, Skipperstone 32, Green Road 12, AGGCC 25)

**Overview** of all 4 play clubs - how the children felt from arriving at club compared to how they felt when they left:

38% increase in happiness  
31% decrease in a neutral feeling  
5% less sadness

Children were asked, ‘What is your favourite thing to do at the club?’  
There were 75 responses overall with some common themes:



Some of the responses given were:

‘Play with my bestie and doing art and playing with the bucket shoes’

‘Make jewellery’

‘bouncy castles’

‘Lego’

‘Go to the park’

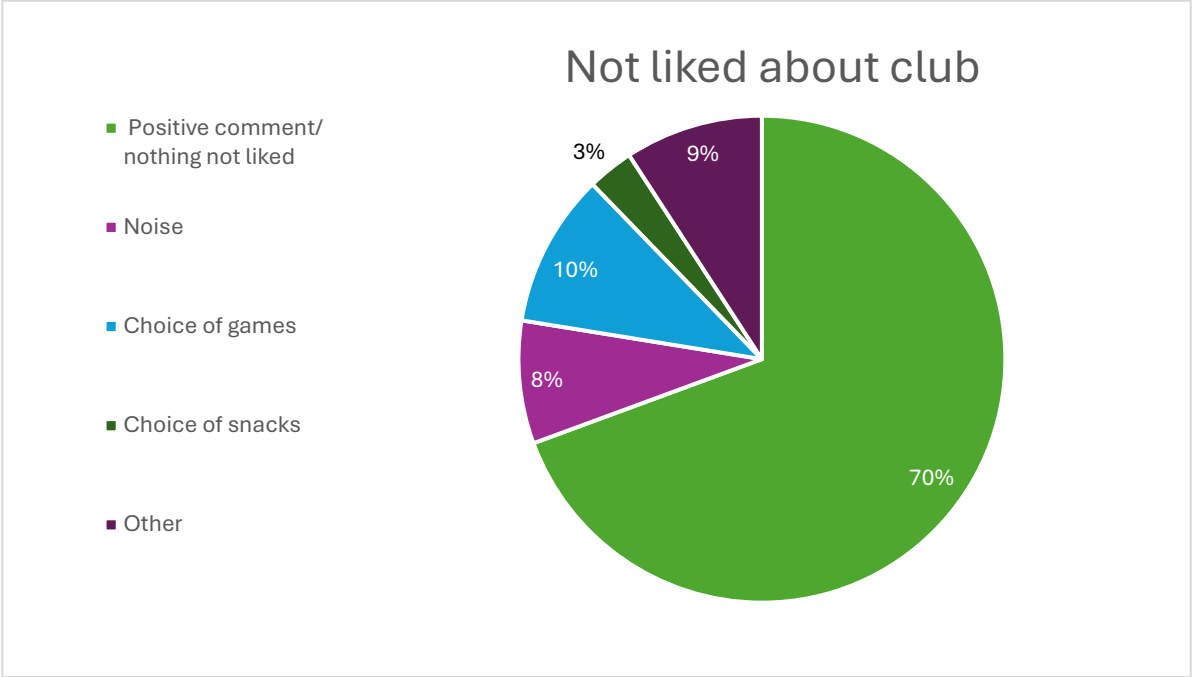
‘Football’

‘Run around’

Children were then asked, ‘Is there anything you do not like about the club?’

Again, there were common themes:

Not liked about club: -



Some of the responses given were: -

I like everything at the club  
It's a little bit shouty  
The loud noises  
Football  
Playing with Lego  
No Wi-Fi  
Fall over  
People being mean  
People keep hurting me and my feelings  
Jenga  
The mixed Legos  
Nothing I love the club  
Food  
Jenga

TikTok puzzle  
Lego  
The snacks  
Not going to the park  
Going without Mummy  
Too noisy  
Not always play the same games  
Too noisy  
Sitting in a circle  
Tidying up  
Noise  
Only toast  
Going home  
No!!

'Nothing'

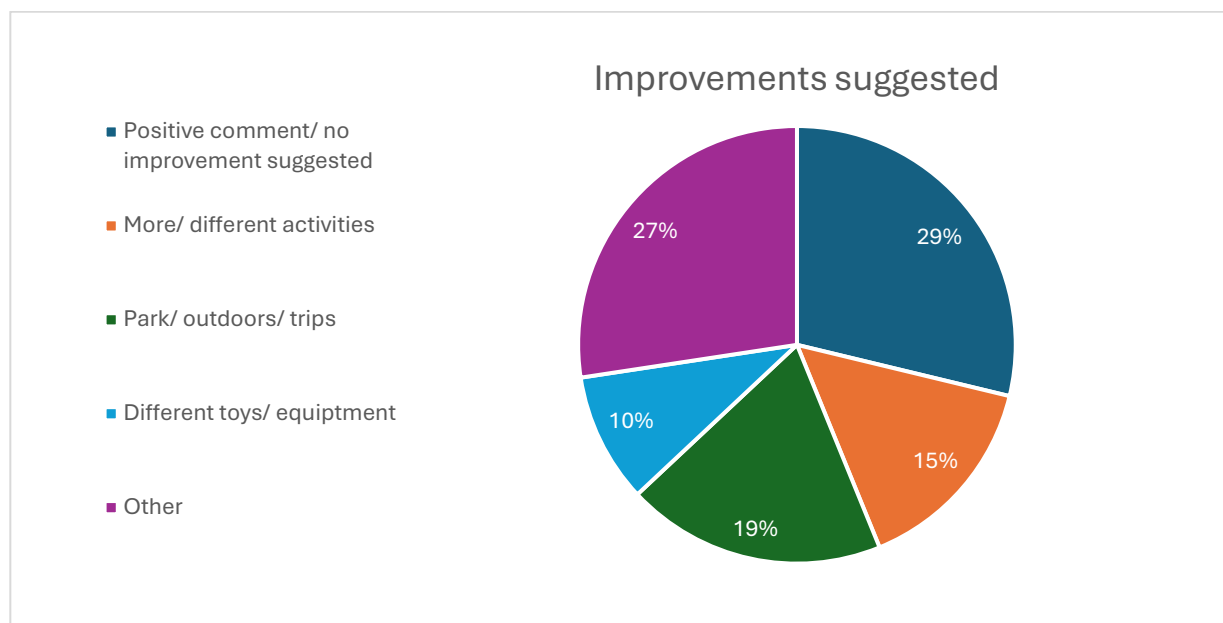
'Jenga'

'People being

'The mixed Legos'

'The noise'

Children were then asked, 'what would make the club better?'



Some suggestions from children included.

- Different snacks
- Longer playing time
- Animals to visit
- A clone of my friends
- You can use phones
- Going to club earlier
- Less people
- Less noise
- More food
- Have more fun
- A slumber party
- More eating
- Keep the noise down a bit
- If it had better food
- If it had better food choices
- Wi-Fi

Children were asked, 'Anything else you want to tell us about the play club?'  
35 respondents added comments:

- It's really good
- It's so good
- It's good
- I like it
- It's so fun
- Best club I've been to
- It's so fun!

- I like it
- Fun!
- I love it!
- It's the best
- This is the best club ever
- It is good
- I like it
- It's the best thing ever
- I love it!
- It's fun
- It's fun!!!
- It's a very lovely club
- We need football
- To have parties for special days
- It is very noisy

### Children's mental health week - 3<sup>rd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> February 2025

One of the many areas of learning this year included children's mental health week. Activities included the building and design of 'Totem Emotion'. This travelled around Community Development clubs allowing each member to add their own touch as well as collecting how the children were feeling on the day. The children then took part in a session led by Clayful minds around the theme of Emotions and the Disney film 'INSIDE OUT', the children made their own version of the Emotion 'ANXIETY' from the film in the form of a clay fridge magnet. The Mayor joined the last session at Skipperstone and joined in the craft activity.





## Summer Schemes

The value of play and its benefits in the shaping of human development are widely documented. It is central to children's learning, development, confidence, and wellbeing.

It is recognised that children have the **right** to play (UNCRC Article 31- children and young people have the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to their age, and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.)

Access is often difficult for many families. There are many barriers for children not participating and some families may face one or multiple barriers to participation. The cost-of-living crisis has placed pressure on families and people on low income.

In 2024 the Council led summer schemes were delivered by the Community Development Team in the following Community Centres/locations:

- Alderman George Green Community Centre
- Ballygowan Village Hall
- Bowtown Movilla Abbey Church Hall
- Donaghadee Community Centre
- Portavogie Community Centre
- Redburn Community Centre
- West Winds Community Centre.

Three Community Led Summer Schemes were delivered in the following areas:

- Bangor, Kilcooley Community Centre – Kilcooley Women's Centre
- Millisle, Millisle Community Hub - Millisle Youth Forum
- Portaferry, Steel Dickson Avenue - Ballyphilip Youth Club

**Table 1**

Council Scheme Location Area	Community Centre	Number of children 2023 Per week	Number of children 2024 Per week
Newtownards	Bowtown	24	48
Newtownards	Westwind's	24	32
Ballygowan	Ballygowan	24	48
Bangor	Alderman George Green	24	48
Hollywood	Redburn	24	48
Portavogie	Portavogie	24	48
Donaghadee	Donaghadee	24	48
Total Per Week		168	320

The Community Development team delivered Summer Schemes at 7 sites during 21 July – 2 August over 2 weeks:

Redburn Community Centre, Ald George Green Community Centre, Donaghadee Community Centre, Portavogie Community Centre, Bowtown Church Halls (Movilla Abbey), Ballygowan Village Hall, West Winds Community Centre.

These all accommodated 48 children per site, except West Winds which held 32 children due to the size of the hall.

### Summer Scheme Partners

Three Community Led Summer Schemes were delivered by Community Partners in the following areas:

- Bangor, Kilcooley Community Centre – Kilcooley Women's Centre
- Millisle, Millisle Community Hub - Millisle Youth Forum
- Portaferry, Steel Dickson Avenue - Ballyphilip Youth Club

Kilcooley Women's Centre attracted additional funding which allowed them to deliver across 4 weeks. They provided 65 places per week, which is a total of 260 places over 4 weeks.

Millisle Youth Forum provided 34 places for Seniors in week one and 60 places for Juniors (2 groups of 30 children at 2.5 days for each group) in week 2. They provided a total of 94 places over two weeks.

Ballyphilip Youth Club provided 53 places in week one for Juniors and 34 places in week two for Seniors. They provided a total of 87 places over two weeks.

Table 1 represents the figures records as below:

Summer Scheme Community Partner	Location and duration	Number of Children 2023	Number of Children 2024
Kilcooley Women's Centre	Kilcooley – 4 weeks	52 per week	65 x 4 weeks
Millisle Youth Centre	Millisle - 2 weeks	29 per week	60 x week one 34 x week two
Ballyphilip Youth Group	Portaferry - 2 weeks	40	53 x week one 34 x week two
<b>Total per week</b>		<b>121</b>	Week one = 178 Week two = 133 Week three = 65 Week four = 65
<b>Total</b>		<b>346</b>	<b>441</b>

## Outcome 6: Grants

*“Our communities have capacity to avail of Council funds to address locally identified needs.”*

The table below outlines all of the Grants and Funding administered by the Community Development Team during 2024/25

Funding/Grant Stream	DfC awarded and Council match funding total amount
Advice Contract - CAAND	£305,206.20
Community Support – Network SLAs	£37,936.33
Welfare Reform Fund	£81,741.15
Advice Services Support Payment	£1,500.00
Integrated Debt Partnership Fund	£68,121.68
Social Supermarket	£127,822.24
Winter Hardship Fund	£47,268.23
Community Festival Fund	£91,139.78
Community Development Running Costs	£93,850.04
Christmas Festivals 2024	£19,919.81
Youth Voice	£24,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£898,505.46</b>
<b>One off funding</b>	
DfE Multiply Project costs	£279,962.84
DfE Multiply Officer	£50,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,228,468.30</b>

### Grants Working Group

In 2024 a cross council working group was set up to the develop a new grants policy in incorporate the numerous grants administered across Council.

One of the main elements of change in the policy is a yearly grants workshop. Also each grant steam requires to be approved by Council prior to opening for call. This should speed up the time in which local groups get Letter of offers, as the results of the scoring panel do not need to go back to Committee and Council for approval.

### Grants Information Sessions

Ards and North Down Grants working group was set up this year to progress the development of the Council Grants policy.

An action of the group was that a grants information session be held on 20th February 2025 in the Queens Hall, Newtownards, with two drop-in times available to members of the public.

This was a very successful event with people queuing to discuss grants and gather information. Lessons learned will be implemented for the next session to be held later in 2025 in a Bangor.

### Multiply Initiative

Multiply is a fully funded government scheme that offers maths courses to adults aged 19 years and older. The aim of the funding is to reach the hardest to reach learners/residents, to engage in basic maths for everyday life, delivered in the heart of the community.

The table below outlines the results from the multiply initiative completed in the Borough in 2025.

Programme	Awarded	Delivery method	Target	Achieved outputs	Budget spent
Engaging Mature Learners – Making it Count	£47,520.00	Direct delivery	48	180	£35,265.91
MSOL	£41,028.00	Direct delivery	96	45	£20,522.93
Numeracy Boot Camps	£79,800.00	VEAT notice extension to	48	42	£79,800



		existing contract				199
Numeracy Boot Camps- Cooking	£70,000.00	Letter of Offer to Social Supermarkets	48	127	£70,000	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£238,348</b>		<b>240</b>	<b>394</b>	<b>£205,588.84</b>	

### **Community Development Running Costs Grant 2024/25**

The Community Development running costs grants for 2024/25 were open from 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024 until 27th February 2024. The Total funding budget was £92,000 and the number of groups supported was 50.

The Community Development Fund (CD) is jointly provided by Ards and North Down Borough Council and the Department of Communities, under the Community Support Programme.

The purpose of the Council's Community Development Fund is to support local Community groups who require running costs for local community bases, and groups (e.g. insurance, utilities, rent/venue hire etc.), which aim to improve the quality of life of communities in Ards and North Down.

Out of the 63 applications received 50 were successful, 9 applications did not meet the pass mark of 50% and 4 applications were deemed ineligible. Table 1 below shows the successful applicants and Table 2 the unsuccessful and ineligible applicants.

The 50 successful applicants were awarded 89% of the eligible running costs they applied for with a total value awarded of **£93,850.04**.

**Table 1: Successful Applicants**

#	Group / Organisation	Amount Awarded @ 89%
1	1st Bangor Scouts	£2,225.00
2	Ards Peninsula Villages Partnership	£1,513.00
3	Ballyphilip Youth Club	£2,216.10
4	Ballywalter & District Historical Society	£400.50
5	Ballywalter Community Action group	£525.10
6	Ballywalter Mens Shed	£703.10
7	Bangor Sea Cadets	£1,780.00
8	Behind the stable door	£2,225.00
9	Bloomfield Community Association	£2,225.00
10	Bowtown Community Development Group	£1,931.30
11	Breezemount Community Association	£2,225.00

12	Carrowdore & District CA	£2,225.00
13	Clandeboyne VCA	£2,225.00
14	Cloughey & District Community Association	£2,036.32
15	Codo Drops	£2,225.00
16	Comber Regeneration Community Partnership	£2,225.00
17	Conlig Community Regeneration Group	£2,225.00
18	Discover Groomsport	£1,739.95
19	Donaghadee Community Development Association	£2,225.00
20	Gifted Enterprise	£2,225.00
21	Greyabbey Village Hall Management Committee	£2,225.00
22	Groomsport Village Association	£2,225.00
23	Hollywood Family Trust	£2,225.00
24	Hollywood Shared Town	£2,225.00
25	Homestart Ards, Comber & Peninsula	£1,780.00
26	Inspiring Yarns CIC	£2,225.00
27	Kilcooley Women's Centre	£2,225.00
28	Killinchy Activity Group	£2,225.00
29	Killinchy Senior Citizens	£1,780.00
30	Ladybirds Parenting Centre	£2,225.00
31	Lisbarnett and Lisbane Community Association	£2,225.00
32	Love Ballyholme	£542.90
33	Millisle & District Community Association	£2,225.00
34	Millisle Health and Wellbeing	£2,225.00
35	Millisle Regeneration	£2,225.00
36	Millisle Youth Forum	£2,225.00
37	Portaferry Community Collective	£933.61
38	Portaferry Community Services Ltd	£2,225.00
39	Portaferry Gala Fest	£2,225.00
40	Portaferry In Bloom	£1,068.00
41	Portaferry Mens Shed	£2,225.00
42	Portavogie Autism Group	£769.83
43	Portavogie Regeneration Forum	£785.43
44	Redburn Loughview Community Forum	£2,180.50
45	St Patricks Community Centre	£2,225.00
46	The Be Kind Project	£2,225.00
47	The Link Family & Community Centre	£2,225.00
48	Twinkle Tots Parent and Toddler	£1,477.40
49	United Ulster History Forum	£712.00
50	Whitehill CA	£2,225.00

	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£93,850.04</b>
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**Table 2: Unsuccessful Applicants: -**

#	Group / Organisation	Reason for Unsuccessful Application
1	Ballygowan & District Community Association	Not Scored incorrect application used
2	Bangor and North Down Samaritans	Not scored deemed ineligible - not grassroots, not CD outputs & big organisation
3	Decorum NI	Didn't meet pass mark of 50%
4	Killinchy and District Community Development Assoc	Didn't meet pass mark of 50%
5	North Down and Ards Red Squirrels & Pine Marten	Not scored - not community development
6	Polish Association Bangor	Didn't meet pass mark of 50%
7	Portaferry and Strangford Trust	Didn't meet pass mark of 50%
8	Portaferry Regeneration Ltd	Didn't meet pass mark of 50%
9	Portaferry WI	Didn't meet pass mark of 50%
10	Portavogie Coastal Rowing Team	Not scored - sports not community development
11	Seahaven Residents Association	Didn't meet pass mark of 50%
12	U3A Ards & Peninsula	Didn't meet pass mark of 50%
13	Warehouse Open Centre	Didn't meet pass mark of 50%

### **Events and Festivals Fund 2024/25**

**Total allocation to Community Festivals: – £91,139.78 Total number of groups funded: 29**

**Total numbers of festival attendees: 51,555 attendees**

This is the second year of the Events and Festivals Fund. The Community and Tourism Events Teams sought feedback from those in receipt of a grant in Year 1. One of the main comments was the lateness of the results of their application. With that in mind, the decision was taken to merge the 2 tranches that opened in Year 1 and open 1 tranche only, for all applications.

Total budget for the Events and Festivals Fund 24/25 is £175,000 the Events and this amount included match funding from Department of Communities (DfC) of £31,600.

There are 3 levels of grant available within the Events and Festivals Fund. These are:

Event/Festival Type	Guidance attendee/participant numbers	Support available
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<b>Local</b>	Attracts up to 500 attendees and participants	Up to £1,000
<b>Neighbourhood</b>	Attracts between 501 and 2,000 attendees and participants	Between £1,000 and £4,000
<b>Medium/Large</b>	Attracts over 1,500 attendees and participants	Between £4,001 and £15,000

The Events and Festivals Fund opened for applications on Wednesday 11 October 2023 and closed on Friday 3 November 2023.

There were 47 applications received by the closing date requesting a total value of £266,434.00 and 32 of these applicants were Community events/festivals. Twenty-nine of the community applications received were successful, two failed to reach the pass mark of 55% and one application was deemed ineligible.

**Table 1: Local Festivals recommended for Award.**

	<b>Group / Organisation</b>	<b>Name of Festival</b>	<b>Amount awarded</b>	<b>Attendee numbers at festival</b>
<b>1</b>	Ballygowan & District Community Association	Family Fun Day	£880.00	120
<b>2</b>	Ballywalter and District Historical Society	Ballywalter Ulster Scots Festival	£980.00	45
<b>3</b>	Breezemount Community Association	Breezemount Community Festival 2024	£1,000.00	200
<b>4</b>	Cloughey and District Community Association	Cloughey Beach Fun Day	£725.00	200
<b>5</b>	Conlig Community Regeneration Group	Conlig Community Festival 2024	£1,000.00	350
<b>6</b>	Hollywood Family Trust	May Day Festival Event	£1,000.00	300
<b>7</b>	Kilcooley Women's Centre	International Women's Day 24/25	£1,000.00	155
<b>8</b>	Ladybird Childcare Services	Global Inclusion Week 2024	£1,000.00	100
<b>9</b>	Lisbarnett and Lisbane Community Association	Lisbane Midsummer Fair 2024	£850.00	250
<b>10</b>	Mae Murray Foundation	All-ability family fundays	£1,000.00	400
<b>11</b>	Millisle & District Community Association	Millisle Reflects	£1,000.00	100
<b>12</b>	St Marys Primary School Parent Support Group Portaferry	Tractor run and family fun day	£1,000.00	250
<b>13</b>	St Marys PSG Kircubbin	Community Fun Fest	£960.00	340
<b>14</b>	The Reeling Rascals Dance Academy	Comber Highland Dance Competition	£1,000.00	130
<b>15</b>	Whitehill Community Association	Whitehill Community Festival 2024	£1,000.00	180

<b>TOTAL of Local Community Events/Festivals</b>	<b>£14,395.00</b>	<b>3,120 attendees</b>
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**Table 2: Neighbourhood Festivals recommended for award**

	<b>Group / Organisation</b>	<b>Name of Festival</b>	<b>Amount awarded</b>	<b>Attendee Numbers at event/festival</b>
<b>1</b>	Ballycrochan Presbyterian Church	Meet the Neighbours	£1,200.00	500
<b>2</b>	Comber District LOL 15	Battle of the Somme Festival	£1,695.75	500
<b>3</b>	Discover Groomsport	Groomsport Big Community Picnic 2024	£1,209.00	550
<b>4</b>	Friends of Columbanus Bangor	Columbanus Festival	£2,820.00	887
<b>5</b>	Hollywood and District Community Council	May Day Festival	£2,999.25	1,000
<b>6</b>	Hollywood Shared Town	Creative Hollywood Festival 2024	£3,000.00	525
<b>7</b>	Polish Association Bangor	Polish Independence Day & Multi-cultural Christmas	£2,000.00	550
<b>8</b>	St Patricks Community Centre	Spooktacular Halloween Bash	£3,000.00	1280
<b>Total of Neighbourhood Community Festivals</b>			<b>£17,924.00</b>	<b>5,792 attendees</b>

**Table 3: Medium and Large Festivals recommended for award**

	<b>Group / Organisation</b>	<b>Name of Event</b>	<b>Amount awarded</b>	<b>Attendee numbers at Festival</b>
<b>1</b>	Comber Regeneration Community Partnership	Comber Fringe Festival 2024	£11,250.00	6710
<b>2</b>	Donaghadee Community Development Association	Donaghadee Summer Festival 2024	£11,250.00	16000
<b>3</b>	Emerald Isle Highland Dance Festival Committee	Emerald Isle Highland Dancing Festival 2024	£5,625.00	1100
<b>4</b>	Green Room Productions NI	Pirate Queen	£8,195.78	303
<b>5</b>	Happy Fest	Happy Fest	£11,250.00	1330
<b>6</b>	Portaferry Gala Festival	Portaferry Gala Fest 2024	£11,250.00	17,200
	<b>Total Medium/Large Community Festivals</b>		<b>£58,820.78</b>	<b>42,643 attendees</b>
	<b>Overall totals for all funded Community Festivals</b>		<b>£91,139.78</b>	<b>51,555 attendees</b>

**Table 4: Unsuccessful applications**

	Group / Organisation	Name of Festival	Reason for unsuccessful application
1	Love Ballyholme	Christmas at Holme	Failed to reach pass mark
2	Portaferry and Strangford Trust	Shipwrecks and Saviours	Failed to reach pass mark
3	Groomsport Parish Church	Fun Day	Deemed ineligible – 2 essential documents not provided

### Christmas Festival Grants 2024/25

**Total funding amount applied for was £22,396.00**

**Total attendees: 11,804**

The Council invited applications for the 2024-25 Christmas Festival Fund with a closing date of 12 noon on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2024. Funding for each of the 14 villages was a maximum of £1,000 and for the 3 towns the maximum applicable was £3,000. Villages (Table 1) and Towns (Table 2).

**Table 1 (VILLAGES)**

	Group / Organisation	Amount Awarded	Attendee Numbers
1	Ballygowan & District Community Association	£810.00	180
2	Ballyhalbert Community Association	£1,000.00	130
3	Ballywalter Community Action Group	£1,000.00	450
4	Carrowdore & District Community Association	£1,000.00	304
5	Cloughey & District Community Association	£586.00	125
6	Conlig Community Regeneration Group	£1,000.00	0 – Storm Eowyn
7	Groomsport Village Association	£1,000.00	238
8	Greyabbey & District Community Association	£1,000.00	300
9	Helens Bay & Crawfordsburn Residents Association	£1,000.00	280
10	Killinchy & District Community Development Association	£1,000.00	250
11	Kircubbin & District Community Association	£1,000.00	350
12	Millisle & District Community Association	£1,000.00	300
13	Portaferry Gala Fest	£1,000.00	990



14	Portavogie Regeneration Forum	£1,000.00	282
	Village's Total	£13,396.00	4,179

Table 2 (TOWNS)

	Name of group	Amount Awarded	Attendee numbers
1	Comber Regeneration Community Partnership	£3,000.00	3000
2	Donaghadee Community Development Association	£3,000.00	2625
3	Hollywood & District Community Council	£3,000.00	2000
	Town's Total	£9,000.00	7,625 attendees
	Overall Christmas 2024 Fund Total	£22,396.00	11,804 attendees

Cloughey held their  
Christmas Light Festival  
on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2024



**Portaferry held their Christmas Light Festival on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2024**







**Winter Hardship Funding 2024/25**

**Total Budget: £47,000 and total amount awarded was £47,268.23**

**Total amount of groups supported: 22 groups were successful.**

Ards and North Down Borough Council was awarded Hardship Funding from DfC of £344,027 and this was initially administered in 2023/24 and 23 groups/organisations were successfully funded. There was an underspend of £47,000 and DfC gave permission for Council to open another funding call in 2024/25 to support Winter Hardship grants. The purpose of this fund was to address hardship due to the current cost of living crisis, particularly the increase in energy and food costs.

The Winter Hardship Funding welcomed applications for grants up to a maximum of £3,000 as an open call. The call opened 9th September 2024 and closed on 24th September 2024 at 12 noon. A total of 31 applications were received by the deadline, totalling to a value of £92,751.00 requested.

There were 22 successful applicants who were awarded 73% of their eligible amount applied for and the total amount awarded was £47,268.23, see table 1. There was 9 unsuccessful or ineligible applications and these are in table 2 below.

**Table 1: Hardship Fund Successful applications:**

Successful Hardship Fund Breakdown - Pass mark 60%		
#	Name Of Group	Amount Awarded @ 73%

1	Ards Community Wellbeing Association	£1,460.00
2	Bangor Foodbank and Community Support	£2,190.00
3	Bowtown Community Development Group	£2,190.00
4	Carrowdore & District Community Association	£2,190.00
5	Clandeboyne Village Community Association	£2,190.00
6	Conlig Community Regeneration Group	£2,190.00
7	Glenward Community Development Association	£2,190.00
8	Hollywood Family Trust	£2,190.00
9	Kilcooley Women's Centre	£2,190.00
10	Ladybirds Childcare	£2,190.00
11	Millisle & District Community Association	£2,190.00
12	Newtownards Foodbank	£2,190.00
13	North Down Community Network	£2,190.00
14	North Down Community Works	£2,190.00
15	Orchardville - North Down Service	£2,044.00
16	Portaferry Community Collective	£2,190.00
17	St Marys Primary School PSG	£2,154.23
18	St Vincent de Paul - Portaferry	£2,190.00
19	West Winds Development Association	£2,190.00
20	Whitehill Community Association	£2,190.00
21	Women's Aid North Down & Ards	£2,190.00
22	YMCA North Down & Ards	£2,190.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£47,268.23</b>

**Table 2: Winter Hardship Fund Unsuccessful applications**

Hardship Fund Applications that were unsuccessful		
#	Name Of Group	Reason for Unsuccessful Application
1	Hollywood Community Network	Did not reach the 60% pass mark
2	St Columba's College Portaferry	Did not reach the 60% pass mark
3	The Hygiene Bank	Did not reach the 60% pass mark
4	Donaghadee Community Development Association	Capital equipment items not eligible
5	St Vincent de Paul - Ballyholme/Donaghadee	As per guidance only 1 application per organisation
6	St Vincent de Paul - Bangor	As per guidance only 1 application per organisation
7	St Vincent de Paul - Hollywood	As per guidance only 1 application per organisation
8	St Vincent de Paul - Kircubbin	As per guidance only 1 application per organisation
9	St Vincent de Paul - Newtownards	As per guidance only 1 application per organisation

## Winter Hardship Fund Feedback

**Newtownards Foodbank** were funded to support their project *Alleviating Food Poverty & Fuel Poverty* which provided food parcels, food vouchers and fuel vouchers/top ups. This project supported 488 primary participants and 940 secondary participants, 688 of which were children.

**Kilcooley Women's Centre (KWC)** received funding for their *Tackling Hardship Programme* which provided food hampers, hygiene packs, baby boxes and fuel vouchers. This project supported 76 primary participants and 213 secondary participants.

### One KWC client shared the following feedback:

- *"I am really struggling to make ends meet, especially with the baby. I have been dreading Christmas and worried sick about paying for it all. The Christmas pack and hygiene items were a lifesaver. We could finally enjoy Christmas without worrying about how we'd afford the Turkey or nappies."*
- *"The baby box was such a relief. It meant we could give our little one everything they needed without stressing about the cost. Thank you for making such a difference this Christmas."*

## Social Supermarkets

In the 2024/25 financial year Council awarded £127,822.24 in funding to two local community providers towards funding local Social Supermarkets through SLAs as a means of addressing increasing food poverty across the Borough. The SLAs are aimed at providing support 'beyond food' that enabled clients to access wraparound support services geared to transition people out of food poverty whilst respecting the dignity of the service users. They were intended to maximise existing support structures, services and partnerships ensuring that wraparound support was achieved.

Two local organisations were awarded funding through the scheme. Initially due to some uncertainty around funding North Down Community Works and Kilcooley Women's Centre were offered a Variance on the 2023/24 SLA to provide the service with limited interruption. NDCW decided after this first quarter that they were not able to continue delivering the programme for 2024/25 which meant that a suitable alternative had to be sought.

Bangor Foodbank and Community Support were successful in being awarded the SLA for quarters 3 and 4 of the contract. They have hit the ground running opening Social Supermarket provision in the Portaferry area and are going from strength to strength.

### Cross Council department initiatives that Community Development staff are involved with:

- ANDBC Community Resuscitation Group
- ANDBC Sustainable tourism Group

- ANDBC All system approach to obesity group
- ANDBC Community Planning third sector group
- ANDBC Climate Action and Sustainability Champions Working Group
- ANDBC Age Friendly
- ANDBC Staff Consultative Committee
- ANDBC Community Support Steering Group
- ANDBC Grants Scheme Development Working Group
- Ards and North Down Locality planning group
- ANDBC Reading Borough
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector
- LMP
- Strategic Community Planning Partnership
- ASPE
- Peace Plus scoring panels

### **Next Step**

A review of Community Development together with a review of Community Halls provision will be undertaken in 2025 in order to produce a Community Development Strategy and Action plan and Community Halls strategy.

We are hopeful that after full community consultation this strategy will be in place by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026, to be rolled out in the next financial year. This will include, for the first time, a Community Development action plan to support staff delivery to the community.

### **Conclusion**

The Community Development team will continue its work in 2025 – 2026. Community Development staff will continue to work with Department for Communities in relation to funding streams whilst continuing to seek additional funding opportunities to help and support all those in our Borough.

## **Glossary**

**SLA** – Service Level Agreement

**DfC** – Department for Communities

**DfE** – Department for Economy

**CD** – Community Development

**LoO** – Letter of Offer

**KNP** – Kilcooley Neighbourhood Partnership

**NRP** – Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership

**NRA** – Neighbourhood Renewal Area



Unclassified

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## ITEM 12

### Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	14 May 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Leisure Services
Date of Report	30 April 2025
File Reference	SD155
Legislation	Recreation and Youth Services Order (1986)
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Ards and North Down Sports Forum Grants (WG April 2025/2026)
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Successful Event Report Appendix 2 - Successful Goldcard Report Appendix 3 - Successful Individual Travel Accommodation Report Appendix 4 - Unsuccessful Report

The Ards and North Down Sports Forum administers grants for sporting purposes on behalf of Council under the Council's Grants Policy agreed in 2024. The report outlines the March 2025 grants that have been administrated and approved by the Ards and North Down Sports Forum and is for noting purposes only. This is in line with the Council's Grants Policy effective from 5 December 2024. £70,000 has been allocated within the 2025/26 revenue budget for this purpose.

During March 2025, the Forum received a total of 31 applications: (1 Coach Education, 2 Events, 9 Goldcards, 1 Club Travel/ Accommodation and 18 Individual Travel/Accommodation).

Not Applicable

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A summary of the 28 successful applications are detailed in the attached 2025/26 Successful Events, Successful Goldcard, and Successful Individual Travel/Accommodation Appendices.

<b>2025/26 Budget £70,000</b>	<b>Annual Budget</b>	<b>Proposed Funding Awarded March 2025</b>	<b>Remaining Budget</b>
Anniversary	£2,000	£0	<b>£2,000</b>
Coach Education	£3,000	£0	<b>£3,000</b>
Equipment	£22,000	£0	<b>£22,000</b>
Events	£10,000	£1,818.80	<b>*£6,181.20</b>
Seeding	£2,000	£0	<b>£2,000</b>
Travel and Accommodation	£28,000	£3,016.87	<b>*£24,683.13</b>
Discretionary	£1,000	£0	<b>£660</b>
Schools/Sports Club Pathway	£2,000	£0	<b>£2,000</b>
<b>8 Goldcards Awarded in March 2025 (8 Goldcards in total during 2025/26)</b>			

\*The proposed remaining budget for events of **£6,181.20** is based on an award of **£1818.80**.

\*The proposed remaining budget for Travel and Accommodation of **£24,683.13** is based on a proposed award this month of **£3,016.87**

The proposed remaining budget for 2025/26 is **£62, 524.33** (11% of the 2025/26 budget spent).

## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes this report.



APPENDIX 1 - SUCCESSFUL EVENT REPORT FOR NOTING 2025-26

NAME	EVENT	DETAILS	BENEFIT	COSTS	REQUESTED	PROPOSED	NOTES
Ards Rangers Football Club (1741)	Football	Ards Rangers Inclusion Tournament at Londonderry Park, Newtownards. A football tournament for inclusion football teams from the North and South of Ireland for ages 7- adult for teams with players with physical and cognitive impairments. Potential for 400-500 in attendance	This is a cross-community event, irrespective of ethnicity religion or gender, providing an opportunity for children and adults with cognitive and physical impairments to participate in ability banded competitive football. it will provide an environment to form connections between inclusive clubs with the potential to organise future competitive football opportunities to alleviate social exclusion.	LDPK pitch hire X2 for 6 hours £772.80 + St Johns ambulance hire £200 = £972.80	£972.80	£972.80	<b>Ards Rangers Football Club have requested £972.80 towards the Ards Rangers Inclusion Tournament on 28 June 2025. Recommend funding of £972.80. Event Management Plan needs to be reviewed by Risk Manager for ANDBC</b>

North Down Hockey Club (1747)	Hockey	Inclusion Hockey at Comber Leisure Centre. The Club aims to deliver a programme of Inclusion Hockey for local young people aged 12 to 18 years over a 6 week period for 1 hour per week delivered by Inclusion-trained coaches.	By creating a safe and welcoming environment with specially trained coaches we hope to provide opportunities for disabled individuals to participate in sport and experience the many physical and mental health benefits it offers. The programme aims to break down barriers and promote inclusivity, ensuring that all young people, regardless of their abilities, can enjoy the thrill of hockey.	Coaching Costs £20 per hour x 4 coaches x 6 weeks = £480 / Pitch Hire Costs £31 x 1 hour x 6 weeks = £186 / Large Hockey Balls (£6 each - 30 balls) = £180. Total costs £846	£846.00	£846.00	North Down Hockey Club have requested £846.00 towards Inclusion Hockey in June and July 2025. Recommend funding of £846.00, 'subject to' an Event Management Plan' being provided.
TOTAL						£1,818.80	

APPENDIX 2 - SUCCESSFUL GOLDCARD REPORT FOR NOTING 2025-26

APPLICANT	SPORT	EVENT	DATES	GOLDCARD	REPRESENTING	PROPOSED	NOTES
Joy Ebbinghaus (1742)	Netball	Netball Youth World Cup	19 - 28 September 2025	BA - Gym	Northern Ireland	Yes	Joy has been selected to represent the U21 Netball Squad for Northern Ireland. She will be competing at the World Youth Cup in Gibraltar from 19-28 September 2025. Goldcard recommended until 29 September 2025.
Eira Lloyd (1748)	Water Polo	International Tournament / National Training Camp	May 2025 & 16-17 August 2025	BA & AMB - Gym & Pool	Ireland	Yes	Eira has been selected to be part of the Irish 2011 Girls Water Polo Squad, this has been confirmed by a selection letter from Swim Ireland. She will be competing at the International Tournament in Poland in May 2025 and attending the National Training Camp in Limerick from 16-17 August 2025. Goldcard recommended until 17 August 2025.
Olivia Gibson (1751)	Hockey	Scottish Series, Scotland	1-8 June 2025	BA - Gym & Pitches	Ulster	Yes	Olivia has been selected to be part of the Ulster U16 Hockey Squad competing at the Scottish Series in June and Interprovincial matches from 1-8 June 2025. Goldcard recommended until 8 June 2025.

Matilda Urry (1754)	Water Polo	Under 18 European Championships 2025, Gzira, Malta	31 August - 7 September 2025	BA, ABM (Gym, Health Suite & Pool)	Ireland	Yes	A letter from the Swim Ireland Water Polo Administrator confirms that Matilda has been selected to attend the Under 18 Girls European Championships in Malta from, 31 August - 7 September 2025. Goldcard recommended until 7 September 2025.
Keira Creaney (1755)	Water Polo	Under 18 European Championships 2025,Gzira, Malta	31 August - 7 September 2025	BA, ABM (Gym, Health Suite & Pool)	Ireland	Yes	A letter from the Swim Ireland Water Polo Administrator confirms that Keira has been selected to attend the Under 18 Girls European Championships in Malta from, 31 August - 7 September 2025. Goldcard recommended until 7 September 2025.
Alex Cree (1756)	Archery	European Youth Cup & World Championships, Slovenia / Winnepeg, Canada	27 July - 2 August 2025 & 17-23 August 2025	ABM Gym, Health Suite and Pool	Northern Ireland / GB	Yes	An email from Archery GB confirms Alex is a member of the Archery GB Compound Development Squad and will be competing at the Youth Cup in Slovenia from 27 July - 2 August 2025. He will also attend the World Championships in Winnepeg from 17-23 August 2025. Goldcard recommended until 23 August 2025.

Amber Dempster (1761)	Futsal	UEFA European Championship Qualifiers. Location TBC	May-26	ABM Gym, & Health Suite. LDPK - Cryospa	Northern Ireland	Yes	A letter from the IFA confirms that Amber has been selected for the Northern Ireland Women’s Senior International Futsal squad. The squad are working towards the next competition, the UEFA European Championships qualifiers in May 2026. Goldcard recommended until 31 March 2026.
Seb Holley (1767)	Hockey	European Championships, Turkey	13-19 July 2025	BA & BS (Gym, Health Suite, Pool, Track & Pitches)	Ireland U18	Yes	Seb has been selected to be part of the Hockey Ireland U18 squad. He will be attending many training sessions and working towards the European Championships in Turkey, from 13-19 July 2025. Goldcard recommended until 19 July 2025.

APPLICATION	NAME	SPORT	EVENT/COURSE /EQUIPMENT TYPE	DATES/DETAILS	DETAILS/LOCATION	REPRESENTING/ BENEFIT	REQUESTED	PROPOSED	NOTES
TRAVEL / ACCOMMODATION	Jim Morgan (1739)	Walking Football	International Games Versus Wales and Isle of Man	06-Apr-25	Chester, England.	Northern Ireland	£149.98	£149.98	A letter from the IFA advises Jim has been selected to represent Northern Ireland at the International Games Versus Wales and Isle of Man, held in Chester, England, on 6 April. Recommend funding of £149.98.
TRAVEL / ACCOMMODATION	Matthew Topping (1740)	Powerlifting	IPF Small Nations Powerlifting Championships	28 February - 2 March	Hamm, Luxembourg	Northern Ireland - National Coach	£170.00	£250.00	Funding not recommended as Matthew is not competing but has been selected as a National Coach for this event.

TRAVEL / ACCOMMODATION	Anthony Cafolla (1743)	Walking Football	N. Ireland vs England WFA	21/3/25- 23/3/25	Bishop Cleeve FC, Cheltenham	Northern Ireland	£150.00	£195.98	Anthony has been selected for the International Games against England, on 21 & 22 March 2025 in Cheltenham. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from the IFA. Recommend funding of £195.98
TRAVEL / ACCOMMODATION	Anthony Cafolla (1744)	Walking Football	N. Ireland vs Wales and vs Isle Of man	6/4/25-7/4/25	Chester	Northern Ireland	£150.00	£193.48	Anthony has been selected for the International Games Wales and Isle Of Man, on 6 & 7 April 2025 in Chester. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from the IFA. Recommend funding of £193.48.

<b>TRAVEL / ACCOMMODATION</b>	Johnny Miskimmon (1746)	Walking Football	N. Ireland vs Wales and vs Isle Of man	6/4/25-7/4/25	Chester	Northern Ireland over 60's & 70's coaching staff	£226.48	£200.00	<b>Johnny has been selected to represent Northern Ireland for the International Games Wales and Isle of Man, on 6 &amp; 7 April 2025 in Chester as a coach. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from the IFA. Recommend funding of £200.00 subject to confirmation email that attendance is a non-paid capacity.</b>
<b>TRAVEL / ACCOMMODATION</b>	Carter Rolston (1749)	Cross Country	Irish Schools Cross Country final	08/03/2025	Galway Ireland	Ulster Schools	£100.00	£150.00	<b>Carter has been selected to compete at the Irish Schools Cross Country Final, Galway on 8 March 2025. Recommend funding of £150, "subject to" an Athletics NI Selection Letter.</b>



TRAVEL / ACCOMMODATION	Carter Rolston (1750)	Athletics	London Mini Marathon	26/04/2025	London	Northern Ireland	£80.00	£80.00	Carter has been selected to compete in the London Mini Marathon on 26 April 2025. Parental contribution of £80 is required. Recommend funding of £80 "subject to" an Athletics NI Selection Letter.
TRAVEL / ACCOMMODATION	David Lemon (1752)	Walking Football	International Games against Wales & Isle of Man	06/04/2025	Chester	Northern Ireland Over 70s Walking Football	£143.00	£143.00	David has been selected for the International Games against Wales & isle of Man, on 6 April 2025 in Chester. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from the IFA. Recommend funding of £143.

<b>TRAVEL / ACCOMMODATION</b>	Ollie Hanna (1753)	Athletics	National Age Group Indoor Championships	29/03/25- 30/03/25	TUS Athlone, Ireland	Ulster/Northern Ireland	£307.94	£150.00	Ollie has been selected to compete at the National Age Group Indoor Championships, Athlone from 29-30 March 2025. Recommend funding of £150.
<b>TRAVEL / ACCOMMODATION</b>	Ken Armstrong (1757)	Walking Football	International games v Wales & v Isle of Man	06/04/2025	Chester	Northern Ireland Over 60s Walking Football	£150.00	£152.48	Ken has been selected for the International Games Wales and Isle Of Man, on 6 April 2025 in Chester. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from the IFA. Recommend funding of £152.48
<b>TRAVEL / ACCOMMODATION</b>	Will Smyth (1758)	Walking Football	Chester Football Tournament	06/04/2025	Chester	Northern Ireland	£150.00	£152.96	Will has been selected for the Chester Football Tournament, on 6 April 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from the IFA. Recommend funding of £152.96.

<b>TRAVEL / ACCOMMODATION</b>	Julie Fisher (1762)	Hockey	Masters Hockey Interpros	25/04/2025 - 27/04/2025	Garryduff, Cork	Ulster Over 55 Squad	£150.00	£150.00	<b>Julie has been selected for the Masters Hockey Interpros, from 25-27 April 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Ulster Hockey. Recommend funding of £150.</b>
<b>TRAVEL / ACCOMMODATION</b>	Eva Patton (1763)	Athletics	Irish Juvenile Indoor Championships	29- 30/03/2025	Athlone Indoor Track	NI/Ulster	£150.49	£150.00	<b>Eva has been selected to compete at the Irish Juvenile Indoor Championships, Athlone, 29-30 March 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Athletics NI. Recommend funding of £150.</b>

<b>TRAVEL / ACCOMMODATION</b>	Eva Patton (1764)	Athletics	Irish Juvenile Indoor Championships	05-Apr	Athlone Indoor Track	NI/Ulster	£109.10	£109.10	<b>Eva has been selected to compete at the Irish Juvenile Indoor Championships, Athlone, 5 April 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Athletics NI. Recommend funding of £109.10.</b>
<b>TRAVEL / ACCOMMODATION</b>	Lucia Magennis (1765)	Gymnastics	Acrobatic NDP & Disability Acro Finals 2025	10/05/2025- 11/05/2025	Stoke-on- Trent, Fenton Manor Sports Complex	Northern Ireland	£490.00	£200.00	<b>Lucia has been selected to compete at the NDP National Finals in Stoke-on-Trent from 10 -11 April 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00.</b>

<b>TRAVEL / ACCOMMODATION</b>	Isla Gawn (1766)	Gymnastics	Acrobatic NDP & Disability Acro Finals 2025	10/05/2025- 11/05/2025	Stoke-on- Trent, Fenton Manor Sports Complex	Northern Ireland	£150.00	£189.89	<b>Isla has been selected to compete at the NDP National Finals in Stoke-on-Trent from 10 -11 April 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £189.89.</b>
<b>TRAVEL / ACCOMMODATION</b>	Sophie Lawther (1768)	Gymnastics	Acrobatic NDP & Disability Acro Finals 2025	10/05/2025- 11/05/2025	Stoke-on- Trent, Fenton Manor Sports Complex	Northern Ireland	£150.00	£200.00	<b>Sophie has been selected to compete at the NDP National Finals in Stoke-on-Trent from 10 -11 April 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00.</b>

<b>TRAVEL / ACCOMMODATION</b>	Emmie Johnston (1769)	Gymnastics	Acrobatic NDP & Disability Acro Finals 2025	10/05/2025-11/05/2025	Stoke-on-Trent, Fenton Manor Sports Complex	Northern Ireland	£606.00	£200.00	<b>Emmie has been selected to compete at the NDP National Finals in Stoke-on-Trent from 10-11 April 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00.</b>
								<b>£3,016.87</b>	

## APPENDIX 4 - UNSUCCESSFUL REPORT

APPLICANT	APPLICATION	REQUEST	EVIDENCE REQUIRED	EXPLANATION
Belfast Kayak Club (1745)	Coach Education	Applying for the National Trainer in Paddle sports (Caoimhe Connor) to attend a club Coach and Leader development day.	Our Guidelines state that "clubs must be affiliated to the Ards and North Down Sports Forum".	<b>Belfast Kayak Club does not meet the essential criteria, the club are not affiliated to the Ards and North Down Sports Forum therefore ineligible for funding. Funding not recommended.</b>
Ards Ladies Hockey Club (1759)	Club Travel/ Accommodation	Applying for travel costs to travel to EY1 All Ireland League Fixture in Limerick, 22 March 2025.	Our guidelines states that " routine costs to away games and training in normal competitions will not be considered".	<b>Ards Ladies Hockey Club costs associated to travel to the EY1 All Ireland League Fixture would be considered as routine costs associated with competing in an All-Ireland League. Funding not recommended.</b>
Felix English (1760)	Goldcard	Applying for Goldcard, part of the Water Polo Ireland U17 Squad.	Our guidelines state that applicants must, "Provide a letter from the relevant SNI/Sport Ireland recognised governing body. The letter must verify the athlete is part of a recognised squad or an Individual in preparation for a specific event/competition. The Governing Body letter/email MUST state what event/competition details you are preparing for. The event/competition must be within 12 months of application being made".	<b>Felix has not provided a valid selection letter from Swim Ireland. Although he is part of the squad, Swim Ireland have confirmed there are no planned events for this squad to attend. Goldcard not recommended.</b>









Unclassified

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## ITEM 13

### Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	14 May 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Leisure Services
Date of Report	24 April 2025
File Reference	CW74
Legislation	Recreation and Youth Servcies Order (1986)
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below: N/A For information only
Subject	Bi Monthly Update on Portavogie 3G and Penninsula 3G pitches and Portaferry Sport Centre
Attachments	13.1 Appendix 1 Portavogie 3G Update February 2025 13.2 Appendix 2 Peninsula 3G Update February 2025 13.3 Appendix 3 Status Update on Portaferry Sports Centre Floor Repair

In February 2024, Council agreed to the following:

*“that Council notes the closure of the training area at Portavogie Football Pitch due to health and safety concerns, recognises the negative impact this has on local provision and sports development and tasks Officers to bring forward a report on options to provide temporary training facilities in the village in the short term and repairs to the pitch in the long term. As a matter of urgency Council tasks Officers to bring forward a bimonthly progress report on the development of the Portavogie 3G Pitch, Portaferry Sports Centre and Portaferry 3G Pitch to this committee.”*

Not Applicable

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This report provides the three updates requested on a bi-monthly basis, and for the two capital projects, in a 'RAG' format as further requested by the proposer in May 2024.

1. The update report for the Portavogie 3G project is attached at appendix 1.
2. The update report for the Peninsula 3G project is attached at appendix 2. A further report on financial matters has been provided for Members consideration in the in confidence section of the committee's agenda.
3. The status update for the defective floor at Portaferry Sports Centre is attached at appendix 3.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council notes the three update reports.

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Portavogie 3G Project. Update 16.  
Information up to date as of 11<sup>th</sup> April 2025

This report has been prepared for information purposes and is issued to interested parties to update them on the most pressing of work streams currently being undertaken.

**Planning application:** LA06/2020/0844/F (submitted on 21 September 2020)  
**Proposal:** Upgrade to existing football ground to include the placement of the existing grass pitch with synthetic surface, fencing and floodlighting along with replacement changing pavilion, additional car parking spaces and associated siteworks  
**Location:** Football ground to the rear of no. 8 and 10 New Harbour Road, Portavogie

For Information – RAG status

Green	Amber	Red
Good progress is being made, with no significant issues.	Progress is being made with some issues needing to be worked through.	Issues exist that could put elements or the whole project at risk.

Background

A planning application was submitted in September 2020. All consultation responses were received one year later, in September 2021, except NI Water (NIW) consultation response.

NIW have issued reports and maps that indicate the underinvestment and lack of capacity over significant areas of Northern Ireland, which is stifling, delaying, and preventing a large amount of capital development projects throughout Northern Ireland. Portavogie is one of the areas affected.

With regards to Portavogie, NIW responded to the planner in November 2021 objecting to the scheme and started a process that resulted in them requesting additional design works related to their infrastructure in the vicinity of the site. The design was to be carried out and developed to Stage 2 (as outlined in their solutions report) to allow NIW’s sign off on the proposal and issue of their final consultation response to Planning.

In September 2023, the EU Commission adopted the EU REACH restriction on intentionally added microplastics. Once entered into force, the restriction will apply in the EU and Northern Ireland. A sales ban on granular infill materials will apply after eight years so that affected stakeholders have time to develop and switch to alternative materials.

In the interim and in light of the science underpinning the restriction, SES requested robust evidence of appropriate mitigation for artificial surfaces with linkages to designated sites, stating that the most effective control is avoidance of infill materials entering the aquatic environment. ANDBC were re-consulted through the planning process in May 2024 and asked to demonstrate that effective mitigation is in place for the Portavogie 3G Pitch.

**Portavogie 3G Project. Update 16.**  
**Information up to date as of 11<sup>th</sup> April 2025**

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In October 2024, DfI Roads withdrew their original consultation response to the proposed redevelopment and reconsulted with PlanningNI, advising that they now consider the proposal unacceptable, as submitted.

**1. Programme**

Green	Amber	Red
	The programme for the delivery of the project cannot be determined until planning is granted.	

The project programme will be updated when we have assurance that Planning approval will be granted and a realistic timeframe for securing same has been provided.

**2. NI Water: Offsetting**

Green	Amber	Red
A solution has been agreed with NIW who have confirmed their conditional approval to the proposed scheme.		

Following re-consultation through the formal planning process, NIW responded in July 2024 to confirm their conditional approval of the submitted drainage offsetting proposal. The proposed solution will free up capacity within the existing, adjacent combined sewer by redirecting drainage from Portavogie Primary School, to facilitate a foul drainage connection from the development site into the adjacent combined public sewer.

It should be noted that legal permission from the Education Authority (EA), is required to carry out the drainage works within the grounds of Portavogie Primary School (PPS) and work is ongoing to secure this. EA approval is conditional to planning approval, therefore it is not required in advance of receiving planning approval but must be achieved thereafter, to proceed with the development.

The EA has repeatedly advised that they have a number of priority projects which currently require input from their appointed solicitor and are taking precedence over their consideration of Council's request. However, it should be noted that there is a noticeable increase in the frequency of communications from the EA, to progress the legal agreement. The EA will seek Committee approval upon receipt of their solicitor's opinion.

**3. NI Water: Requisition**

Green	Amber	Red
NIW has provided a conditional response to the resubmitted requisition application		

**Portavogie 3G Project. Update 16.**  
**Information up to date as of 11<sup>th</sup> April 2025**

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(received on 11.06.24) and detailed design development by NIW is underway.		
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The development of the detailed design for the requisition sewer is still in progress, following ANDBC's payment of a £10K deposit. The proposed requisition sewer is required to drain surface run off from the proposed site and facilitate a connection for the re-routed PPS storm drainage (subject to receipt of the EA's legal permission). This aspect of the drainage proposal has received NIW's conditional approval through the formal planning process and we await NIW's detailed design solution for this aspect of the works.

**4. Planning: Statutory Consultation – Shared Environmental Services**

Green	Amber	Red
Planning consulted with NIEA Water Management Unit, Marine & Fisheries and SES, following our submission of an updated HRA		

In response to the EU future ban of use of microplastics in artificial pitches, SES reconsulted on all live planning applications affected by this decision, including this proposal in Portavogie. SES requested an updated HRA, to either i) confirm that natural infill will be used and evidence that it is not harmful to the environment or ii) or provide appropriate measures in the design to infiltrate rubber infill crumb before it is discharged out to the storm sewer.

Planning consulted with NIEA Water Management Unit, Marine & Fisheries and SES, following our submission of an updated HRA confirming that ANDBC will use natural infill in the 3G pitch, in accordance with mitigation option i), listed above.

**SES** - A positive consultation response was received from SES who confirmed they have no reason to disagree with the findings of the HRA published on 10/10/2024. SES considers that the Council has fulfilled its obligations under the assessment requirements of Regulation 43 (1) of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended).

**DEARA Marine & Fisheries** – a positive consultation response was received from NIEA Marine & Fisheries division on 14/11/2024 advising that they welcome the mitigation measures outlined in the updated HRA.

**DEARA Water Management Unit (WMU)** – a positive response was received further to the issue of information requested by WMU. WMU has responded to confirm they have considered the impacts of the proposal on the surface water environment and, on the basis of the information provided, are content with the proposal, subject to Conditions.

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**Information up to date as of 11<sup>th</sup> April 2025**

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**5. Planning: Statutory Consultation – Dfl Roads**

Green	Amber	Red
		Dfl original consultation response withdrawn and additional information requested with significant impact on current access design.

In October 2024, Dfl Roads withdrew their original consultation response to the proposed redevelopment and reconsulted with PlanningNI, advising that they now consider the proposal unacceptable, as submitted because of access to the site.

Council can confirm that Dfl Roads has requested an updated site access design with visibility splays. Further internal meetings were held to agree a strategy on how to deal with the requirements that DFI Roads have asked for.

A meeting took place at the site on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2025 when a number of options were discussed regarding potential solutions and a further meeting is proposed to see if any further progress can be made on the DFI's objection.

**6. Planning Update: General**

Green	Amber	Red
	All requests from consultees have been addressed with the exception Dfl Roads which is in progress.	

The planning consultation process remains live until engagement with Dfl Roads concludes. We therefore await a planning decision once the further access information requested has been submitted and DFI further consulted.

By 3<sup>rd</sup> March drawings had been prepared for the planning service to have a discussion with DFI on their latest objection. Land and Property Services will be approached in relation to the value of any additional lands that will be required for the enhanced access to the site.

In accordance with the agreement with the landowner of the additional lands, a formal response, addressing Dfl Roads requirements, will be sent to the Department through the planning process in the hope that this will allow planning permission to be granted and the proposal will be detailed to the landowner in writing.

The landowner involved was written to with this update on the access road development on 4<sup>th</sup> March.

By the beginning of April, the meeting between DFI and Planning had taken place and additional lands have been identified as being required by DFI to allow a site



**Portavogie 3G Project. Update 16.**  
**Information up to date as of 11<sup>th</sup> April 2025**

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access design that will comply with their requirements to be delivered. A request was made on 1<sup>st</sup> April for contact details of the owners of these additional 3<sup>rd</sup> party lands and at the time of writing this information is awaited.

DFI have approved the suggested design in principle, LPS will be asked to provide a valuation of the lands in question so that this can be discussed with the landowners. The project architect has been asked to develop detailed drawings, to inform LPS's valuation and for formal submission to DFI through the planning process, requesting a formal response.

A further update was provided to the primary 3<sup>rd</sup> party landowner on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2025.

**Peninsula 3G Project**  
**Information up to date as of 29<sup>th</sup> April 2025**

**Appendix 2**

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**This report has been prepared for information purposes only and is issued to members to update them on the main workstreams currently being undertaken.**

**Planning application:** Not yet submitted

**Proposal:** A full-size GAA 3G pitch with multi-use design to assist a range of GAA clubs and Soccer clubs in the area, for competitive GAA matches and multi sports training. Set close to St Columba's College with the intention that the school will make full use of the pitch during school hours.

**Location:** Cloughey Road Portaferry, behind the sports centre

**For Information – RAG status**

Green	Amber	Red
Good progress is being made, with no significant issues.	Progress is being made with some issues needing to be worked through.	Issues exist that could put elements or the whole project at risk.

**Background**

1. Design consultants appointed
2. Establishment of and site surveys in progress and nearing completion with pre-application discussions with planning in the next weeks.
3. Preferred layout established and further discussion with the clubs is required.
4. Updated Capital Costs by consultant exceed the current Project Budget, Project Board instructed capital team to continue with the full scheme through to the planning process while the cost shortfall will be addressed via an update report.

**1. Programme**

Amber
<p>The programme for the delivery of the project cannot be determined until planning is granted as there are too many variables to accurately predict a date as to when the planning application will be determined at this stage.</p> <p>RIBA Stage 2 is completed with the Consultants Draft report submitted to the team for review. With elements of RIBA Stage 3 underway to enable consultation with planning in the coming weeks.</p>

**2. Key Risks**

Amber
<p>There have been several risks identified with particularly relevance to the stage, the top five are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Funding allocated £2.3m within the current project prioritisation current estimated cost in excess of £6.5m, this is currently not included in budget profiles or in the project prioritisation. A report to include a current cost estimates for members consideration will need to be presented.</li> <li>2. Water based habitat system over a large element of the site, cost of mitigation currently being established in the region of £1m.</li> </ol>

**Peninsula 3G Project**  
**Information up to date as of 29<sup>th</sup> April 2025**

**Appendix 2**

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3. NI Water mitigation measures are in verbally agreed but this will stay a risk until these are agreed through the planning process and it appears that there is capacity within the current infrastructure to cater for this facility.
4. Entrance off the public road required widening, this will add cost and whilst positive discussions have taken place with DfI Roads they will only sign off proposals through the planning processes.
5. Close out of statutory consultees including NIEA through PAD process

**3. Costs**

**Red**

**The estimated cost has risen since the OBC from c£2.2m in 2017 to in excess of c£6.5m. This is due to:**

- The original OBC was produced 2016/17 and at this stage the costs were established at 2017 rates. We have now predicted the cost at the potential midpoint of construction, that is more likely to be 2027. Therefore 10 years increase of costs.
- Construction inflation has risen significantly in recent years and although has settled it has not reduced.

In the original OBC:

- The pavilion was smaller
- New electrical supply to the site was not taken for
- Preliminaries were a far lower percentage, a more realistic percentage based on recent experience has now been used
- A smaller car park was proposed
- No optimism bias allowance
- No allowance for earth works
- No allowance for fencing
- No allowance for drainage
- No allowance for new organic infill

The site investigation surveys carried out as part of the RIBA stages 1&2 have indicated that the following through consultation with statutory authorities will add costs.

- Major relocation of a wet land habituate
- Widened entrance off the main road
- Upgrade works external to the site
- Disposal of potentially hazardous materials from old landfill (this amount has reduced significantly since the last update)

A further report has been provided for Councils consideration on this detail with recommendations on the way forward.

**4. Environmental Issues**

**Amber**

- A full set of surveys instructed are reaching completion and engagement with relevant statutory consultees have taken place.
- A water-based habitat system that NIEA will require relocating. The proposed new location is between the new 3G pitch and the councils soccer grass pitch, this will require some re-routing of the water course that exists in the area to ensure a wet area is maintained. The earth works and cost of these works has now been established with some assumptions at this stage i.e the level of hazardous and inert waste requiring disposal and the depth below the ground water level.

5. Lands

Green
Discussion with the Education Authority and Diocese regarding a lease are going well with good dialogue established. The Education Authority and Diocese confirmed that the rent of the land required for the project will be at peppercorn rate.

## APPENDIX 3

**Status update on the Portaferry Sports Centre Sports Hall Floor repairs**

The hall remains only partly usable, with no funding yet confirmed forthcoming from the responsible organisation to carrying out the remaining repairs.

A meeting took place with the Diocesan Trustees, St MacNissi's Educational Trust, the Department of Education, the school, elected members and senior Community and Wellbeing Officers on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2024 in an attempt to progress the issue. It was confirmed at that meeting that the Trust were responsible for the upkeep of the building and as such that the school principal would forward an application for works to be carried out on the floor to the Department of Education. It was explained by the Department representative that this would then be the responsibility of the Education Authority to scope out and that any works to be carried out would be subject to budgetary approvals.

The application was submitted by the school principal on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2024 and the Minister for Education has responded as follows.

*I can confirm that the unavoidable minor works application submitted by the school on 11 November 2024 has been issued to the Education Authority (EA) for scoping and assessment. Subject to the necessary approvals, the project will be considered in line with available budget and against competing priorities. Officials from the Department's Estate Operations Team will ensure you are kept informed on progress of your application.*

*You will appreciate that the Department is currently having to make very difficult decisions about how best to target investment and any available capital budget has been directed to provide education access to the most vulnerable and to those inescapable emergency works that, if not completed, would force the closure of schools.*

Following this, the principle was contacted by the Education Authority in January and site visit appointment with the EAs estate operations team locality manager was secured for a date in February.

The Department of Education visited the Portaferry Sports Centre on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2025 and inspected the floor of the main hall along with the Principal and the Buildings Supervisor.

The outcome of the visit is that the Department Representative will contact the Education Authority regarding the matter and attempt to move things forward. The Dept representative also indicated at the meeting that she will provide an update directly to officers in the Council.

At the time of writing this update, no further information has been received from the Department Representative.



Unclassified

ITEM 14

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	14 May 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Parks and Cemeteries
Date of Report	16 April 2025
File Reference	CW30
Legislation	N/A
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below: N/A
Subject	North Down Coastal Path Working Group
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Minutes of the North Down Coastal Path Working Group held on 6th January 2025

The meeting of the North Down Coastal Path Working Group was held on 6th January 2025.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council note the attached minutes.

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

A Meeting of the North Down Coastal Path Working Group of Ards and North Down Borough Council was held in Church Street, Newtownards, on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at 6:00 pm.

**PRESENT:**

- Councillor McKimm (Chairman)
- Alderman Graham
- Alderman McRandal
- Councillor Cochrane
- Councillor Alex Harbinson
- Councillor Henessy
- Councillor McBurney
- Councillor McClean
- Councillor McCollum
- Councillor McLaren
- Councillor Barry McKee
- Mr David Lennon (Friends of Columbanus, Bangor)
- Ms Alison McQueen (For Another Path)
- Mr Stephen McCrory (Ards and North Down Cycle Campaign Group)
- Mr Frank Shivers (Bangor Chamber of Commerce)

**Officers:** Head of Parks & Cemeteries (S Daye), Park & Cemeteries Development Manager (Johnny Bettes) and Democratic Services Officer (S McCrea)

### **1. APOLOGIES & INTRODUCTIONS**

Apologies were received from Councillors Irwin, Hollywood and McCollum as well as Marianne Kennerley (Boom Incl/ Boom Studios) and James Hunter (Greenspaces Bangor). The Chair, Councillor McKimm welcomed all those present to the meeting.

**NOTED.**

### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest notified.

**NOTED.**

### **3. MINUTES OF NORTH DOWN COASTAL PATH WORKING GROUP MEETING DATED 30 SEPTEMBER 2-24**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Minutes of the North Down Coastal Path Working Group meeting dated 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024.



**NOTED.**

#### **4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (UPDATE REPORT)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailed as follows:

##### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The minutes from the July 2024 meeting were approved by the Group at the meeting on the 30th September and were noted at the October Council meeting.

At the July meeting Members of the Group agreed a way forward regarding the £150,000 budget, the delivery areas breakdown is as below:

- £80,000 (Path Repairs and Surveys)
- £45,000 (Machinery Maintenance)
- £25,000 (Signage, Promotion and Engagement)

The draft minutes from the 30<sup>th</sup> September had been circulated to Members of the Working Group due to the time delay between meetings. These minutes would be considered for approval at the Council meeting and would be presented at the January Council meeting.

At the meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> September several proposals were put forward to members of the group to progress improvements to the maintenance of the path, the promotion of it and the accessibility and connectivity of the path.

As was outlined at the meeting most of the path was not in council ownership.

##### **2.0 MAINTENANCE**

It was proposed that Council undertook some maintenance works on the Council owned sections of the path (Pickie to Swineley Bay), such as:

- Verge encroachment clearance to reinstate the full original width of the path exposing the tarmac underneath
- Cut back overhanging vegetation
- Temporary barriers will be replaced with railings similar to those adjacent to it at Downshire Road/Smelt Bay (this is necessary to prevent people coming down from the Downshire Road and potentially missing the turn and falling down the drop to the beach, a hedge is not suitable)
- Path will be surfaced on approach to Swineley Bay
- Address the drainage issues along the path such as at Skipperstone Beach

These works had been programmed to take place in January/February 2025.

### **3.0 MACHINERY**

A procurement exercise had been completed for the purchase of a Non-Herbicide Weed Control Unit. This unit would aid future maintenance of the Coastal Path. Once the verges had been cleared back so the entire path could be utilised, the new equipment would allow for ongoing chemical free maintenance of the path verges.

Additional equipment was also being researched by the Operational Teams with further purchases being made early 2025. Furthermore, an order had been approved for two mechanical sweepers which were to be delivered through Spring 2025. These sweepers bolster the ability to adequately maintain the path without the use of unnecessary, harmful chemicals. The budget for these was outside of that allocated to the Coastal Path.

### **4.0 PLANNING APPLICATION**

Work was underway to prepare a planning application to cover the section from the bridge at Seahill to the Royal Belfast Golf Club, approx. 2km long. This section was particularly narrow, uneven underfoot, had overgrown verges and as previously outlined, the section along the Royal Belfast Golf Club was at risk of collapse given that the rock armour had slipped, and the path was unsupported in places. Discussions would be required with the respective landowners prior to the submission of the planning application. Certain surveys would be required, and these were being explored at the time of writing. It was proposed to compile photomontages alongside the planning drawings so that the proposed improvements could be clearly understood, these will be the minimal interventions to ensure the durability of the path and improve its condition only, however they would still require planning permission.

The majority of the path was in the coastal flood inundation zone and in places it may be prudent to create a raise in freeboard/levels by approx. 300mm to raise it slightly out of the inundation zone to ensure the durability of the path.

### **5.0 SIGNAGE AND PROMOTION**

The existing North Down Coastal Path leaflet had been reviewed and updated and an order has been placed with the printers to deliver the new leaflets, which would be available in the Visitor Information Centres etc. Details in relation to the railway line and stations had been added as well as the locations of Changing Places, Tourist Information locations, the Columban Way and updated contact details etc.

There were six signs along the North Down Coastal Path, at Seapark, Cultra, Grey Point, Bangor, Ballymacormick Point and Orlock. These had perished over the years in the environment or had been removed. The content of these signs was reviewed and updated and new lectern stands would be produced with robust finishes to ensure

durability, and the signs reinstated at their original positions. The information displayed on them described the section of trail in the vicinity of the sign, the nature that could be seen in the area and the relevant points of interest. Details in relation to the railway line and stations had been added as well as the locations of Changing Places, Tourist Information locations, the Columban Way and updated contact details were included. There had been requests for the 6 signs mentioned above to be replaced by other Elected Members, so that is why they were being progressed at this stage.

A wider signage audit and strategy for the North Down Coastal Path would be explored and codesigned in due course with the Working Group.

The new Development Officer (Community Trails and Greenways) had facilitated and programmed a series of events along the coastal path as follows:

*Inclusive Walks:*

- 17 October, 2 sessions AM/PM from Pickie Park

*Mindfulness Walks:*

- 14 November: Helen's Bay Beach car park
- 12 December: Seapark Recreation Grounds
- 16 January 2025: Pickie Park, Bangor
- 13 February: Helen's Bay Beach car park
- 13 March: Seapark Recreation Grounds

A Bioblitz was being programmed for May 2025.

The path has also been 360 degrees photographed and mapped from Holywood to Stricklands Glen and can be viewed on Google Streetview. This will enable people to scope sections of the walk they may wish to use, and it is especially useful for people with mobility issues, in that they can see exactly what the path is like on the ground from an eye level perspective to see if it is suitable for their abilities.

A videographer was appointed to create promotional footage and arial shots of the Coastal Path and its surrounding landscape. The promotional footage would be taken in late Winter early Spring to capture the path coming to life whilst still showcasing the rugged reality of its coastal environment. Further footage would be shot in Summer so a full picture of the environment in which the path exists could be captured. The footage would be used for future promotions of the Coastal Path and associated events. Raw footage supplied by the videographer would also assist this group with decision making and understanding of areas under discussion.

In January 2025 Officers would be meeting with representatives from the Ards and North Down Heritage groups at their cluster meetings. This will signal the beginning of

the Living History project for the Coastal Path, as well as other areas throughout the Borough.

## **6.0 ALTERNATIVE CYCLE ROUTE AT GREY POINT**

Officers were exploring the potential for an alternative cycle/accessible route in the vicinity of Grey Point Fort where the path narrows considerably. There may be the option to direct people along Grey Point to The Fort and down alongside the fort to the path. There was an alleged Right of Way that links Sheridan Drive with the coastal path and Officers were exploring if that could also provide an alternative link to the path.

## **7.0 RECOMMENDATION**

RECOMMENDED that the content of this report be noted.

The Park & Cemeteries Development Manager, with the aid of a presentation provided an in-depth update on the above report. Some salient points that arose from the presentation included the budget of £80k for path repairs and surveys, £45k for machinery and maintenance and £25k for signage and promotion. The report did agree that some areas were to be cared for from Pickie Pool to Swinley Bay including the clearance of verges, overhanging vegetation, temporary barriers being replaced at Downshire Road toward Smelt Mill Bay on the approach to Swinley Bay and indeed, to address the drainage issues along the path such as Skipperstone Beach whereupon frequenting individuals may often find run-off from the grassy areas west of the pathway.

Upon queries from the room about asking questions amid the presentation, The Chair, (Councillor McKimm) agreed that questions could be asked throughout the presentation's progression.

Alison McQueen (From Another Path) alluded to the replacement of temporary barriers, asking for their specific locations as well as if the barriers could be painted green to remove the stark-grey colouration from affecting visual amenity. The Park & Cemeteries Development Manager explained that temporary fencing could be found at the bottom of the ramp from Downshire Road and stretched from there to meet the existing barrier. It used to be a permanent barrier but had deteriorated over the years. The problem with camouflaging the replacement barriers with paint was that it would be an additional, likely yearly maintenance cost. Alison McQueen was content however with the future solution of allowing surrounding vegetation to encompass the galvanised steel barriers.

The Park & Cemeteries Development Manager continued with the presentation, explaining that small drainage channels would help with waters running across the pathway. The Machinery budget had allowed for a procurement exercise for non-herbicide weed control units which would look toward avoiding future encroachment

after the verges had been cleared. Two mechanical sweepers had been approved whilst the Operational Teams within the department were continuing to research additional equipment that could be useful within the Coastal Path's remit.

Meanwhile, the Planning Application was due to start this year, 2025 when agreement of which, would allow works to begin. This particular application was with regard to the pathway nearby the Royal Belfast Golf Club, stretching onward toward the bridge located at Seahill; approximately 2km. The state of the pathway at the time of writing these minutes was precarious at best with a risk of collapse in some locations due to the failure of sea defences and erosion that had led to undermining.

It was hoped that by way of photo montages created as supporting visuals to the Planning Application would aid the viewer as to what the proposed path may look like upon completion. In addition, due to the aforementioned undermining issues, Officers may have to look at the coastal flood inundation level as, in quite a few locations, the path sat below the sea level. By raising the path height by up to 300mm in some areas would greatly assist against such issues. The worst affected area of the 2km stretch was that which ran alongside the boundary walls of the golf course. The presentation provided an example of structurally sound sea defences made from rough hewn hard rock such as basalt and/or granite boulders which had been laid in position as to provide, '*rock armour*.' The area beside the golf course did in fact once resemble the reference photograph but over the years had deteriorated to its current state. The Planning Application therefore sought to reinstate sea defences.

Alison McQueen asked if sea defences were the only option, making reference to flora and fauna, specifically that of Eurasian Otters that made the coast their home and the effect that reinstatement of sea defences may have upon them. In addition, Councillor McKimm added that the subject of rock defences had been a very significant and delicate moment in North Down Coastal Path's history. Many had concerns, whether local burgesses, groups or those further afield and, as luck would have it, examples existed from other areas, such as Newcastle wherein the construction of sea defences/ man made structures had created an impact on sea currents, the effects of which were not visible at the site of said works but much further up-shore or down-shore. With such potentially foreboding consequences,

Councillor McKimm wanted to ensure that appropriate engagement occurred with the community and stakeholders before decision were made. The Park & Cemeteries Development Manager agreed that such could be a possibility but that he had to ensure those present were aware of timelines associated with the project whilst the Head of Parks & Cemeteries explained that the previous example of coastal damage had been due to roadworks as opposed to sea defences.

The Park & Cemeteries Development Manager added that, as had been previously shown, the area of sea defences that near the golf course were to be reinstated; they had previously existed as per the sound example of rock armour and had presented

with no impacts along the shoreline. Whilst Alison McQueen wanted to ensure alternatives had been investigated before deciding on the use of rock defences, in the event that they were reinstated, she hoped a critique could be provided which could be used to explain to stakeholders why the decision had been taken.

Alderman Graham regarded the working group and explained that, in enlarging it to encompass more stakeholders as had been done at September 2024's meeting, the Working Group was already effectively carrying out a public consultation as those present were representatives of wider communities and groups to whom information from meetings could be brought back. He suggested there were only two possible solutions; to use the precast concrete revetment sea defences as could be seen around Bangor Marina or to progress with the preferred rock-armour.

Councillor McLaren asked if machinery sourced under the Coastal Path budget would be exclusively used for the path or if it would become property of the department and be used across the borough as required. The Park & Cemeteries Development Manager explained that if the machinery were not in use, it could be used by the department across the Borough and exemplified the recent purchase of a Grillo that had been instrumental in the cutting of re-wilding areas. However, when it came to the areas requiring attention that the Grillo was originally bought for, it would be returned as a priority. Treating machinery this way avoided needless idleness, allowing the machine to be used to its full effect which in turn provided much better value for money for ratepayers. Steven McCrory (Ards & North Down Cycle Campaign Group) suggested the use of such a machine would be advantageous to the likes of Comber Greenway but was reminded that the Ards & North Down Borough Council did not maintain that particular greenway at this moment in time.

Frank Shivers of Bangor Chamber of Commerce queried why the need existed for a Planning Application given that proposed plans were merely to replace that which had once been, like for like rather than the development of something new, adding his concern that such a pathway could be construed as allowing for additional revenue to be gathered by another department. Councillor McKimm added to Frank Shivers' statement in asking if the requirement for a Planning Application had been a stipulation created by the Council or external bodies such as the NIEA. Both the Head of Parks & Cemeteries and The Park & Cemeteries Development Manager advised that the reasoning was because of the area being protected. Designated areas, regardless of the project and scope required Planning Applications. It was also noteworthy for those present at the meeting to remember that a Consultant was being engaged who would not only look at the plans as laid before the Working Group, but also at alternatives. This plan was about improving what existed as opposed to enhancing the area and, of course there would be areas that, due to varying factors, the Working Group and agreed plan would be unable to change.

In the following slides, the Park & Cemeteries Development Manager showed photos of the pathway in areas where it had worn down which prompted questioning over ownership by Alderman Graham. Alderman McRandal recalled areas of the path

near Rockport School that were often in bog-like conditions with one area belonging to an adjacent dwelling and asked if areas such as this may be included in works. Frank Shivers added that, if parts of the pathway belonged to local landowners, whose responsibility it may be for upkeep and maintenance. The Park & Cemeteries Development Manager explained that as the Council did not own the majority of land along the coastal path, there would need to be engagement with local landowners. If the Planning Application was approved, a business case would be created before the end of 2025 in preparation for the following year.

Regarding inferences of responsibility, David Lennon (Friends of Columbanus) advised that many landowners may not be keen on partaking in maintenance and upkeep of their land where the coastal path intersects due to public liability. He suggested such landowners were safe if they were not carrying out maintenance at the time of writing but that if they began to do so then stopped, public liability would enter the fray. The Park & Cemeteries Development Manager explained that problems had been identified with drainage being a major player with slippage and the general state of land. Some landowners had seemed more than happy for maintenance and upkeep work to be taken over by Council during some early probing. Councillor McKimm asked to ensure that the legal point raised by David Lennon be addressed in the Planning Application in order to keep landowners safe from any liability to which the Park & Cemeteries Development Manager agreed that investigations would indeed be required.

Alderman Graham, in relation to Alderman McRandal's comments on bog-like areas, explained that there would no doubt be attention drawn if works were carried out to improve the path and land whilst others may prefer the natural, foot-worn state. As decision makers on what would inevitably be the custodianship of Council on the coastal path, the Working Group members had to establish local opinion rather than just agreeing to carry out works and upgrades which would lessen any issue down the line. Councillor McKimm agreed, reminding the Working Group that Community Engagement had been of great import whilst the Coastal Path Plans were still fledgling and that indeed, the Working Group were charged with responsibility. The Head of Parks & Cemeteries reminded the Working Group that the path wasn't natural to begin with, with foot traffic forging the path in the first instance and improvements being made by various entities over the years. As such, there was always the possibility to arrive at a decision where nature takes its course and the path be left alone.

David Lennon explained how large swathes of the path were muddy and in some ways, expected as could be seen in many other areas where paths gave way to mud and rocks. Though it could be possible for stonework to be laid to improve access, the problem would then be the maintenance. Alison McQueen added that some local residents of the area had taken it upon themselves to add gravel to areas to improve ground underfoot and added to David Lennon's point, suggesting that if parts of the path were to be stoned or tarmacked, how would it be decided where such work stopped.

Councillor McLaren believed the point of the Working Group was to include different parts of the community as it had done so and as such, it was already amidst the public consultation period. If the Working Group as it was could not make decisions, there was little point in its existence. The Group had already discussed how each of its members and participants represented particular areas of the community. Councillor McKimm explained that the group's collective voice would be heard throughout the community when it came to issues of decision making, adding that Section 75 would become applicable once a decision to carry out works had been made. The Head of Parks & Cemeteries explained that when new paths were agreed and works began, various responsibilities and parameters became involved and the same would apply here; if no works were carried out, Section 75 would not apply, but the moment any works would be approved, those additional requirements would come into play.

Frank Shivers queried whether it would be wise for the Council to survey the path's usage given ratepayer monies would be spent on the project. If there was to be little to no increase in usage, ratepayers could argue such expenditure's validity. The Head of Parks & Cemeteries explained that survey works had been carried out when planning for the proposed greenways but that the list of priorities identified with regard to the coastal path had been identified by Officers at previous meetings. Councillor McKimm reminded the Working Group that a multi-year budget had already been set aside for works on the coastal path.

Councillor Hennessy asked for clarification on what was being proposed for these boggy areas. The Park & Cemeteries Development Manager advised that, where possible, ground works would occur to install a levelled gravel path and given the professional nature of such works, there would not be concern for the gravel washing away or sinking as it had done where local residents had attempted to alleviate issues. Stephen McCrory (Ards and North Down Cycle Campaign Group) advised that the area in question was five miles from Belfast and Bangor and could be considered an urban, countryside path where expectations would not be as difficult as in the middle of towns and cities. He believed members of the Cycling Group would be happy with gravel but would want to see nature respected nonetheless whilst Alison McQueen did not believe there would be much resistance from local groups given the leveling/gravel plans.

Alderman McRandal referenced the path alongside the golf course where tarmac had sunk and the works required to reinstate both it and the sea defences. HE suggested such works were of an entirely different nature to those closer to Seahill where there was talk of only using gravel and asked what the cost-benefit would be as he could understand the works closer to Holywood being required, but not so much those closer to Seahill. The Park & Cemeteries Development Manager explained that the Consultant's report would provide further information, but he suspected that the reinstatement of sea defences would be a significant piece of work which could potentially use the lions share of the budget. The Head of Parks &



Cemeteries reminded the Working Group that at this stage, they were only looking to agree on what works should be carried out which would inform the Planning Application, but it would be the work of the Consultant that defines what works would actually happen. In turn, the amalgamation of that information would feed into the business case that would be taken into the next financial year where the budget grouping panel would negotiate the budget.

The Park & Cemeteries Development Manager continued with the presentation, moving onto Signage & Promotion whereby £25k had been budgeted. Within the current financial year (2024-25), the coastal path leaflet had already been upgraded with improvements relating to locations of Visitor Information Centres, railway stops and information on local amenities that link into the Coastal Path like the St Columba's Way and contact details. At the time of writing these minutes, six signs were in existence along the coastal path; Seapark, Cultra, Grey's Point, Bangor, Ballymacormick Point and Orlock. These would all be updated and show relevant points of interest as well as information on local flora and fauna. David Lennon asked what references would exist to St Columba's Way or if there was dedicated signage. In April, pilgrimages would be travelling from Italy to Bangor and it would be fortuitous should such signage exist. The Park & Cemeteries Development Manager explained that there would be reference to the Columba Way on the aforementioned signs but suggested a signage audit with Friends of Columbanus may be required in the future with relation to dedicated signage.

Councillor McLaren's concerns of a budget existing for signage were assuaged by both the Chair, Councillor McKimm and the Park & Cemeteries Development Manager. The leaflets would also be given a digital format. Frank Shivers suggested adding QR codes to the new signs but, given the late hour of the process, such may be a possibility in the future. Frank Shivers was content with the suggestion as to avoid missing deadlines.

The Park & Cemeteries Development Manager went on to explain how a new Development Officer had been installed who looked toward identifying and scheduling events to publicise the Coastal Path such as inclusive and mindfulness walks, some of which had already taken place. Information garnered from such events could be wielded as a tool in future endeavours. A videographer would be hired whose skills would add value to the promotion of the coastal path whilst Officers would meet with heritage groups next week (commencing Monday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2025) which would assist in developing a living history. The Coastal Path and surrounding areas were rich in history from the Mesolithic period, motte and baileys, old estates and right up to the modern industrial era with Smelt Mill Bay's links to the Leadmines, Grey's Point Fort and local legends such as Jenny Watts.

As a final point, there was one area of the Coastal Path, from Helen's Bay Beach in a North-Westerly direction where cyclists would find difficulty traversing. From the beach, the pathway to Helen's Bay leads up a slope and through a gate onto Grey Point Road. From there, a short distance is travelled along the road North to a bend

where the coastal path continues. This stretch of narrow pathway snakes its way along the coast to Grey's Point Fort and beyond. The specific section between Grey Point Road and the fort is of narrow stature with rugged outcroppings and drops which makes for a less-than-safe traversal on bicycles, especially considering its usage on foot. As such, it was proposed that an alternative cycling route may be in the best interests of all parties. Either cyclists could continue along Grey Point Road North by Northwest and find themselves upon Grey's Point Fort itself where two gravel pathways encircle the Fort as they lead down to the coastal path. Alternatively, cyclists could head due South, following Fort Road as it turns West and intersects with Sheriden Drive on the right (northerly) side. Sheridan Drive has a sweeping left bend some 500 yards from the Fort Road intersection upon which an old public right of way exists that connects with the Coastal Path. These options were to be explored in the future.

**NOTED.**

## **5. VISUAL WALKTHORUGH OF PATH (PRESENTATION)**

The Park & Cemeteries Development Manager directed the Working Group's attention to the presentation screen where Google Maps was used to, '*drop in*,' on Streetview. In recent times, a member of the public who frequented the coastal path as a runner had taken it upon themselves to photograph the pathway using 360 degree equipment, thus allowing anyone wishing to digitally travel the coastal path the ability to do so. The Head of Parks & Cemeteries advised that this could be promoted in other facilities throughout the Council area.

**NOTED**

## **6. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS**

The subject of Drainage had been an item of Any Other Notified Business. However, as questions had been taken during Item 4 of this meeting, all questions and queries and been answered relating to this subject and members of the Working Group were content that it need not be revisited.

Councillor McKee queried if the local Town Advisory Groups had all been invited to participate in the North Down Coastal Path Working Group. Both the Head of Parks & Cemeteries and the Park & Cemeteries Development Manager explained that many stakeholders had been contacted regarding these meetings though some had not yet confirmed or declined attendance.

## **7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the North Down Coastal Path Working Group was scheduled to take place on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, 1800hrs at Church Street Council Chamber, Newtownards.

**CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting terminated at 1921hrs.

Unclassified

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## ITEM 15

### Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	14 May 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Parks and Cemeteries
Date of Report	28 April 2025
File Reference	PCA1
Legislation	Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Local Biodiversity Action Plan (2023-2033) Progress
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Summary of Actions and Updates

This report summarises progress made against the Council's Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) that was agreed in 2023.

#### Background

The provision of biodiversity is a statutory requirement under the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 or WANE Act. The Act requires public bodies to take reasonable steps to further the conservation of priority habitats and species or to promote such actions by others. This production and delivery of the LBAP will assist in demonstrating the Council's compliance with the statutory duty. Under the WANE Act, the Council is responsible for considering five key aspects of biodiversity:

- Protection of Biodiversity
- Maintenance of Biodiversity
- Enhancing Biodiversity
- Restoring Biodiversity

Not Applicable

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- Promoting Biodiversity

The Borough's second Biodiversity Action Plan was approved and adopted in April 2023 and has helped to coordinate efforts to protect and enhance biodiversity across the Borough. The development of the plan is a crucial step in recognising the importance of our local biodiversity. It aims to ensure that international, national, regional and local biodiversity objectives are achieved through a range of partnerships.

A total of eighty-four actions were proposed across four themes in the LBAP, the actions listed are to help protect, conserve, and enhance those priority habitats and species within the Borough identified through the audit. LBAP actions were listed under one of the following four themes i.e. Theme 1: Education and Awareness, Theme 2: Research and Monitoring, Theme 3: Land Management & Theme 4: Building Partnerships.

### Meeting Corporate Objectives

The Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) plays a vital role in supporting the strategic objectives of Council and operational priorities set out in the Parks & Cemeteries Service Plan for 2025–2026. It strengthens the Council's overarching commitment to environmental sustainability, climate resilience, and active community engagement by providing evidence of ongoing work and measurable progress in local biodiversity.

A key area of alignment is with the strategic objectives of climate recovery and biodiversity gain. This report and associated appendix demonstrate significant contributions to these goals through a range of actions including protecting and enhancing areas for biodiversity, educating and engagement with the public and working in partnership with a variety of key stakeholders to support the LBAP. These efforts contribute directly to carbon sequestration, improved air quality, and enhanced biodiversity. Ongoing monitoring - either formally through formal surveys and bioblitzes, or informal community-based surveys and citizen science type events - will assist us to build a picture of the condition of our local biodiversity and green spaces. The LBAP meets several Service Plan Performance Measures including maintaining 130,000m<sup>2</sup> of rewilded council land, whilst also contributing to Bloom/Best Kept Awards and 7 Green Flagged Sites.

The Council's LBAP not only advances environmental and climate goals but also significantly contributes to community wellbeing, aligning closely with the 'Five Steps to Wellbeing' framework. Outdoor Initiatives such as bird watching, bioblitzes, dawn chorus events and engagement activities encourages our community to engage more with green spaces and appreciate and protect their local environment. This provides not only health benefits through time spent outdoors but also breaks down feelings of social isolation by bringing people together under a shared interest in their environment.

### RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council note this report.

Appendix 1 - Progress on the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (2023 to 2033)

	Action	Update
Theme 1. Education & Awareness		
1	Encourage participation in citizen science wildlife projects and engage the public in biodiversity recording and awareness.	<p>Two x Bioblitz Events held i.e. at Whitespots County Park on 16th and 17th August 2024 and North Down Coastal Path on 30th May 2025.</p> <p>On Friday the 16th and Saturday 17th August 2024 naturalists and the public came together at Whitespots Country Park, to assist in the recording of the site’s wildlife. This concerted effort, known as a BioBlitz, involved a total 15 naturalists with expertise in plants, fungi, freshwater and terrestrial invertebrates, moths, birds and mammals to help identify and record as many species as possible within the 2-day set period. During this 2-day event, members of the public were encouraged to attend and participate in several workshops, some tailored for adults and others for families. There was a total of 14 workshops held across the two days. Workshops included moth trapping and identification, bird identification, minibeast/bug hunts, tree identification, pollinator and FIT counts, plant and bryophyte identification and pond dipping. The event was part of the public engagement activity for the wider Whitespots project but equally to gain as much biodiversity information as possible which could significantly improve knowledge of the site and the range of species that inhabit the area.</p> <p>RSPB Seabird Report Launch: 27th March 2025: Council hosted the BTO Seabird 2024 Report Launch. At this event BTO NI</p>

		<p>present the most up to date monitoring data on Seabirds in Northern Ireland. The event is an opportunity to celebrate the efforts of the NI Seabird Network including volunteers, NGO's and the NIEA.</p> <p>Bird watching event at Crawfordsburn Glen Saturday 18th January 2025</p> <p>Big Garden Birdwatch is the world's largest garden wildlife survey. Every year, hundreds of thousands of nature lovers take part, helping to build a picture of how garden birds are faring. Ahead of the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch 2025, a bird identification event was held at Crawfordsburn Glen on Saturday 18th January for a birdwatching workshop, the event focused on helping participants to learn how to identify key garden bird species and how to record their presence.</p> <p>Moth Trapping activities &amp; information stall at 'Awakening Garden' event – Saturday 5th April</p>
2	Encourage the public to get involved in practical activities and habitat restoration projects to increase the numbers of our priority species	<p>As part of Nest Box Week, the Parks Team alongside the North Down Red Squirrel Group visited Castle Gardens Primary School to build nest boxes and bird feeders for their homes. Over 70 children took part.</p> <p>This school sits adjacent to one of our developing Rewilding sites on the Bowtown Road, Newtownards. This type of engagement with children will encourage them to use the space as an outdoor classroom and educate them on the value of protecting our wildlife.</p>

		<p>This is part of the Bowtown Road Rewilding Site Habitat Management Plan which aims to demonstrate how appropriate management can benefit priority species and people.</p> <p>See also Action 27</p>
3	Support participation in national and international biodiversity awareness campaigns	<p>Council celebrated World Rewilding Day on 20th March with the launch of new signage at our rewilding sites and a new page on our website for additional information via a QR code. We have several sites across the borough dedicated to rewilding with the aim to increase our portfolio over the years ahead. These sites will be specifically managed with biodiversity in mind and some sites will be used for education and raising awareness, including surveying and species identification.</p> <p>On the 20th May each year ‘World Bee Day’ is observed and celebrated to raise awareness of the essential role of bees and other pollinators, the threats they face and the small steps we can take to help and protect them. Council held a World Bee Day celebration on Saturday 25th May 2024 at Bangor Walled Garden. Visitors were treated to a bee hunt trail and were encouraged to try to identify as many bee and other pollinator species within the grounds of the garden.</p> <p>Visitors were also able to see the workings of a real hive with Phelim Breen a local Beekeeper and had the opportunity to ‘bee’ creative assistance of Boom Studios.</p> <p>On Sunday the 7th of May 2024 local participants took part in a Dawn Chorus event, held at Cairn Wood. The event, hosted by Ards and North Down Borough Council and lead by expert guide David Thompson, proved to be a huge success with a total of 16</p>



		<p>Bird species identified by the end of the event. Taking place on the first Sunday every May is 'Internation Dawn Chorus Day', a worldwide celebration of natures greatest festival, focusing on bird song.</p> <p>RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch: Big Garden Birdwatch Event, Bangor Central and St. Congalls, at Bangor Castle and Walled Garden, 14th January 2025. Plus Bird Watch Event at Crawfordsburn Glen, 18th January, 2025.</p>
4	Raise the profile of bats by running a programme of related activities and developing an information page on the council website.	Progress still to be made within the LBAP (2023 to 2033)
5	Encourage participation in SeaSearch via diving clubs <a href="https://www.seasearch.org.uk/">https://www.seasearch.org.uk/</a>	Progress still to be made within the LBAP (2023 to 2033)
6	Work in partnership to organise training in whale and dolphin identification and monitoring	Progress still to be made within the LBAP (2023 to 2033)
7	Carry out an audit and mapping exercise of coastal interpretative panels on council owned land. Identify panels in need replacing, opportunities to combine panel information and potential new panel locations to promote marine biodiversity.	Work underway in 2025
8	Inform the public where land is being managed for biodiversity.	Rewilding sites on website plus signage in place.
9	Raise awareness on the biodiversity of our rivers and produce interpretation material on the biodiversity value of wetlands habitats and associated species at key sites.	Following the success at Kiltonga Nature Reserve, a new duck feeder has been installed at Ward Park in partnership the 'Feed the Ducks Initiative'. Feed the Ducks is an environmental initiative aiming to reduce the amount of bread and incorrect feed being

		<p>fed by the public to wildlife in parks. It provides an alternative for the public to use, rather than bringing unsustainable and unhealthy amounts of feed such as bread when they go to feed the ducks. Feed is available 24/7 and is a preventable measure to issues like silt build up or blue algae which is life threatening to local wildlife. Designed as a green initiative, the feeders are contactless, solar powered and made of recycled plastics (each feeder recycles the equivalent of 20,000 water bottles). The feed is dispensed to hand, helping to reduce plastic litter waste. The feed is also a special high protein-based feed that is suitable for the diet of Ducks, Geese and Swans. Each feeder aims to provide a source of education and includes a sign notifying the public about the issues of bread feeding, what food they can feed should they not use the dispenser and a QR code that links to a website, specifically built for each location. This website includes fun facts about the park, the local habitat and content that children can engage with on habitat conservation.</p> <p>Staff have completed training with Field Studies Ireland to develop this action further in the future.</p>
10	Promote local biodiversity by creating new biodiversity trails (including interpretative signage) in selected woodland locations.	The development of a Castle Park trail is underway with tree identification signage with seasonal trails showcasing the best trees for each season and a child's friendly trail.
11	Raise awareness regarding land management changes for barn owl conservation and promote recording sightings of barn owls.	Progress still to be made within the LBAP (2023 to 2033)
12	Promote 'Gardening for Wildlife' and support the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025	Schools Growing Clubs – 10 schools taking part.

		<p>Bryansburn Allotments official launch of Community Shed in October 2024.</p> <p>Completed the All-Ireland Pollinator response for 2024</p> <p>Promoted National Gardening Day – 14 April 2025</p> <p>In Bloom Community Competition continues to promote the Gardening for Wildlife category.</p> <p>Walled Garden wildflower beds and associated signage for bees and pollinators.</p> <p>Wildflower and sunflower seed giveaways at events and as part of In Bloom Community Competition.</p>
13	Raise awareness of red squirrel conservation and encourage local recording of the red squirrel and pine marten.	Continue to work in partnership with the North Down Red Squirrel group
14	Raise awareness on danger of rodenticides to non-target wildlife and the importance of using rodenticides correctly.	Herbicide Reduction Policy continues to be rolled out across Council sites.
15	Engage with the PSNI Wildlife Officer to promote the Partnership Against Wildlife Crime (PAWS) and raise public awareness of the threats and persecutions that face some of our most vulnerable and iconic species.	Progress still to be made within the LBAP (2023 to 2033)
16	Monitor the progress of this action plan through the setting up of a BAP implementation / partnership group within the first year of the plan. To be made up partner organisations meeting on an annual basis.	Progress still to be made within the LBAP (2023 to 2033)

17	Publicize the BAP within the council and beyond through existing information centres and museums (e.g. Bangor Library)	Working to create an 'easy read' version of the LBAP, progressing a Child friendly version for schools and youth groups. LBAP promoted and distributed at 'Awakening Garden Event' 5th April 2025
18	Ensure council land managers are familiar with the latest biodiversity guidance, policy and legislation through appropriate training.	Regular formal and informal training available for all staff. This could be face to face, webinars, emails/information circulated.
19	Provide invasive species identification, control and management training to council staff and the wider public and produce an Invasive Species Swatch for council staff to assist with identification in the field.	Invasive Species training for staff in summer 2025.
20	Target and promote agri-environment scheme uptake around lanes, ponds and rivers - including buffer zones and ungrazed grass margins to reduce the impact of eutrophication and sedimentation. Highlight the importance of these features as wildlife corridors.	Progress still to be made within the LBAP (2023 to 2033)
21	Promote the importance of cereal field margins for biodiversity	Progress still to be made within the LBAP (2023 to 2033)
22	Raise awareness of the importance of our hedgerows for local biodiversity and its role as a vital ecological network and promote best practice management.	The importance of hedgerows and hedgerow planting is part of the Councils Tree & Woodland Strategy. 7 new sites have been identified for the 2025/26 season which will plant 7000 hedgerow whips. These will be done in partnership with local groups and schools. Other sites may also be identified through the year.
23	Establish a 'Birds of the Borough' project group, to develop project ideas to promote the understanding	In partnership with the North Down Swift Group several sites have been located to site swift boxes and callers. These will be installed in time for swift nesting season. A walk and talk event,

	and conservation of the Borough's iconic birds through education and outreach.	in partnership with the North Down Swift Group, is scheduled for 13th June 2025.
24	Raise awareness of Swift nesting habitat in our urban environment with the wider public and in all relevant sections of the council. Provide training in Swift identification and adequate habitat requirements	See Action 23
25	Distribute guidance on habitat management that will benefit each of our priority bird species	Progress still to be made within the LBAP (2023 to 2033)
26	Promote semi-natural grassland biodiversity through local events, and council publicity, hold lowland meadow identification and management training courses.	Re-launched our Rewilding sites as part of World Rewilding Day on 20 March 2025 – this included social media, new web page on the Council website and new sign at our key sites – these will be rolled out over the coming months.
27	Implement the <b>STAND4TREES</b> initiative by engaging stakeholders including local groups and communities through activity workshops to increase tree and hedgerow cover throughout the Borough.	<p>Through planting season 2024-2025 more than 15,000 new trees were planted in the borough. For most of the sites, tree, hedgerow orchard planting events were held in partnership with local community groups, schools and volunteers.</p> <p>Ards and North Down now has twelve new community orchards, each being planted by local community groups and schools, meeting the target for this stage of the Tree and Woodland Strategy. Planting season 2024-25 seen orchards planted at Springwell Crescent Playpark, Groomsport, Linear Park, Bangor and Helens Bay Playpark, Helens Bay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ards and North Down Orchard Locations:</li> <li>• Ann Street, Portaferry</li> <li>• Lawson Gardens, Portavogie</li> <li>• Village Hall, Greyabbey</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Brice Park, Bangor</li><li>• Londonderry Park, Newtownards</li><li>• Cottown Open Space, Six Roads Ends</li><li>• Dickson Park, Ballygowan</li><li>• Kerr Park, Holywood</li><li>• Holywood Nature Park, Holywood</li><li>• The Green, Kircubbin</li><li>• Laurel Bank Lane, Comber</li><li>• Hunts Park, Donaghadee</li><li>• Springwell Crescent Playpark, Groomsport</li><li>• Linear Park, Bangor</li><li>• Helens Bay Playpark, Helens Bay</li><li>• Ward Park, Bangor</li><li>• Clifton School, Bangor</li></ul> <p>The target is for three new orchards per year.</p> <p>National Tree Week – Community Orchard Planting, Seed Gathering workshop, woodland crafts with local schools at Portaferry and Castle Park tour with Neil Porteous.</p> <p>In Summer 2024, council actioned Treeconomics to produce the Tree Asset Valuation which provided an in-depth analysis of the tree population managed by Ards and North Down Borough Council. The outcomes of this survey was reported to this Committee in February 2025.</p>
28	Raise awareness of the Borough’s oldest and most important trees through the promotion of the Ancient Tree Inventory.	Capturing information on the age of our tree stock through regular and ongoing survey work.

<b>Theme 2. Research &amp; Monitoring</b>		
29	Facilitate and support survey work to understand current distribution and condition of priority habitats and priority species populations within the Borough.	Overwintering bird survey carried out at Bowtown Road, rewilding site in Newtownards. Several priority bird species reported to be identified on site.
30	Log 'Actions for Pollinators (www.pollinators.ie) to aid the tracking of resources in the landscape.	Completed the All-Ireland Pollinator response.
31	Commission an invasive species audit of Council owned land and produce a Council Invasive Species Management Strategy; to include a 'traffic light' system to prioritise control of certain species	Currently mapping our invasive species as staff are onsite. Future plans will be to further train staff on identification and management through new technologies and treatment.
32	Commission a survey of the distribution, extent and condition of Council hedgerow networks. Review council hedgerow management practices for the benefits of biodiversity. Identify areas for hedgerow enhancement and establishment, particularly where habitats can be connected.	Developing a brief for a student from Queens - in progress – to recruit a student to identify and map the location, quantity, quality and type of hedgerow in the borough. This would be an information gathering exercise to develop a baseline, identify gaps and areas for increasing our hedgerows.
33	Commission a desktop and field-based survey of woodland and parkland on key Council-owned sites including invertebrates and lower plants (lichens, bryophytes).	Progress still to be made within the LBAP (2023 to 2033)
34	Commission a biodiversity audit, to include a Bryophyte and lichen survey, of all Council owned graveyards and cemeteries to guide conservation management	Many Council owned sites within the Strangford Lough and Lecale Partnership area have been included in soe future survey work.

35	Support Ulster Wildlife (UW), NI Barn Owl Project, to include the surveying of Barn Owl hotspots on council owned land.	Progress still to be made within the LBAP (2023 to 2033)
<b>Theme 3. Land Management</b>		
36	Identify and declare Local Nature Reserves at appropriate sites in the Borough and manage accordingly.	Extension of Balloo Wetland – Council is pursuing the acquisition of a strip of land from Invest NI to recreate a looped trail around the site linking into the exiting paths.
37	Commission conservation management plans for key Council owned sites detailing prescriptions to ensure relevant features remain in good condition, any features not in favourable condition are to be improved and maintained in good condition.	Conservation Management Plans have been completed for Bowtown Road Rewilding Area. We will be looking to carry out a Conservation Plan for Cloughey Sand Dunes. Other sand dune sites will be progressed in due course.
38	Encourage the concept of green walls/roofs where appropriate on new Council buildings.	No progress to date however Strategic Capital Development are developing a Sustainable Building Criteria/Policy
39	Secure funding to commission a feasibility study exploring the potential of a local nature recovery network demonstration project on the Comber River (and its tributaries to connect fragmented habitat)	Progress still to be made within the LBAP (2023 to 2033)
40	Secure funding to commission a feasibility study to explore the options for habitat restoration and management at Laurel Bank and Crawfordsburn Glen.	Full reports completed on both sites – Crawfordsburn Glen needs to be progressed further in terms of the pond area. Consultants have been drafted in to look specifically at this to include options for current and future management.
41	Control excessive gorse growth Ulex sp. on the rocky higher ground of Whitespots Country Park. Thin planted trees at the site to create a more open and biodiverse environment.	Progress still to be made within the LBAP (2023 to 2033)



42	Commission management plan for Cloughey sand dunes outlining conservation actions to effect favourable condition	Sand Dune mini conference being developed for August 2025 supported by a selection of specialists to explain the need for Sand Dune protection and management for both nature, biodiversity and climate change.
43	Create and install features in existing and newly created meadows, to benefit invertebrates including bug hotels and beetle and bee banks.	Ward Park Bee Banks – protection of the area, signage, training for staff. Habitat letters being placed in Ward Park – these are large wooden letters designed to spell out ‘Ward Park’ but will also be bug and bee habitat. Due for completion in June 2025. Part of the Bowtown Road site includes several habitats enhancements for birds, hedgehogs, bugs and bees.
44	Avoid removing deadwood from woodlands unless there is over-riding health and safety reasons. Ensure this is incorporated into the management plans for all council managed woodlands.	We aim to leave most felled trees and branches to act as habitats. This is done as best practice across all our sites but is stipulated within seven management plans as part of our Green Flag accreditations.
45	Look at opportunities to create new ponds across the Borough at suitable locations	Not progressed yet in terms of new ponds however the protection and enhancement of our existing ponds is a top priority, e.g. Ward Park – pond has recently had silt removed to improve its depth and flow for wildlife value and flooding attenuation.
46	Restore woodland and pond habitats at Strickland Glen for the benefit of biodiversity	Business Case for infrastructure improvements for 2025/26 – pathways, railings, steps and bridges. Opportunities for Volunteers work to remove laurel. Future business case could address ponds, water quality and wider biodiversity benefits.
47	Erect and maintain existing and newly installed bat boxes within key council-owned woodland and parkland sites where suitable trees and stone	Progress still to be made within the LBAP (2023 to 2033)

	structures exist, and along river banks within close proximity to ponds, lakes and canals.	
48	Restore or plant new native species-rich hedgerows for biodiversity with emphasis on connecting woodlands and other habitats. These hedgerows should act as demonstration sites for good practice hedgerow management.	See Action 22
49	Identify suitable sites to install swift boxes on council buildings.	See Actions 23 & 24
50	Improve land management in council owned land and identify and erect barn owl nesting boxes key locations within the Borough in collaboration with wildlife organisations.	Progress still to be made within the LBAP (2023 to 2033)
51	Continue to manage and monitor lowland meadows under the council rewilding initiative and increase the extent of species-rich wildflower meadow habitat by creating new meadows and expanding the area of existing meadows, in both urban and rural locations. Opportunities to connect to other habitats should be identified and prioritised.	<p>Grassland Management Plan approved in November 2024. This will now be rolled out by mapping and tiering our grassland sites to determine how different sites are managed for their biodiversity value. A few high quality areas will be used for education and engagement with local schools and groups.</p> <p>Rewilding Portfolio to be extended year on year. This is reported as part of the Rewilding annual update.</p> <p>A Rewilding and Tree and Woodland 'Task &amp; Finish' group has been established to progress actions and delivery on the ground practical solutions, with membership from across the service.</p>
52	Reduce the frequency of amenity grassland cutting per year at selected Council amenity areas including around sports facilities.	A Grassland Management Strategy was agreed in November 2024, and actions are being delivered to include a range of cutting regimes and frequencies.

53	Establish a network of native seed donor sites for habitat creation and restoration. Ensure that ENSCONET Seed Collecting Manual for Wild Species is utilised.	<p>The Seed2Leaf Community Tree Nursery initiative forms a fundamental part of the Council's Tree and Woodland Strategy, directly supporting the <b>STAND4TREES</b> target of planting 160,000 trees across the borough by 2032. This innovative programme enables local communities to engage directly in the complete tree growth cycle, from seed collection through to sapling cultivation, thereby gaining long-term environmental responsibility and ownership of local green spaces.</p> <p>The inaugural year of the programme saw the successful establishment of two community nurseries through a competitive application process. Portaferry In Bloom created a fully operational nursery with council-supported infrastructure and partnered with Portaferry Primary School to conduct seed-gathering activities, resulting in over 200 native saplings currently in propagation. Millisle Youth Forum engaged young participants in urban greening projects with a particular focus on hedgerow species to enhance local biodiversity.</p> <p>To build on this success, the programme will reopen for applications on 1st June 2025, with the aim of establishing 2 additional nurseries in the coming year.</p>
54	Actively pursue the use of local provenance seed (tree and wildflower) and hold workshops on seed harvesting, collection, storage and growing. Including the establishment of local / community tree nurseries.	See Action 53 re: Seed2Leaf Community Tree Nurseries initiative. The Council aims to develop their own tree nursery at a vacant Parks site.

55	Actively excluding all peat-based compost from council use and aiming for a ban on peat-based compost sales. Encourage other organisations and the community to adopt a peat free approach to growing.	Go Peat Free campaign was launched in July 2024 with Council leading by example by removing peat from their operations. This campaign will be promoted again during Compost Week May 2025.
56	Ensure all built structures and mature trees on council owned sites are adequately scoped for the presence of bats prior to any works (even minor works such as limb / ivy removal) occur.	This is being completed as standard best practice.
57	Creation of a council grassland management strategy.	A Grassland Management Strategy was agreed in November 2024, and actions are being delivered
58	Investigate with our partners the feasibility of providing wild bird cover for farmland birds	Working alongside RSPB a habitat management plan was produced for Bowtown Road, rewilding site in Newtownards. Wild bird cover for farmland birds identified for this site as part of this plan.
59	Reduce, replace and where possible eliminate the use of herbicides, pesticides and fertilisers on council land	Herbicide reduction policy in place and details reported to Community & Wellbeing Committee every six months. A Task & Finish group with membership from across the service has been established to progress actions and delivery practical solutions towards a reduction in chemical usage.
60	Increase accessible woodland (% of population with access to a 2ha+ wood within 500m) towards UK average of 21.1% by 2032. Increase woodland creation (% population requiring new woodland to be able to access a 20ha+ wood within 4km) towards UK average of 12.1% by 2030	The Council undertakes to replace trees in numbers in excess of those that need to be felled and has an annual tree-planting programme which sees many trees of both native and interesting varieties planted over each Autumn/Winter season. For example, our <b>STAND4TREES</b> initiative aims to plant a tree for every person in the Borough, that is approximately 160,000 trees. To date, council has planted over 61,459 new trees, the yearly

		breakdown is: 2021/22 – 12,435; 2022/23 – 15,223; 2023/24 – 18,269; 2024/25 – 15,532. Additional funding has been made available to purchase additional land for tree planting and work is currently being finalised to complete the business case.
61	Ensure a collection of diverse tree colonies through the planting of native trees across the Borough with the creation of an equitable canopy map.	The Tree & Woodland Strategy aims to plant native trees but also now takes consideration for climate friendly species to ensure stability and longevity. The Council undertakes to replace trees in numbers in excess of those that need to be felled and has an annual tree-planting programme which sees many trees of both native and interesting varieties planted over each Autumn/Winter season.
62	Engage with all landowners in relation to the eutrophication issue at the ponds located in Whitespots Country Park	Progress still to be made within the LBAP (2023 to 2033)
63	Provide funding to create community wildlife gardens with pollinator-friendly wildflower areas	As per action 12
64	Develop an ambitious planting plan starting with the planting of 160,000 native trees across the Borough with further increased planting to contribute to regional and national targets	Re action 27
65	Investigate the potential for incorporating buffer zones around ponds and rivers on council owned land.	Progress still to be made within the LBAP (2023 to 2033)
66	Commission a resurvey of SLNCIs in the council area	Progress still to be made within the LBAP (2023 to 2033)

67	Ensure all council owned sites are adequately scoped for the presence of badgers and/or setts prior to the commencement of any works, including maintenance works such as the removal of vegetation or scrub	This is done as standard/best practice
68	Review current rodenticide use across council services and promote the use of the CRRU code.	Progress still to be made within the LBAP (2023 to 2033)
<b>Theme 4. Building Partnerships</b>		
69	Promote biodiversity objectives in the management of golf courses and encourage all golf courses in the Borough to secure the GEO certified label.	Reported on last year – was progressed in 2024 but not in 2025
70	Engage with local businesses to encourage involvement in local biodiversity projects.	Attendance at the Economic Development Conference, Clandeboye Hotel. Working with local businesses to host swift boxes/callers. Corporate Volunteering Days promoted by the Team. To date we have had external organisations in removing tree guards at Whitespots and litter picks on beaches.
71	Engage with local operators of business parks and supermarkets to encourage biodiversity enhancements.	Progress still to be made within the LBAP (2023 to 2033)
72	Engage with local quarries in conservation actions for key habitats and species in conjunction with conservation NGOs.	Progress still to be made within the LBAP (2023 to 2033)
73	Engage with local residents, businesses and schools to establish Swift nest boxes on their buildings / premises.	See Actions 23 & 24

74	Work in partnership promoting good practice in local provenance native woodland management.	As part of the development of volunteering the Council aim to trial a core group (as a trial) to maintain the Community Orchard sites.
75	Work in partnership to produce a rivers and streams biodiversity education pack	Staff have undergone recent training to deliver this across the borough.
76	Support a local biodiversity partnership collaboration between Camphill Community, Royal Belfast Golfclub and local schools	Progress still to be made within the LBAP (2023 to 2033)
77	Work in partnership to highlight Irish hare identification and habitat requirements.	Progress still to be made within the LBAP (2023 to 2033)
78	Engage with and support local biodiversity partnerships between council and other landowners to increase the extent of land managed for biodiversity.	In Bloom Community Competition encourages local businesses to create spaces for planting to encourage biodiversity.
79	Work in partnership with relevant statutory bodies, NGO's and local groups to support the conservation of the red squirrel and pine marten and identify road mortality black spots where warning signs can be erected.	Continue to work with North Down Red Squirrel group on control of grey squirrels.
80	Work in partnership with DfI to manage key roadside verges for pollinators	Roundabout Sponsorship Policy encourages local businesses to sponsor a roundabout with a key focus on a design for environmental sustainability. Working with DfI on urban tree initiatives.
81	Improve the value of urban green spaces for biodiversity by setting up 'Friends of' Groups at selected sites	A target has been set within the Parks & Cemeteries Service Plan to have 5 'Friends of' Groups across the borough. Time has been spent with existing volunteering groups to develop them into Friends of groups as defined within the policy. These locations

		included Hunts Park, Linnear Park, and Ballymenoch with a plan to develop and establish groups in the future including at Kiltonga Nature Reserve. Bryansburn Allotments is a well-established group, located in Bangor.
82	Engage with local groups to help deliver community led biodiversity related projects and support them to develop and lead their own	19 x 'In Bloom' grants to be issued this year to support local groups in developing community growing spaces. Bowtown Road, Rewilding Site, Newtownards – Ards Canal Pathway Group planted Native Tree species in section of the site in 2022/20203. The group is sowing a small native wildflower meadow for the benefit of pollinators at the site in April/May 2025.
83	Engage with stakeholders to facilitate the reduction in ammonia and nutrient run-off across landscapes.	Progress still to be made within the LBAP (2023 to 2033)
84	Identify potential peatland restoration sites and engage with stakeholders to identify opportunities for restoring of sites into a semi natural state.	Progress still to be made within the LBAP (2023 to 2033)



Unclassified

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**ITEM 16****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	14 May 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Parks and Cemeteries
Date of Report	24 April 2025
File Reference	PCA4
Legislation	Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Tree and Woodland Strategy Update
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Tree and Woodland Strategy Update Report

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the recent progress of the Council's Tree and Woodland Strategy that was agreed in March 2021. The purpose of the Tree and Woodland Strategy is to recognise the importance of trees, the many benefits they afford us and the increasingly important role they can play in mitigating the effects of climate change. The strategy is required to ensure the Council's limited budget is focused on positive planting programmes and managing tree care and risks.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council note the progress of the Tree and Woodland Strategy.

## **Tree and Woodland Strategy Update Report**

Our citizens are rightly proud of the greenness of our Borough, but it is something that is not static and which cannot be taken for granted. Trees play a significant role in improving environmental conditions and people's quality of life. Trees act as carbon sinks and absorb carbon dioxide (the main greenhouse gas) and produce oxygen. In addition, trees filter, absorb and reduce pollutants. Trees can make our borough a healthier, more attractive and more comfortable place to live and work. Trees provide food and shelter for wildlife such as birds, mammals and insects, as well as for people. Trees have been proven to increase property value and to help relax people by lowering heart rates and reducing stress.

Council is committed to conserving and retaining existing trees and other features where it is considered that they have landscape or amenity value and will use its powers to protect trees where necessary.

Council is also committed to ensuring improved tree cover within the Borough, and to promote the importance of trees to ensure several Corporate and Community Plan objectives are met. Council has a legal 'duty of care' and will provide appropriate levels of management arrangements to ensure that users and neighbours of its land are reasonably safe.

### **Strategic Objectives and Operational Priorities**

The Tree and Woodland Strategy plays a vital role in supporting the strategic objectives and operational priorities set out in council documents such as the Corporate Plan, The Big Plan and the Parks & Cemeteries Service Plan. The strategy strengthens the Council's overarching commitment to environmental sustainability, climate resilience, and active community engagement by providing clear evidence of ongoing work and measurable progress in tree and woodland management.

A key area of alignment is with the strategic objectives of climate recovery and biodiversity gain. The report demonstrates significant contributions to these goals through large-scale tree planting, over 15,000 trees annually and the expansion of the urban tree canopy. These efforts contribute directly to carbon sequestration, improved air quality, and enhance biodiversity. Notably, the **STAND4TREES** initiative, which aims to plant 160,000 trees by 2032, is a clear example of how the report's content supports the Council's net-zero and climate mitigation targets set out in the Corporate Plan.

At present the NI average of accessible woodland is 10.3% but only 7% in the Borough, in the UK the average is 21.1%. Accessible woodland is defined as a percentage of population with access to a 2ha (hectares) or greater wood within 500m. Our tree planting programme is currently using land within parks and other open spaces. However, for the Borough to achieve the N.I average, Council needs to plant up 1,702ha. This can only be achieved by purchasing more land and working with other landowners. Council has agreed to purchase in the period 2025/6 approximately

65ha of land for Tree & Woodland, this will contribute towards the 1,702ha needed to achieve NI average for accessible woodland.

In terms of community engagement and volunteering, the report highlights active partnerships with schools, community organisations, and volunteer groups. Initiatives such as Seed2Leaf nurseries and commemorative tree plantings foster a sense of ownership and inclusion within local communities. This is closely aligned with the Service Plan's objective to strengthen and grow Friends Groups and other volunteer-led programmes, enhancing the social value of parks and green spaces.

The report also reflects the Service Plan's focus on innovation and digital transformation. The adoption of advanced technologies like the PiCUS Sonic Tomograph for tree risk assessment illustrates a shift towards more efficient, proactive, and data-driven management of natural assets.

The Tree and Woodland Report contributes directly to several Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) within the Service Plan. These include the annual planting of 15,000 trees in line with the **STAND4TREES** target, the delivery of over 70 community-focused projects such as orchard plantings and mindfulness sessions, a marked reduction in herbicide use through sustainable practices, and the expansion of rewilded land to a target of 130,000 square metres.

Environmental sustainability remains a core priority of the Service Plan, and the Tree and Woodland Report complements this through its promotion of native species, improved urban canopy equity, and increased resilience to storms. It also demonstrates economic and social value, with a Tree Asset Valuation estimating £277 million in amenity value and £7.6 million in carbon storage—figures that support the Service Plan's focus on income generation through green infrastructure.

The Council's Tree and Woodland Strategy not only advances environmental and climate goals but also significantly contributes to community wellbeing, aligning closely with the Five Steps to Wellbeing framework. Initiatives such as mindfulness sessions, guided tree tours, and community planting events improve connections by bringing people together, while outdoor activities like orchard clean-ups and tree planting promote being active.

Events like National Tree Week encourage participants to take notice of nature's beauty, and educational programs like Seed2Leaf nurseries and Forest Schools support continuous learning. Finally, volunteering opportunities and community-led projects embody the spirit of giving, strengthening social bonds and collective pride in local green spaces. By integrating these principles, the Strategy ensures that trees and woodlands serve as vital assets for both planetary and human health.

## 2024/2025 Tree Plantings

The Council undertakes to replace trees in numbers in excess of those that need to be felled and has an annual tree-planting programme which sees many trees of both native and interesting varieties planted over each Autumn/Winter season. For example, our **STAND4TREES** initiative aims to plant a tree for every person in the Borough, that is approximately 160,000 trees. Through planting season 2024-2025 in

excess of 15,000 new trees were planted in the borough. To date, council has planted over 61,459 new trees, the yearly breakdown is:

- 2021/22 – 12,435
- 2022/23 – 15,223
- 2023/24 – 18,269
- 2024/25 – 15,532

In general, trees planted will be native species such as oak, elder, hazel, hawthorn and birch, in line with Councils Local Biodiversity Action Plan, unless there is a specific ornamental scheme which requires cultivated species. An example of this is Castle Park (Bangor) and Ballymenoch Park (Holywood) which are regarded as historic tree arboretums and would require rare and unusual trees as replacements. This is intended to ensure a diverse collection of tree colonies across the Borough.

A total of 15,532 tree whips have been planted during the previous tree planting season (November 2024- March 2025). For most of the sites, tree, hedgerow and orchard planting events were held in partnership with stakeholders including local community groups, schools and volunteers.

**Trees Planted in 2024/2025**

Location	Standard (large trees)	Whip (small trees)	Orchard (fruit trees)	Total Trees
Castle Park, Bangor	17	3,700		3,717
Ward Park, Bangor	30		10	40
Linear Park, Bangor			40	40
Pickie, Bangor	20			20
Helens Bay Playpark			10	10
Clifton School, Bangor			10	10
Groomsport Play Park			10	10
Whitespots Country Pk, Newtownards	75			75
Jackscut, Newtownards		5,000		5,000

Londonderry Park, Newtownards		1,250	10	<b>1,260</b>
Upper Crescent, Comber		2,500		<b>2,500</b>
Village Hall, Greyabbey		650		<b>650</b>
Ballywalter Football Pitch		700		<b>700</b>
Cloughey Football Pitch		1,500		<b>1,500</b>
<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>15,300</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>15,532</b>

Commemorative Tree Planting

Members will be aware that Council have facilitated the planting of commemorative trees on Council land in conjunction with local groups and organisations in accordance with its approved policy.

A total of 2 commemorative trees have been planted during the previous tree planting season (November 2024 - March 2025).

- Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS) celebrated the Freedom of the borough by planting a commemorative tree (Turkey Oak) in Castle Park, Bangor.
- Bangor Rotary Club celebrated their 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary by planting a commemorative tree (Purple Beech) in Castle Park, Bangor.

Community Engagement

Community engagement is a vital part of successful tree and woodland initiatives. By involving residents, schools, volunteer groups, and organisations, which gives a sense of ownership and responsibility for our green spaces. Engaged communities are more likely to protect and nurture these areas, ensuring their long-term sustainability. Additionally, participation in tree planting, maintenance, and educational events strengthens social bonds, promotes environmental awareness, and enhances mental and physical well-being.

This Tree and Woodland Events Calendar will serve as the foundation for all community engagement activities over the coming years. Each year will feature different events and initiatives, ensuring fresh opportunities for involvement while maintaining core activities that support our **STAND4TREES** goal planting 160,000 trees by 2032 (one for every resident in the Borough).

2024/2025 Tree and Woodland Calendar of Events

Tree and Woodland events are scheduled from 1st April to 31st March each year, culminating in the tree planting season (November–March). This timing allows Parks Officers to maximise engagement and deliver a wide range of activities for the local community. Below is a month-by-month engagement calendar highlighting major events from the past year. This template will guide future years’ programming, with new activities introduced annually to keep engagement dynamic and inclusive.

April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hunts Park, Donaghadee – The local community along with the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs opened the community orchard in Hunts Park.</li></ul>
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hibernia Street, Holywood – Holywood P.School helped plant the new mobile orchard in Hibernia Street.</li><li>• Whitespots Country Park, Newtownards – Local volunteer group helped Officers clear plastic tree guards from the trees around the main carpark.</li><li>• National Hedgerow Week – Council promoted the beneficial impact of hedgerows.</li></ul>

<b>June</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each Thursday in June, Castle Park Bangor hosted a Mindfulness Session which proved to be a massive hit.</li> <li>Tree officer hosted a tree tour of Castle Park, Bangor</li> </ul>
<b>July</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each Thursday in July, Castle Park Bangor hosted a Mindfulness Session</li> <li>Lawson Gardens, Portavogie – an orchard clean-up was organised in conjunction with the local community.</li> </ul>
<b>Love Parks Week (26<sup>th</sup> July to 5<sup>th</sup> August)</b>	<p>Love Parks Week is an annual campaign that celebrates parks, green spaces, and the dedicated volunteers and workers that look after them all year round. Parks are vibrant, living spaces bringing communities together and provide an opportunity to connect with nature in the heart of our cities, towns, and neighbourhoods. Ards and North Down Borough Council ran several family-friendly events such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bird Walk</li> <li>Bat Night</li> <li>Environmental Story Telling</li> <li>Kids Park Art</li> <li>Volunteering promotion and experience</li> <li>Nature Skills for families</li> <li>Tree and Plant ID</li> </ul>
<b>August</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each Thursday in August, Ward Park, Bangor hosted a Mindfulness Session</li> </ul>
<b>September</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whitespots Country Park, Newtownards – Local volunteer group helped Officers clear plastic tree guards from the trees around the main carpark.</li> </ul>
<b>October</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cairn Wood, Holywood – a tree tour was held as part of the Community Trails walking sessions.</li> </ul>
<b>November</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Castle Park, Portaferry – As part of the council Community Tree Nursery (Seed2Leaf) project, council officers held a tree seed gathering session for students from Portaferry P.S. This involves collecting tree seeds which will be grown by members from Portaferry In Bloom within their council funded tree nursery.</li> </ul>
<b>National Tree Week</b>	<p>National Tree Week, the UK's largest annual celebration of trees. Each year, tree-lovers come together to kick off the tree planting season. A number of family-friendly events were organised such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community orchard planting</li> <li>Tree Tours</li> <li>Woodland Crafts with local schools</li> <li>Tree seed gathering sessions</li> </ul>
<b>January</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each Wednesday in January, Officers hosted a community tree planting event in Upper Crescent, Comber.</li> </ul>
<b>February</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each Wednesday in February, Officers hosted a community tree planting events at Cloughey Football Pitch (x2) and Greyabbey Village Hall (x2).</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hunts Park, Donaghadee – Community orchard clean up as part of the first Friends of Hunts Park community event.</li> <li>• Greyabbey Village Hall - an orchard clean-up was organised in conjunction with the local community.</li> <li>• Ballymenoch Park, Holywood – As part of the Community Trails walking sessions, a tree tour was held in Cairn Wood.</li> </ul>
<b>March</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each Wednesday in March, Officers hosted a community tree planting events at Valentine Pitches, Bangor. In addition, 5 more planting events were held at the same locations, 2 with 10-year students from Bangor Academy, 2 with the local Health and Social Care Trust and 1 with the local Cubs group.</li> <li>• Springwell Crescent, Groomsport – Community orchard planting with the local community.</li> <li>• Londonderry Park, Newtownards – Regent House Grammar School, Victoria P.S and Movilla High School came to Londonderry Park to plant a new woodland, hedgerow and orchard.</li> <li>• Clifton School, Bangor – Council Officer helped the school plant a new orchard on site.</li> <li>• Helens Bay, Playpark - Community orchard planting with the local community.</li> </ul>

### New Woodland and Hedgerow Plantings 2025/2026

A total of 15,370 tree whips will be ordered this year for the next tree and hedgerow planting season, which runs from November 2025 through March 2026. The locations of the new significant tree and hedgerow plantings are outlined below; this does not include individual or small plantings. For many of the sites, tree and hedgerow planting events will be held in partnership with local community groups, volunteers and schools.

Castle Park, Bangor (Woodland Planting - 4,000 whips) W3W: /vine.prices.blocks





Jacks Cut, Newtownards (Woodland Planting - 3,000 whips)  
W3W:/ ///downward.tango.gazes



Portaferry Community Orchard, Portaferry (Hedgerow Planting – 450 whips).  
W3W:/concerned.escalated.award





Lawson Gardens Community Orchard (Hedgerow Planting – 1,500 whips)  
W3W: /ledge.sponge.unhappily



Kircubbin Rewilding Site Hedgerow Planting – 2,500 whips)  
W3W: /organ.soonest.bypasses



Greyabbey Cemetery (Hedgerow Planting – 800 whips)  
W3W: /ledge.sponge.unhappily



Castle Park Community Orchard, Bangor (Hedgerow Planting – 450 whips)  
W3W: /pizza.spin.deeply





Smelt Bay, Bangor (Hedgerow Planting – 700 whips plus  
Woodland Planting – 270 whips)  
W3W:/models.legs.exit



Ballystockart Rewilding Site (Hedgerow Planting – 1,600 whips)  
W3W:/discrepancy.snowballs.polar



## Kerrs Wood, Bangor (Woodland Planting - 100 light standards) W3W:/softly.stocks.react



### Community Orchard Plantings

As part of Councils commitment to successfully implement the Tree and Woodland Strategy, Park Officers identified potential sites on which community orchards can be planted. This has been carried out through a process of community engagement and internal site management. The aim is to achieve a target of 3 new Community Orchards each year.

Community orchards are an excellent place for people to come together, providing a space for celebrations and are a source of food. They can be used as educational resource for local schools, community groups and the wider public. Trees in general can reduce stress and illness by providing psychological refreshment and a sense of wellbeing, creating character and a sense of place and permanence.

Orchards encourage healthy eating and outdoor activities improving wellbeing, as well as making our towns, villages and neighbourhoods more pleasant places to live. Tree plantations of any type can symbolize community focal points and offer aesthetic, amenity and historic value and can act as landmark features within our settlements and open countryside.

Ards and North Down now has 12 new community orchards, each being planted by local community groups and schools, meeting the target for this stage of the Tree and Woodland Strategy. Planting season 2024-25 seen orchards planted at Springwell Crescent Playpark, Groomsport, Linear Park, Bangor and Helens Bay Playpark, Helens Bay



### Ards and North Down Orchard Locations:

- Ann Street, Portaferry
- Lawson Gardens, Portavogie
- Village Hall, Greyabbey
- Brice Park, Bangor
- Londonderry Park, Newtownards
- Cottown Open Space, Six Roads Ends
- Dickson Park, Ballygowan
- Kerr Park, Holywood
- Holywood Nature Park, Holywood
- The Green, Kircubbin
- Laurel Bank Lane, Comber
- Hunts Park, Donaghadee
- Springwell Crescent Playpark, Groomsport
- Linear Park, Bangor
- Helens Bay Playpark, Helens Bay
- Ward Park, Bangor
- Clifton School, Bangor

### New Community Orchard Plantings 2025/2026

For each of the proposed community orchard sites, Officers conduct a site visit to determine the feasibility of the orchard. Where possible, officers will also invite local community group representatives who will provide feedback on the orchard site. While on site, Officers and local community reps will assess the ground condition, potential usage and proximity of local schools and community groups who could potentially help plant and maintain the orchard. All the proposed community orchard sites have been identified as viable locations. Officers will engage local schools and community groups regarding possible planting dates.

Calhame Park, Cloughey (10 mixed fruit tree)  
W3W:/moisture.feasting.undertone



Jacks Cut, Newtownards (20 mixed fruit tree)  
W3W:/downward.tango.gazes



Castle Park, Bangor (15 mixed fruit trees)  
W3W:/pizza.spin.deeply



### Seed2Leaf: Community Tree Nursery

The Seed2Leaf Community Tree Nursery initiative forms a fundamental part of the Council's Tree and Woodland Strategy. This innovative programme enables local

communities to engage directly in the complete tree growth cycle, from seed collection through to sapling cultivation, thereby gaining long-term environmental responsibility and ownership of local green spaces. Following a successful inaugural year involving Portaferry In Bloom and Missile Youth Forum, this report details the programme's achievements.

The primary objective of Seed2Leaf is to create a sustainable network of community-managed tree nurseries that serve multiple purposes. These nurseries increase the availability of locally sourced native tree stock for council planting schemes while simultaneously strengthening community involvement in environmental initiatives. The programme provides valuable educational opportunities for schools and youth groups and offers a cost-effective approach to tree procurement through local seed collection and propagation.

The initiative operates through four key phases. The seed gathering phase involves Officers and volunteers collecting locally adapted tree species such as oak, hazel and rowan. Community groups then establish nurseries using council-provided funding, materials and comprehensive training. Volunteers subsequently nurture the seeds into viable saplings over a one-to-three-year period. Finally, the saplings are replanted across the borough in public parks, school grounds and housing estates, directly contributing to the **STAND4TREES** planting targets.

The inaugural year of the programme saw the successful establishment of two community nurseries through a competitive application process. Portaferry In Bloom created a fully operational nursery with council-supported infrastructure and partnered with Portaferry Primary School to conduct seed-gathering activities, resulting in over 200 native saplings currently in propagation. Missile Youth Forum engaged young participants in urban greening projects with a particular focus on hedgerow species to enhance local biodiversity.

To build on this success, the programme will re-open for applications on 1st June 2025, with the aim of establishing 2 additional nurseries in the coming year. Eligibility will extend to schools, residents' associations, environmental groups and youth organisations, with particular emphasis on areas currently experiencing low tree canopy cover or higher levels of social deprivation. Each selected group will receive a comprehensive support package including grants for essential equipment, specialised training in seed stratification and nursery maintenance, and ongoing mentorship from Officers. The expansion will seek to develop new partnerships with local businesses for potential sponsorship opportunities and explore collaborations with health trusts to incorporate therapeutic horticulture elements.

### **Northern Ireland Forest School Association (NIFSA)**

Officers have embarked on a partnership with the Northern Ireland Forest School Association (NIFSA) aimed at establishing and nurturing 3 forest schools annually. This collaboration underscores the council's commitment to environmental education and community engagement.

At its core, the initiative seeks to integrate nature-based learning into local communities, fostering environmental stewardship and enhancing the well-being of



residents. Through structured outdoor experiences, forest schools provide a rich environment for children to explore, learn, and connect with nature, promoting physical activity, creativity, and social skills. NIFSA has developed the only nationally recognised Forest School qualification specifically for Northern Ireland. NIFSA have trained hundreds of teachers to become accredited Forest School Level 3 Leaders in the process. There are now over 200 official NIFSA Forest Schools supporting over 5,000 pupils a month learning outside.

Crucially, this partnership is not only about establishing more forest schools within Ards and North Down but is also about ensuring their sustainability. The councils Park service aims to fund 3 new Forest Schools per year. By empowering teachers and pupils to become stewards of their natural surroundings and fostering a deeper connection with the environment. The Council and NIFSA partnership is poised to make a meaningful and lasting impact on the community, paving the way for a more sustainable and interconnected future.

Applications to become a Forest School opened 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025 and closed 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025. In total, 7 schools from across the borough applied. A selection process identified the following schools to be the new Forest Schools within Ards and North Down:

- Clifton School, Bangor
- Kilmoody Playgroup, Killinchy
- St Mary's Primary School Kircubbin

The selection criteria included factors such as the school's commitment to sustainability and environmental education, the availability of space and existing infrastructure for growing activities.

## **The Vital Role of Urban Tree Canopy**

The urban tree canopy – the layer of leaves, branches, and stems that covers the ground when viewed from above – is a critical asset for the Borough, delivering wide-ranging environmental, social, and economic benefits. Research by The Woodland Trust's Tree Equity Score highlights how access to urban trees is often unequal, with disadvantaged communities frequently having significantly lower canopy cover. This tool assesses the distribution of trees relative to socioeconomic factors, demonstrating that areas with higher deprivation levels tend to have fewer trees, exacerbating health inequalities and environmental injustice.

From an environmental perspective, the urban canopy serves as a vital tool for climate resilience. Trees actively mitigate the urban heat island effect, with shaded areas demonstrating temperature reductions of up to 5°C compared to exposed surfaces. Their capacity to sequester carbon dioxide while simultaneously filtering harmful air pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter contributes significantly to improving local air quality. Furthermore, tree canopies play an important role in sustainable urban drainage by intercepting rainfall and reducing stormwater runoff, thereby helping to mitigate flood risks during extreme weather events.

The health and wellbeing benefits of urban trees are equally significant. Numerous studies have established clear correlations between urban tree cover and improved public health outcomes, including reduced stress levels, increased physical activity and lower incidence of respiratory conditions. Mature trees in green spaces have been shown to enhance mental health while gaining stronger community cohesion through the creation of attractive, shared public spaces. Ecologically, urban canopies provide essential habitat for wildlife and serve as crucial connectors in broader ecological networks. Economically, tree-lined streets have been demonstrated to increase local property values while making commercial areas more attractive to businesses and visitors. These multiple benefits make the protection and expansion of our urban tree canopy a strategic priority that directly supports the Council's **STAND4TREES** target.

#### Partnership with DFI Roads: Expanding Street Trees

Recognising the importance of urban trees, Officers have established a collaborative partnership with the Department for Infrastructure (DFI) Roads to identify suitable locations for future street tree planting across the borough. This partnership focuses on creating a strategic approach to urban greening that aligns with Councils environmental objectives while addressing practical considerations for long-term tree establishment and maintenance.

Through this partnership, Officers are developing a systematic methodology to identify planting opportunities along urban streets. The process considers multiple factors including existing canopy coverage, soil conditions, underground utilities, and pedestrian safety requirements. Particular attention is being given to areas that would benefit most from increased tree cover, such as urban heat islands and neighbourhoods with limited access to green space.

Initial discussions have identified several potential locations for planting schemes, with sites in Bangor and Newtownards currently being assessed for inclusion in the 2025/26 planting programme. The partnership aims to create a replicable framework for future collaborative planting initiatives that can be expanded across the borough in coming years.

This cooperative approach ensures that street tree planting complements existing infrastructure while maximising the environmental and social benefits of urban trees. By working closely with DFI Roads, Council can strategically expand the urban tree canopy in locations where it will have the greatest positive impact on local communities and the wider environment.

#### **ANDBC Tree Asset Valuation**

In summer 2024, council actioned Treeconomics to produce the Tree Asset Valuation which provided an in-depth analysis of the tree population managed by Council. This report was commissioned to evaluate the composition, distribution, and ecosystem benefits of the council's trees, as well as their structural and amenity value. The assessment forms part of the Council's 'Tree and Woodland Strategy,' supporting sustainability goals and informing long-term tree management strategies. The full report was presented to Members in February 2025.

The report recorded over 10,700 trees across public parks and spaces within the borough, representing 151 species. Key metrics such as carbon storage, pollution removal, avoided water runoff, and replacement costs were analysed. This data underpins the strategic value of trees in mitigating climate change, supporting biodiversity, and enhancing public well-being.

### Key Findings

#### Tree Population and Diversity

- Population: 10,700 trees over 7cm DBH were recorded, encompassing 151 species.
- Diversity: The most common species are Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*), and Common Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), collectively accounting for 31.3% of the population. The population's diversity indicates resilience to pests, diseases, and climate change.
- Distribution: 60.7% of the trees are in Bangor, with significant populations also in Holywood and Newtownards.

#### Ecosystem Services

- Carbon Storage: Trees store 7,690 tonnes of carbon, valued at £7.6 million, with an annual sequestration of 143 tonnes (£141,000).
- Air Pollution Removal: 1,620 kg of pollutants (NO<sub>2</sub>, SO<sub>2</sub>, PM2.5) are removed annually, worth £47,200.
- Avoided Surface Runoff: Trees intercept 1,200 m<sup>3</sup> of water annually, saving £2,700 in drainage costs.
- Leaf Area: The total canopy leaf area spans 424 hectares, underscoring trees' significant role in providing ecosystem services.

#### Asset Value

- Replacement Cost: The estimated cost to replace the tree population is £25 million.
- Amenity Value: The trees' amenity value, calculated using the CAVAT method, is £277 million. Castle Park Bangor's trees alone have an amenity value of £97.9 million.

### Tree Asset Valuation Recommendations for Enhancing Urban Tree Canopy

Council is encouraged to prioritise diverse and climate-resilient species in new planting initiatives. By selecting species that are tolerant of urban stressors, such as poor soil quality and limited water availability, the urban tree canopy can become more resilient to climate change and pests. Increasing genetic diversity will also reduce reliance on a few dominant species and mitigate risks associated with monocultures.

Key contributions include:

- **Baseline Metrics:** The report establishes quantifiable benchmarks for carbon sequestration, pollution removal, and water runoff management. These figures can guide future initiatives aimed at increasing tree canopy coverage.
- **Strategic Planning:** Insights from the report inform long-term planting schemes and species selection, ensuring alignment with sustainability goals and climate adaptation strategies.
- **Urban Heat Island Mitigation:** Increasing tree canopy in identified urban heat zones can significantly reduce temperatures and improve living conditions for residents.
- **Public Engagement:** The findings provide a platform for engaging communities on the importance of urban forestry.

The findings highlight the immense value of Ards and North Down's tree population in terms of ecological benefits, monetary valuation, and community well-being. The data-driven insights provided in this report can guide council policies and strategies to maintain and enhance the urban forest, ensuring it continues to deliver vital ecosystem services for future generations. Additionally, this report provides the Council with essential baseline metrics to monitor and improve canopy cover, directly contributing to the broader Sustainability Roadmap.

### **Scheduled Tree Works Completed in 2024/2025 Season**

Council adopts a proactive and responsible approach to managing its tree stock. To ensure public safety and the health of our urban forest. Council engages expert consultants to conduct comprehensive inspection surveys across all sites. These surveys assess the risk of significant harm posed by tree or branch failures and recommend necessary actions, including felling or pruning.

Council recognises that tree removal is a sensitive issue and is undertaken only when necessary, such as when trees are dead, diseased, structurally unsound, or pose a risk to public safety. Further details on the rationale for tree works can be found in the Frequently Asked Questions section on the Council's website. Updates on scheduled works are also regularly posted.

### **Key Works Completed (2024/2025)**

#### Castle Park, Bangor

- 10x Fell
- 15x Monoliths
- 16x Maintenance pruning

#### Ward Park, Bangor

- 3x Fells

#### Plantation Wood, Bangor

- 6x Fells

### Kerrs Wood, Bangor

- 6x Fells
- 3x Monoliths
- 4x Maintenance pruning

### Stricklands Glen, Bangor

- 14 Fells

While the Council aims to complete scheduled works between 1st September and 28th February in line with ecological protections. Under the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985, nesting birds are safeguarded during the breeding season (1st March–31st August). Works may proceed outside this period, but contractors are legally obligated to conduct pre-work checks to avoid disturbing active nests. Delays may occur, but public safety remains the priority.

### **Impact of Weather Conditions on Tree Works**

The increasing frequency and severity of storms, such as Storm Éowyn (Jan 2025), which caused widespread damage, felling approximately 200 trees has underscored vulnerabilities in tree management strategies. Extreme winds, heavy rainfall, and prolonged wet conditions weaken trees, increasing risks of:

- Uprooting or splitting in shallow-rooted or diseased trees.
- Branch failure, particularly in older or poorly maintained specimens.
- Soil saturation, destabilising root systems and increasing fall risks.

Notably, sites like Cairn Wood, Holywood, which council has recreational responsibility for, experienced disproportionate destruction due to their reliance on commercial timber species (e.g., fast-growing conifers like Spruce). These monoculture plantations, while economically efficient, often lack the deep root systems and natural resilience of native broadleaf species, making them more susceptible to storm damage.

### How Council's Tree and Woodland Management Mitigates Damage

- Proactive Inspections: Regular surveys identify high-risk trees pre-storm, enabling pre-emptive action.
- Diversified Species Planting: Prioritising resilient native species (e.g., oak, birch) over storm-vulnerable commercial timber trees.
- Monolith Retention: Preserving deadwood habitats where safe to maintain biodiversity.
- Rapid Response Protocols: Dedicated teams swiftly clear storm damage to restore safety.

By combining preventive maintenance, adaptive species selection, and emergency preparedness, the Council's strategy has reduced storm-related failures, a critical contrast to commercial forestry's challenges. Continued investment in these measures is essential as climate change intensifies.

## Tree Inspections

Whether trees are managed for landscape, habitat, commercial or multipurpose objectives, the legal obligation to ensure the reasonable safety of others remains the same. The law recognises that there is a balance to be struck between the risks and benefits of trees. ANDBC, as owner and occupier of land, is required to consider the level of risk associated with a tree and whether it is reasonable to protect against that risk.

The duty is to identify apparent sources of danger and to make land safe, so far as is reasonably practicable. Liability is determined based on whether a danger posed by a tree could have been foreseen and whether reasonable remedies could have been undertaken, which would have reduced the risks to an acceptable level.

Collecting regular data from all council owned/maintained trees allows Officers to gather important environmental data such as Carbon Storage, Leaf Biomass and Water Retention. The environmental data collected will help give council the base line numbers which are needed to review the progress of the **STAND4TREES** initiative which will see council plant over 160,000 trees throughout the borough by 2032.

Recording and marking trees forms part of the regular tree inspection programme within Ards and North Down Borough Council. Council officers have again been researching, enhancing, and implementing new ways to record tree data and help assess the risk factor and environmental data of the tree. The enhanced method, Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) works alongside risk ratings for comprehensive management of their urban green spaces. VTA offers an evaluation of tree health, vitality, and structural integrity beyond mere risk assessment, providing an environmental view essential for informed decision-making.

The inspection of trees will be undertaken in accordance with industry best practice guidelines and following the Visual Tree Assessment methodology (VTA) devised by Mattheck and Breloer (1994). The risk assessment element will be carried out following the recommendations and process defined by the National Tree Safety Group 'Common Sense Risk Management of Trees' (2011) and International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Tree Risk Assessment Best Practice Guidance. These processes identify all potential targets that could be impacted by the failure of a hazard. They then identify all potential hazards relating to the tree. Each hazard is then assessed to consider the likelihood of failure, the likelihood of the target being impacted in the event of a failure, and the consequence of that impact taking into consideration protection factors (e.g. other trees/structures between the identified).

The incorporation of VTA alongside risk ratings empowers Council to prioritize both safety and sustainability in managing their urban forest, ensuring the long-term well-being of residents and the environment.

## Risk Management Threshold

The assessment of risk has been determined by considering the likelihood of a noted hazard failing within three years from the date of the assessment. The reason for this

is due to maturity, size, and location of trees in proximity to high occupancy locations and targets.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has published guidelines relating to the management of risk from falling trees or branches (SIM 10/2007/05)<sup>2</sup>. This document follows the principles defined in the HSE document Risk Assessment – A brief guide to controlling risks in the workplace. This establishes the principle that the objective of a risk assessment system is to reduce a risk to “as low as reasonably practicable” (ALARP)<sup>3</sup>.

The risk system adopted by Council will provide four levels of risk rating for every tree:

Rating	Description
Extreme	Failure is imminent with a high likelihood of the hazard impacting a defined target. The consequences of such an impact are severe, and likely to lead to death or highly significant injury. Remedial action will be required as soon as possible.
High	The failure of a hazard is highly likely to occur and the consequence of that hazard impacting a target would be significant, leading to a severe injury or damage to property. Remedial action will be required as soon as reasonably possible.
Moderate	The potential failure of a noted hazard is relatively low or minor, although it is still probable that it would impact a target. Mitigation options must be considered although the timing will be dependent on the tolerance of the land owner.
Low	Low risk hazards are those where the consequences of a hazard impacting a target would be insignificant or negligible, and/or where the likelihood of such an impact is low. Remedial action may be desirable but not necessary.

## Tree Risk Assessment Methodology

For risk to exist, there needs to be a hazard. A hazard is defined as something that has the potential to cause harm. In relation to trees, any part of a tree that could fail has the potential to be a hazard. Therefore, all trees are potentially hazardous.

A hazard is something with the potential to cause harm, whereas risk is the likelihood of potential harm from that hazard being realised. The extent of the risk will depend on:

1. the likelihood of that harm occurring.
2. the potential severity of that harm, i.e. of any resultant injury or adverse health effect; and
3. the target (person, property or infrastructure) which might be affected by the hazard.

The International Society of Arboricultural has devised a programme for tree risk assessment which assesses tree related risk uses two matrices to consider the likelihood of failure, the likelihood of a failed part impacting a target and the severity of that impact. The resulting output of the matrices provides an assessed risk rating (Extreme, High, Moderate & Low), but the management of that risk is retained with the landowner.

Every person or organisation will have a different attitude to risk and therefore the risk threshold will differ. The Risk Assessment does not seek to set a threshold but instead to provide a reference point for the risk manager to base any decision upon.

To assist in determining the level of risk associated with a hazard, the risk assessor needs to follow several stages:

- 1) Assessment of the potential target: The assessor must consider everything, whether inanimate or animate, which could be impacted by a hazard. Having considered what each target is, the assessor must then provide an occupancy rating based on the criteria in Table 2.

Table 2 - Occupancy Rates

Occupancy Rates	
Constant	A target is present at all time, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
Frequent	A target is occupied for a large portion of the day or week
Occasional	The target zone is occupied by people or targets infrequently or irregularly
Rare	The target zone is not commonly occupied by people

- 2) Having considered the potential target/s, the risk assessor must then consider the likelihood of each specified hazard failing. Table 3 provides details of the likely failure definitions.

Table 3 - Likelihood of failure

Likelihood of Failure	
Imminent	Failure has started or is most likely to occur in the near future, even if there is no significant wind or increased load
Probable	Failure may be expected under normal weather conditions within the specified time period
Possible	Failure could occur, but is unlikely during normal weather conditions within the specified period
Improbable	The tree or part is not likely to fail during normal weather conditions and may not fail in many severe weather conditions, within the specified period.

- 3) Once the likelihood of failure has been determined, the assessor must then consider the likelihood of the hazard impacting on the target (on the assumption that the hazard has failed). Table 4 provide a summary of the likelihood of impact definitions.



Table 4 - Likelihood of impact

Likelihood of Impact	
High	Failed tree or tree part will most likely impact the target
Medium	Failed tree or part is as likely as not to impact the target
Low	Not likely that the failed tree or part will impact the target
Very Low	The likelihood of the felled tree or tree part impacting the target is remote.

- 4) Having assessed the potential for failure and the potential of a hazard impacting the target, the assessor needs to consider the consequence of the hazard impacting the target. Table 5 provides details of the consequence definitions.

Table 5 - Consequence of failure

Consequence of Failure	
Severe	Serious personal injury or death, damage to high-value property or disruption of important activities
Significant	Personal injury, property damage of moderate to high-value or considerable disruption
Minor	Very minor personal injury, property damage of low to moderate-value, or small disruptions to traffic
Negligible	No personal injury, low value property damage, or disruption that can be mitigated or repaired.

Once all of the likely or potential outcomes have been considered, the risk assessor is able to reach a conclusion as to the risk rating, using the matrices provided in Table 6 - Likelihood of Failure vs Likelihood of Impact Table 6 and Table 7.

Table 6 - Likelihood of Failure vs Likelihood of Impact

		Likelihood of Impact			
		Very low	Low	Medium	High
Likelihood of failure	Imminent	Unlikely	Somewhat Likely	Likely	Very Likely
	Probable	Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Likely	Likely
	Possible	Unlikely	Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Likely
	Improbable	Unlikely	Unlikely	Unlikely	Unlikely

Table 7 - Risk Rating

		Severity of Impact			
		Negligible	Minor	Significant	Severe
Results of Table 1	Very Likely	Low	Moderate	High	Extreme
	Likely	Low	Moderate	High	High
	Somewhat Likely	Low	Low	Moderate	Moderate
	Unlikely	Low	Low	Low	Low

The principle that has been adopted by Council has been to ensure that mitigation is proposed to reduce all risks to as low as is reasonably possible.

### **PiCUS Sonic Tomograph**

Council Recently invested in the PiCUS Sonic Tomograph, a cutting-edge tool that significantly enhances our ability to assess the internal condition of trees. To maximise the benefits of this technology. Council's Professional Tree Inspectors have undergone specialist training, ensuring they can effectively interpret the data and apply it to tree management strategies. This advanced system employs sonic waves to detect structural weaknesses, decay, and hollows within the tree trunk. By analysing variations in sound velocity, the PiCUS generates detailed tomograms, visually representing the internal condition of a tree in a 2D or even 3D format. This enables arborists to gain crucial insights into tree stability without causing damage to the tree itself.

The PiCUS Sonic Tomograph plays a vital role in safeguarding public spaces by enabling proactive tree risk assessments. Trees in high-traffic areas, such as roadsides, parks, and playgrounds, are particularly susceptible to failure due to decay or structural weakness. By identifying compromised trees before failure occurs, we can take appropriate actions, such as pruning or removal, to prevent potential harm to people and property. This technology supports informed decision-making in response to extreme weather events. Storms and high winds can exacerbate existing weaknesses, leading to tree failure. By integrating PiCUS assessments into routine inspections, Council can mitigate risks by prioritising interventions in vulnerable locations, ultimately reducing the likelihood of accidents and injuries.

Investing in the PiCUS Sonic Tomograph also serves to protect the council's natural and financial assets. Trees are valuable components of urban and park landscapes, providing ecological, aesthetic, and social benefits. Traditional tree risk assessment methods often relied on external symptoms, which could sometimes result in unnecessary tree removals. With the PiCUS, we can make precise evaluations, allowing for targeted pruning and bracing rather than premature removal, preserving valuable tree stock while maintaining safety.

Additionally, preventing tree failure reduces damage to infrastructure, such as footpaths, roads, buildings, and underground utilities. Fallen trees or large branches can cause significant disruption and financial burdens due to emergency response, repair costs, and potential legal liabilities. By incorporating PiCUS technology into our inspection regime, we enhance the longevity of tree assets while minimising maintenance expenses.

#### **Key Benefits of the PiCUS System:**

- Non-invasive assessment – No need for destructive drilling, preserving tree health.
- Accurate decay detection – Identifies fungal decay, cavities, and structural weaknesses before they become hazardous.
- Supports tree retention – Facilitates informed risk management, allowing trees to be preserved where possible.

- Enhanced decision-making – Provides clear, visual insights that guide necessary pruning, bracing, or management actions.
- Cost-effective risk management – Reduces emergency tree work and associated repair costs by identifying and mitigating hazards proactively.

Council tree inspectors are dedicated to balancing public safety with tree conservation. Our specialist training in using the PiCUS Sonic Tomograph equips Tree Inspectors with another valuable tool to ensure our trees continue to thrive while mitigating potential risks. By adopting this innovative technology, the council reinforces its commitment to responsible tree management, fostering safer and greener public spaces for everyone.

Unclassified

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ITEM 17

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	14 May 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Parks & Cemeteries
Date of Report	28 April 2025
File Reference	CW4
Legislation	Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Play Provision, Loughries
Attachments	

A Notice of Motion was agreed by Council in October 2022:  
*“That Council task officers to carry out a review of Play Provision in Loughries with a view to its inclusion in the Councils Play Strategy going forward.”*

*A report on this was brought to Council in December 2022 when the following was agreed.*

*“That Council review the potential for play provision for Loughries in the future when the thresholds as outlined above have been met unless provision is made as a result of the planned discussion with others outside of Council. Council notes the report and will review Play Provision in Loughries in 2024.”*

Play provision was reviewed as agreed in 2024, and in May that year a further report was brought to Council which highlighted that the position had not changed in terms of thresholds being met. At that stage, the following was agreed:

Not Applicable

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*“That Council task officers to engage with local landowners with a view to providing an open green space / informal play area for the community of Loughries in line with the council play strategy. Furthermore, agree that Officers review the potential for play provision for Loughries in the future when the thresholds as outlined above have been met.”*

This report provides a further update to the previous work undertaken.

### Context

The Council's Play Strategy was finalised in 2021 and outlines the strategic approach to play provision in the Borough until 2032. Loughries was assessed in the development of the strategy, but no specific actions in relation to the settlement were included. This was because Loughries is classified as a Small Settlement (as defined in the Ards and North Down Area Plan 2015). The approach to play provision for Small Settlements and rural areas is outlined in the Councils agreed Play Strategy (Section 6.4) as follows:

“Rural Provision Providing fixed play areas in rural settings needs to be measured and balanced against a range of factors including those outlined above in terms of demographics, distance to other settlements and playparks, as well as the need for land acquisition and budget constraints. In rural areas households tend to be generally dispersed within the landscape. In some cases, clusters of dwellings are defined as Small Settlements in terms of the settlement hierarchy which is outlined in the relevant Local Development Plan. The approach in other Council areas in Northern Ireland is to only provide formal fixed play provision in settlements which are classified as Villages and above. In planning terms, the need for play areas is outlined under Planning Policy Statement 8, Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation (Policy OS 2, Public Open Space in New Residential Development). This is a useful benchmark to consider along with the previously mentioned considerations when determining the need for play provision.”

Therefore, a fixed play area will be considered if a Small Settlement has:

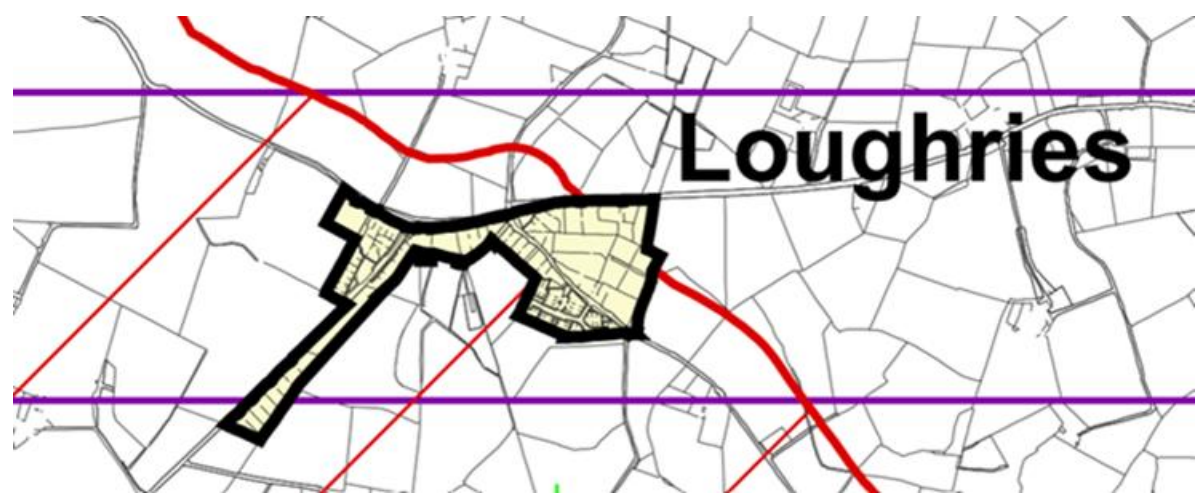
- More than 100 residential units within the defined Settlement Limit (as delineated by the Area Plan) or
- Minimum of 100 residential units within the catchment radial of the play area

If a Small Settlement meets the criterion and in conjunction with the other considerations as outlined above, then the installation of a play area will be considered (if suitable land can be acquired if the Council does not have any other land available within the settlement). If a play area is deemed necessary, then it is considered that a Tier 3/Doorstep Facility would be appropriate.

Alternatives to fixed play provision can be deployed in rural areas such as exploration of Play Partnerships with schools (if they have play areas), Play Events and Play Pods which have been discussed previously within the Play Strategy. This was to be progressed by the appointment of a Development Officer (Play and Recreation), who is now in post and who has been running a series of events across the Borough since starting in July 2024. Further work in relation to alternative play is being progressed.

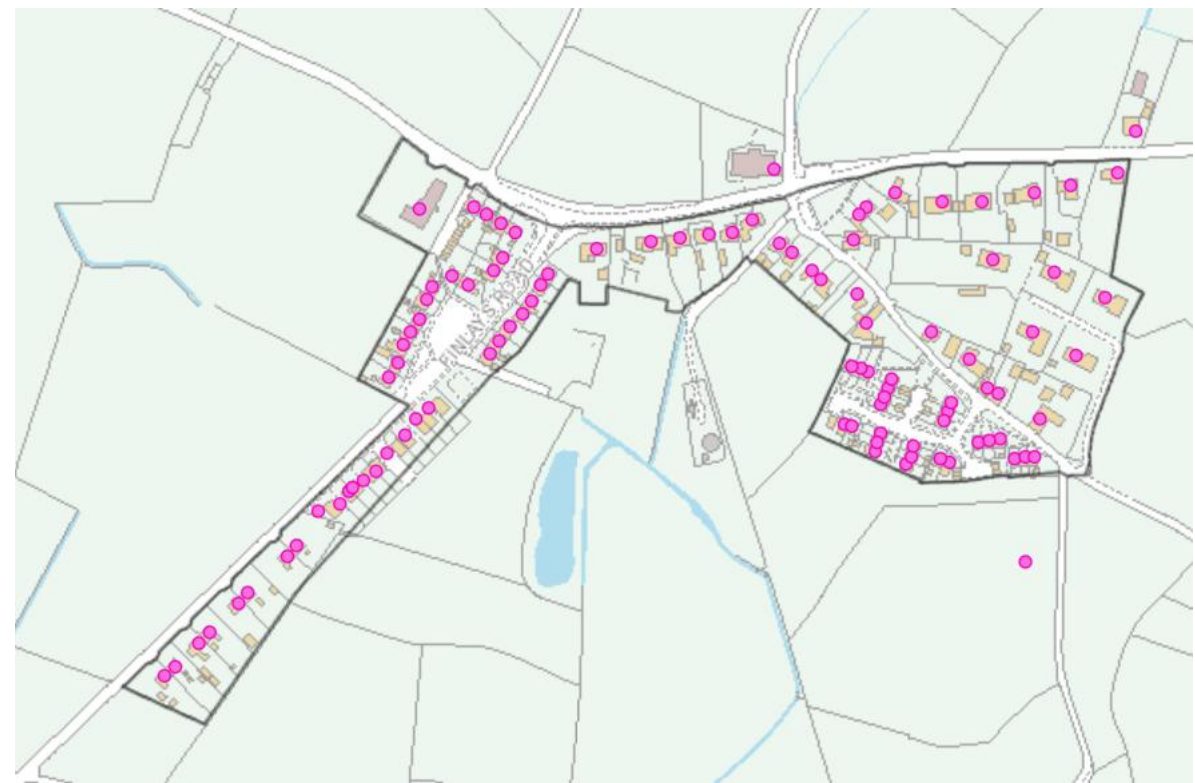
Not Applicable

The Settlement Limit for Loughries as defined by the Ards and Down Area Plan 2015 is shown below.



Settlement Limit of Loughries in the Ards and Down Area Plan 2015

Using the Council's GIS (Geographical Information System) all address points registered in the Borough are shown. This information is updated on a regular basis using Address Pointer Data received via Land and Property Services. There are currently 98 addresses registered within the Settlement Limit of Loughries with one being the Church and another a school, which are not residential, as is shown below. The black line denotes the Settlement Limit.



Address Points in Loughries



Not Applicable



Address Points in Loughries

The above is a recent orthophotography image of Loughries with the address points shown and the Settlement Limit is delineated by the red line. While the number of address points hasn't changed since the reports in December 2022 and May 2024, it may have been perceived that some new houses have been built along Finlay's Road, but at the time of the December 2022 report, the address points had already been registered with Land and Property Services and were annotated on the map and were therefore counted at that time.

Furthermore, Council currently has no land holdings within or out with the Settlement Limit, so therefore land acquisition would be required to deliver any play provision in Loughries.

**Summary**

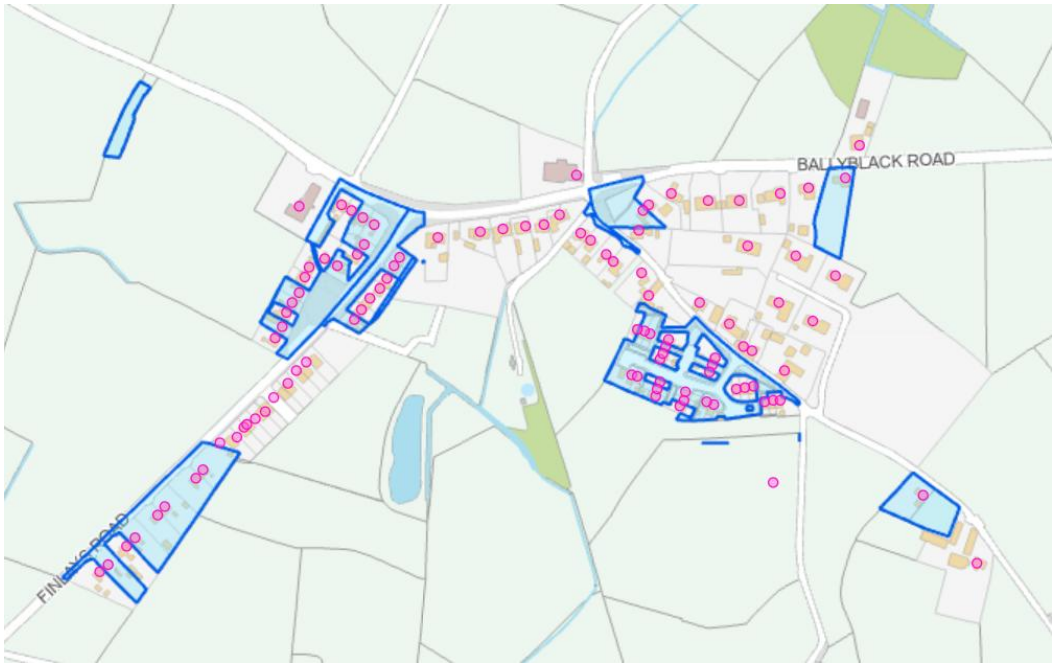
Currently Loughries does not meet the criteria as defined in planning policies and outlined in the Play Strategy, as:

- 1. the threshold of 100 dwellings has not been reached and
- 2. there is no Council land available.

**Future Options**

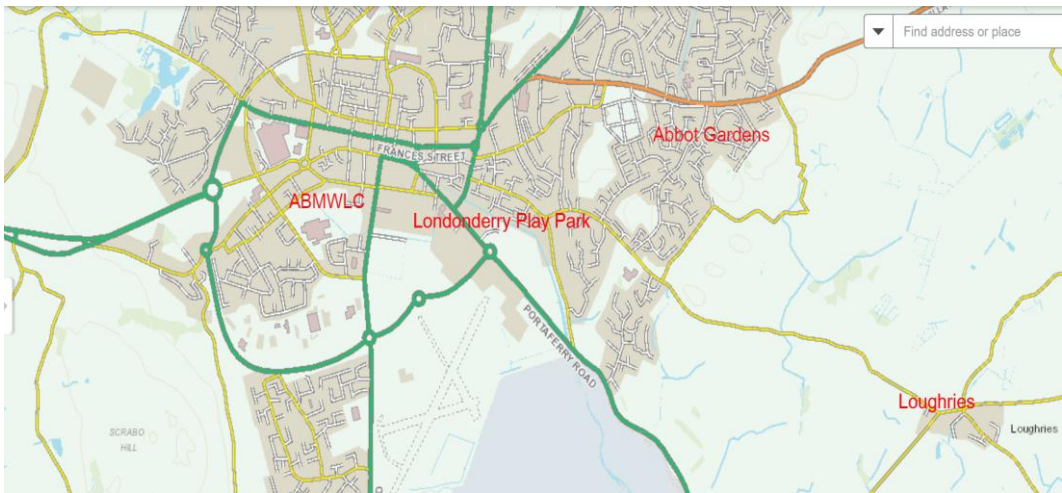
In the May 2024 report, it was put forward that if the residential unit threshold was met, Council could potentially look to explore a partnership with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive who have some land holdings in Loughries (see map on page 5). However, their land holding maps have now been updated and there is no land that would be deemed suitable for the creation of a play area.

Not Applicable



NIHE Land in Loughries

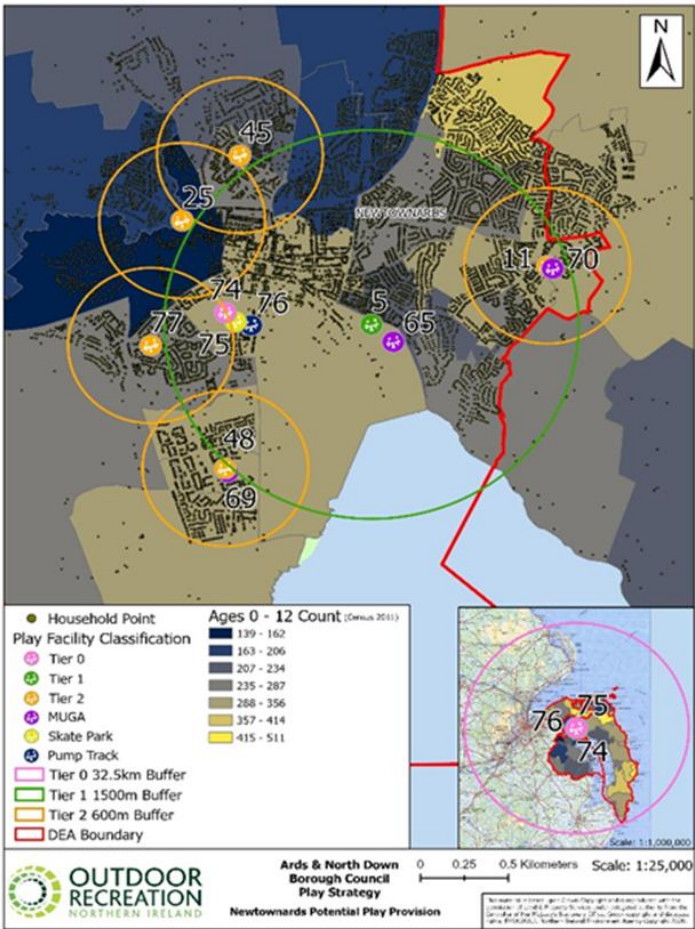
It should also be noted that there are other play parks which are close to Loughries, with the recently refurbished Londonderry Park (Tier 1) being 2.4 miles (by road) and ABMWLC Tier 0 which has an even wider catchment area as shown on the map insert below as well as Abbot Gardens (Bowtown) (Tier 2).



Nearby Play Parks in Newtownards



Not Applicable



Catchment Areas of Play Parks in Newtownards

Private Land

Officers have written to the landowners of nearby parcels of land. To date we have not received any replies to our request to enter into discussions to see if we can use the land for a potential informal play and recreation area. Officers are continuing to make attempts to engage with the landowners to ascertain if the option of acquiring a piece of land for use as an informal play and recreation area is feasible in the future.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes this report.

Unclassified

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## ITEM 18

### Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	14 May 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	N/A
Date of Report	29 April 2025
File Reference	CW173
Legislation	Local Government Act 2015
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below: Correspondence for noting only
Subject	Correspondence with the Prime Minister's Office on Winter Fuel Payments
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Letter from Council Chief Executive to the Prime Minister  Appendix 2 - Response from the Minister for the Department for Work and Pensions

At the meeting of Ards and North Down Borough Council on 30th October, Council stated the position that it strongly opposed the UK Government's recent Winter Fuel Payment policy change and agreed to write to the Prime Minister concerning the matter. A response has now been received.

### RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes the correspondence attached.

## Appendix 1



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12 November 2024

Prime Minister & First Lord of the Treasury  
10 Downing Street  
London  
SW1A 2AA

Dear Prime Minister,

At the meeting of Ards and North Down Borough Council on 30<sup>th</sup> October, Council stated the position that it strongly opposes the UK Government's recent Winter Fuel Payment policy change.

Further, Council has decided to write to you and urge the Government to reverse this harmful decision, which will have a far-reaching and devastating impact on pensioner households across the UK. It would seek assurance that, at the very least, the Pension Credit minimum income guarantee will be increased, ensuring that more low-income pensioner households, particularly those who narrowly miss out, become eligible for pension credit.

I would ask that you give this due consideration and welcome your response, so that I may report back to our elected members.

Yours sincerely

Susie McCullough  
Chief Executive Officer

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**Department  
for Work &  
Pensions**

Caxton House  
Tothill Street  
LONDON  
SW1H 9DA

[ministers@dwp.gov.uk](mailto:ministers@dwp.gov.uk)



**HM Treasury**

HM Treasury  
1 Horse Guards Road  
London  
SW1A 2HQ

Councillor Susie McCullough  
Chief Executive Officer  
Ards and North Down Borough Council  
City Hall, The Castle  
Bangor  
BT20 4BT

Your ref: 193745

Our ref: MC2024/98574

24 April 2025

Dear Councillor McCullough,

Thank you for your letter of 12 November 2024 to the Prime Minister regarding the decision to restrict Winter Fuel Payment eligibility. I am replying as the Minister for Pensions and I apologise for the delay.

In face of the substantial pressures faced by the public finances the UK Government has had to make hard choices to bring the public finances back under control, including changing eligibility for the Winter Fuel Payment so it is targeted on those pensioners who need it most. I am sure you understand that this decision was not taken lightly.

The Winter Fuel Payment is a devolved matter in Northern Ireland and its delivery and the eligibility criteria are the responsibility of the Department for Communities. The Northern Ireland Executive is responsible for balancing its own budget, and I recognise the Executive's decision to maintain parity with the rest of the UK on this issue.

We will not be reversing the decision to means test Winter Fuel Payments - but the Government is resolutely focused on increasing Pension Credit take up to ensure those low-income pensioners eligible for Winter Fuel Payments continue to receive them.

The UK Government is taking action to increase take-up in England, Scotland and Wales and claims have already significantly increased. In Northern Ireland, people can ensure they are receiving all the benefits they are entitled to by contacting the Northern Ireland Pension Centre's Pension Credit Application Line or the 'Make the Call' Wraparound Service.

The Warm Home Discount scheme provides eligible low-income households across Great Britain with a £150 rebate on their electricity bill. This winter, we expect over three million households, including over one million pensioners, to benefit under the scheme. In Northern Ireland, the Affordable Warmth Scheme is available.

The UK Government's Warm Homes Plan will also support investment in insulation and low carbon heating - upgrading millions of homes over this Parliament, protecting bill payers permanently and reducing fuel poverty. I know that my Department is already working with the Department for Communities in Northern Ireland on these devolved matters, and will continue to do so, taking account of the principle of parity in matters of social security.

The Government is absolutely committed to supporting pensioners and giving them the dignity and security they deserve in retirement which is why we have made a commitment to the Triple Lock for the entirety of this Parliament which will mean spending on people's State Pensions is forecast to rise by over £31 billion. Over the course of this Parliament, the yearly amount of the basic State Pension is forecast to increase by around £1,500. Protecting the Triple Lock even in the current economic climate shows our steadfast commitment to pensioners.

Thank you for taking the time to write regarding your concerns.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Torsten Bell', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Torsten Bell MP**

**Minister for Pensions**