June 12th, 2025

Notice Of Meeting

You are requested to attend the meeting to be held on **Wednesday, 18th June 2025** at **7:00 pm** in **Church Street, Newtownards.**

Agenda

Agenda

(Attached)

Agenda C&WC 18 June 2025.pdf *Page 1*

1. Apologies

2. Declarations of Interest

Deputation

3. Branch Out Community

Reports for Approval

4. Leisure Strategy

(Attached)

4. Leisure Strategy.pdf *Page 5*

4.1 Appendix 1 - Getting Active, Staying Active - Leisure Strategy 2025-2034.pdf *Page 7*

5. Food Service Plan 2025/26 and Review of 2024/25

(Attached)

5. Food Service Plan 2025-26 and Review of 2024-2025.pdf *Page 55*

5.1 Appendix 1 - Food Control Service Plan 2025-26 & Review 2024-25.pdf *Page 56*

6. Response to NoM 519 Queens Hall, Holywood

(Attached)

6. Response to Notice of Motion 519. Queens Hall Holywood.pdf *Page 82*

7. Response to NoM 549 White Ribbon Charter

(Attached)

7. Response to Notice of Motion 549. White Ribbon Charter.pdf *Page 85*

8. Christmas Grant Scheme Approval

(Attached)

8. Christmas Grant Scheme Approval.pdf **Page 88**

8.1 Appendix 1 - Christmas Festival 2025 Guidance Critera.pdf **Page 90**

8.2 Appendix 2 - Christmas Festival Application 2025.pdf **Page 96**

9. Updated Good Relations Action Plan 2025 -2026

(Attached)

9. Updated Good Relations Action Plan 2025-2026.pdf **Page 103**

9.1 Appendix 1 - ANDBC Good Relations Action Plan with Additional Reductions.pdf **Page 106**

10. Ulster Scots Action Plan 2025 -2026

(Attached)

10. Ulster Scots Action Plan 2025 - 2026.pdf **Page 139**

10.1 Appendix 1 - Ulster Scots Action Plan 2025 - 2026.pdf **Page 140**

11. Heritage Grants

(Attached)

11. Heritage Grants.pdf **Page 144**

12. Commemorative Tree Planting for Sound Around Ards Talking Newspaper

(Attached)

12. Commemorative Tree Planting for Sound Around Ards Talking Newspaper.pdf **Page 146**

Reports for Noting

13. Environmental Health Protection and Development Annual Activity Report 2024-2025

(Attached)

13. Environmental Health Protection and Development Annual Activity Report 2024-2025.pdf **Page 148**

14. Update on Bathing Waters in ANDBC - Brompton Bay and Donaghadee

(Attached)

14. Update on Bathing Waters in ANDBC - Brompton Bay and Donaghadee?.pdf **Page 162**

15. Response to NoM 595 Bangor Christian Heritage

(Attached)

15. Response to Notice of Motion 595. Bangor Christian Heritage.pdf **Page 164**

16. Ending Violence Against Women and Girls

(Attached)

16. Ending Violence Against Women and Girls.pdf **Page 167**

17. Ards and North Down Sports Forum Grants

(Attached)

17. Ards and North Down Sports Forum Grants.pdf **Page 170**

17.1 Appendix 1 - Successful Coach Education Report for Noting 2025-26.pdf **Page 172**

17.2 Appendix 2 - Successful Individual Travel Accommodation Report for Noting 2025-26.pdf **Page 173**

17.3 Appendix 3 - Unsuccessful Report.pdf **Page 188**

18. Response to NoM 545 Movilla Coffin Lids Update

(Attached)

18. Response to Notice of Motion 545. Movilla Coffin Lids Update.pdf **Page 194**

19. Quest - Ards Blair Mayne and Wellness Leisure Centre and Comber Leisure Centre

(Attached)

19. Quest - Ards Blair Mayne & Wellness Leisure Centre & Comber Leisure Centre.pdf *Page 196*

20. Response to NoM 581 Cemetery Maintenance - Six Month Update

(Attached)

20. Response to Notice of Motion 581. Cemetery Maintenance Six Month Update.pdf *Page 198*

21. Response to NoM 630 Sports Pitch Maintenance Six Month Update

(Attached)

21. Response to Notice of Motion 630. Sports Pitch Maintenance - Six Month Update.pdf *Page 202*

22. Response to NoM 629 Clandeboye Park and Pitch Update

(Attached)

22. Response to Notice of Motion 629. Clandeboye Park & Pitch Update.pdf *Page 206*

23. Performance Report Q3/Q4 20024-2025 Leisure

(Attached)

23. Performance Report Q3-Q4 2024-2025 Leisure.pdf *Page 210*

24. Performance Report Q3/Q4 2024-2025 Environmental Health

(Attached)

24. Performance Report Q3-Q4 2024-2025 Environmental Health.pdf *Page 216*

25. Performance Report Q3/Q42024-2025 Parks and Cemeteries

(Attached)

25. Performance Report Q3-Q4 2024-2025 Parks and Cemeteries.pdf *Page 223*

26. Performance Report Q3/Q4 2024-2025 Community and Culture

(Attached)

26. Performance Report Q3-Q4 2024-2025 Community & Culture.pdf *Page 230*

27. Response to NoM 626 Recognition of US Regiments based in Ards and North Down

(Attached)

27. Response to Notice of Motion 626. Recognition of US Regiments based in ANDBC.pdf *Page 237*

28. Notices of Motion

28.1 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Morgan and Councillor Ashe

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.

28.2 Notice of Motion from Councillor Wray and Councillor Hollywood

Council amends funding eligibility criteria to allow for voluntary dance groups to avail of grants within either the arts or sport funding streams.

Council acknowledges the opportunities performance arts bring in terms of community wellbeing, education, tourism and our local economy.

Officers will provide a report on how Council can further grow performance art across Ards and North Down.

29. Any Other Notified Business

ITEMS ***IN CONFIDENCE***

Reports for Approval Delegated to Committee

30. Regional Tender for Home Safety Equipment

(Attached)

30. Regional Tender for Home Safety Equipment.pdf *Not included*

31. Tender for the Provision of Grounds Maintenance Equipment Repairs and Servicing - June 2025

(Attached)

- ***31. Tender for the Provision of Grounds Maintenance Equipment Repairs and Servicing - June 2025.pdf*** ***Not included***

32. Tender for the Provision of Memorial Testing - June 2025

(Attached)

- ***32. Tender for the Provision of Memorial Testing - June 2025.pdf*** ***Not included***

33. Tender Extension - Grounds Maintenance Support Services

(Attached)

- ***33. Tender Extension - Grounds Maintenance Support Services.pdf*** ***Not included***

34. Tender Extension - Provision of a Keyholder Response Service and Opening and Locking of Various Council areas.

(Attached)

- ***34. Tender Extension - Provision of a Keyholder Response Service and.pdf*** ***Not included***

Reports for Approval

35. Response to NoM 525 Sporting Grants

(Attached)

- ***35. Response to Notice of Motion 525. Sporting Grants.pdf*** ***Not included***

36. Item Withdrawn

37. Q1 Funding - CAAND and Community Network

(Attached)

- ***37. Q1 Funding - CAAND and Community Network.pdf*** ***Not included***

38. MOU for Advice Services 2025-26

(Attached)

- ***38. Memorandum of Understanding for Advice Services 2025-26.pdf*** ***Not included***

39. Request to Change Opening Hours at Bangor Aurora

(Attached)

39. NCLT Request for approval of temporary ammendment to weekend opening hours at Bangor Aurora.pdf	***Not included***

Reports for Noting

40. PEACEPLUS Partnership Minutes

(Attached)

40. PEACEPLUS Partnership minutes.pdf	***Not included***
40.1 Appendix 1 - Minutes of PEACEPLUS Partnership meeting 10th October 2024.pdf	***Not included***

41. PCSP Minutes

(Attached)

41. PCSP Minutes.pdf	***Not included***
41.1 Appendix 1 - Minutes Full PCSP 17.02.2025.pdf	***Not included***

42. NCLT Quarterly Report

(Attached)

42. NCLT Quarterly Report.pdf	***Not included***
42.1 Appendix 1 Q4 202425 Trust Report.pdf	***Not included***
42.2 Appendix 2. NCLT Financial Report Q4 2024-2025.pdf	***Not included***

43. Update on Storm Eowyn Damage at Aurora

(Attached)

43. Update on Storm Eowyn Damage at Aurora.pdf	***Not included***

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

11 June 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 18 June 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

Deputation

3. Branch Out Community

Reports for Approval

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MEMBERSHIP OF COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE (16 MEMBERS)

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

ITEM 4

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	18 June 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Leisure Services
Date of Report	03 June 2025
File Reference	LEI 18
Legislation	The Local Government Act (NI) 2014 The Recreation and Youth Servcies (NI) Order 1986
Section 75 Compliant	Yes ☒ No ☐ Other ☐ If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Leisure Strategy.
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Getting Active, Staying Active Leisure Strategy 2025 - 2034

Members are aware that the Council embarked on the process of developing a new Leisure Strategy for the Borough in January 2024. Following a procurement process, Otium Leisure Consultancy were appointed in May 2024.

Significant research was carried out to determine to state of leisure within the borough. This included.

- Online research with schools, providers and members of the community was carried out.
- Workshops with ANDBC, NCLT and SERCO officers.
- Three workshops with providers of leisure across the Borough.
- Two Elected Member workshops were held.

The level of engagement in the research and the workshops was much higher than similar engagement exercises and highlights the level of interest in this critical area of

Not Applicable

Service delivery. This was extremely helpful for the consultant to develop the leisure strategy. This is summarised in the “What You Told Us” section of the strategy.

The leisure strategy is a ten-year strategy (2025 – 2034) and includes a two year and a ten-year action plan with ambitions targets / KPI’s. A budget of £100,000 for the first year of the strategy has been secured and a brief overview is detailed below.

Year 1 2025-26 Key Aspects

The delivery of the strategy is very much dependent on the Council committing much needed financial resources to ensure effective delivery over the ten years the strategy covers. As part of the 2025/26 budget setting process earlier this year Officers proposed an indicative budget of £100,000 towards the first year of delivery. This was secured and it is proposed, as detailed in the two-year action plan, that work commences immediately on the following four key areas.

1. An update of the sport facilities strategy for the Borough. £40k indicative budget
2. The development of a sport specific strategy in partnership with the governing body, sport clubs and other key stakeholders. It is proposed to focus on the sport of athletics in light of the ongoing issues at sportsplex, the concerns raised by the users of the facility, meetings with local athletic clubs and the governing body and the significant number of active participants who actively are engaging in athletics from the coach to 5k participant to our Olympians. Further sport specific strategies will be developed in future years pending funding. £30k indicative budget.
3. A series of baseline data analysis to be undertaken as detailed in the two-year action plan will require a dedicated resource. It is critical baseline data is established against which the ten-year strategy will be delivered and measured against. £10k indicative budget
4. A number of actual activity programmes targeted at identified areas of need and delivered in partnerships. These will be delivered in the areas and will require support in terms of delivery staff and equipment. Indicative cost £10k
5. The remaining £10k will be utilised across the other activities identified in year one of the two-year action plan depending on staff availability and progress on the above comprehensive programme of works.

Otium Leisure Consultancy who developed the strategy will present to the Committee.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council adopt the Leisure Strategy, “Getting Active, Staying Active”.

Getting Active, Staying Active

LEISURE STRATEGY 2025-2034

A LEISURE STRATEGY FOR ARDS AND NORTH DOWN
WHERE EVERYONE CAN ENJOY AN ACTIVE LIFE

www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

An Overview

This is Ards and North Down's first leisure strategy. Creating the strategy has been led by the Council whilst its implementation will be coordinated by a partnership of agencies and groups offering active leisure opportunities (anything that involves exercise) in the Borough. Consultation, through surveys and meetings has been extensive, showing a great deal of interest in and support for the strategy's vision as well as a keen desire to be involved in its delivery. The strategy is being brought forward at a time when the role of providers of active leisure opportunities in helping to address wider societal challenges is increasingly recognised.

Getting Active, Staying Active links clearly with the Council's third Corporate Plan, which will see ***'progress towards A Sustainable Borough through innovation in our services and greater partnerships with our residents and other organisations.'***

Why We Need a Leisure Strategy

The link between being active and being healthy is well known yet there are sections of our community oblivious to the benefits of an active lifestyle or for whom the barriers to being active are too great. We need to be better at supporting people with the most to gain from being active whilst encouraging everyone to remain active throughout their life.

It's clear that the leisure sector's social conscience has been awakened and that its important role as a contributor to addressing wider societal challenges has been recognised. The operation of leisure services is transitioning from its traditional role solely as a leisure provider to becoming an active wellbeing service. Embracing this shift is critical to the development and implementation of the Getting Active, Staying Active leisure strategy as it sets out to fulfil its potential and make an appreciable difference in the lives of everyone in Ards and North Down, especially those who need it the most.

The Big Plan (the Borough's Community Plan)

Getting Active, Staying Active is aligned with The Big Plan, which aims to ensure *all people in Ards and North Down:*

- enjoy good health and wellbeing.
- are respected and live in communities where they are safe and feel secure.
- feel pride from having access to a well-managed sustainable environment.

The Vision

Getting Active, Staying Active
A Leisure Strategy for Ards and North Down
where everyone can enjoy an active life

Themes and Outcomes

Getting Active, Staying Active focuses on four themes across a ten-year delivery period. The strategy will be delivered in stages, each stage having a detailed action plan with measurement of what has been achieved. The strategy has an initial two-year action plan. One of the KPIs during this two-year period is the formation of the Strategy Implementation Group who will oversee the delivery of the strategy and its ten-year action plan.

Theme	Outcome
Active Partnerships	All Council directorates or service areas and relevant external organisations have ownership of the strategy and are committed to its delivery. The strategy's potential is realised.
Active Opportunities	All sections of the Ards and North Down population can access active leisure opportunities that suit their age, abilities, interests and circumstances.
Active Communications	Better awareness of opportunities for active leisure through a mix of general and targeted information shared via both traditional and digital channels.
Active Support	Activity providers are supported in their work to deliver active leisure opportunities.

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2. Living Better, Living Longer **03**

3. What You Told Us **07**

4. Why We Need a Leisure Strategy **17**

5. The Strategy **23**

6. What Next? **33**

1. Getting Active, Staying Active

This is the first leisure strategy for Ards and North Down. Within the strategy 'leisure' is taken to mean *active leisure – anything that involves exercise.* This includes sport and physical activity whether it's enjoyed as a group or by individuals either indoors or outdoors, everything from recreational walking to competing as a team.

Creating the strategy has brought together a wide range of groups and organisations and gathered the views of around 1,600 residents. The strategy's vision, Getting Active, Staying Active, encourages everyone to be more active – no-one is left out. Consultation and research tell us that we need to be better at supporting people with the most to gain from being active and encourage everyone to remain active throughout their life.

Geography of the Borough

The Borough's urban areas are Bangor City, Newtownards, Holywood, Comber and Donaghadee with many villages and small settlements making up the area's population of 164,000.

With around 115 miles of attractive coastline on the southern shore of Belfast Lough and most of Strangford Lough, the area is a popular place to live in and visit. Ards and North Down Borough Council has led the preparation of Getting Active, Staying Active, which will be implemented in partnership with statutory organisations and activity provider groups throughout the Borough.

In Ards and North Down there are many opportunities to enjoy active leisure at indoor and outdoor facilities provided by the Council, by commercial operators and by voluntary and community providers. Getting Active, Staying Active embraces all the providers of active leisure opportunities, while recognising that the Council provides the most opportunities for active leisure via its facilities and services across the Borough, including:

- Ards Blair Mayne Wellbeing and Leisure Complex
- Bangor Aurora Aquatic and Leisure Complex
- Bangor Sportsplex
- Comber Leisure Centre
- Londonderry Park, Newtownards
- Outdoor sports and recreation facilities
- Portaferry Sports Centre
- Queen's Leisure Complex, Holywood

Annually, the Council's Leisure Service attracts around two million visits, a mix of members, casual users and people engaging in coached sessions and activities.

Add to this the thousands of sessions delivered by other providers and the multitude of opportunities for informal outdoor activities and it's clear to see that many people in the Borough enjoy being active. Yet, like other Council areas there are health inequalities in Ards and North Down[1] depending on where people live. This can be seen in life expectancy at birth statistics:

[1] *Health Inequalities: Annual Report 2024. Department of Health.*

Life Expectancy at Birth in AND		
	Borough-Wide	In 20% most deprived areas
Male	80.0 years	77.2 years
Female	82.9 years	81.0 years

The largest inequality gaps between the 20% most and least deprived areas are found in smoking during pregnancy, preventable deaths and hospital admissions linked to drugs, alcohol and self-harm. Encouraging and enabling more people to get active and stay active can help reduce these and other health-related inequalities.

It is people, at whatever age, who are presently inactive or not active enough who will benefit most from becoming active and remaining active throughout their life. There are still sections of society oblivious to the message of the benefits of an active lifestyle or for whom the barriers to being active are too great. This challenge is emphasised by Sport England:[2]

'For many people sport and activity is not part of everyday life. Even more so now than before the pandemic, opportunities to get involved in sport and activity – and to reap the rewards of being active – depend too much on your background, your gender, your bank balance and postcode. Helping to remove the barriers to activity has never been more important.'

[2] *Future of Public Sector Leisure. Sport England 2022.*

It's clear that the leisure sector's social conscience has been awakened and that its important role as a contributor to addressing wider societal challenges has been recognised. The operation of leisure services is transitioning from its traditional role solely as a leisure provider to becoming an active wellbeing service. Embracing this shift is critical to the development and implementation of the Getting Active, Staying Active leisure strategy as it sets out to fulfil its potential and make an appreciable difference in the lives of everyone in Ards and North Down, especially those who need it the most.

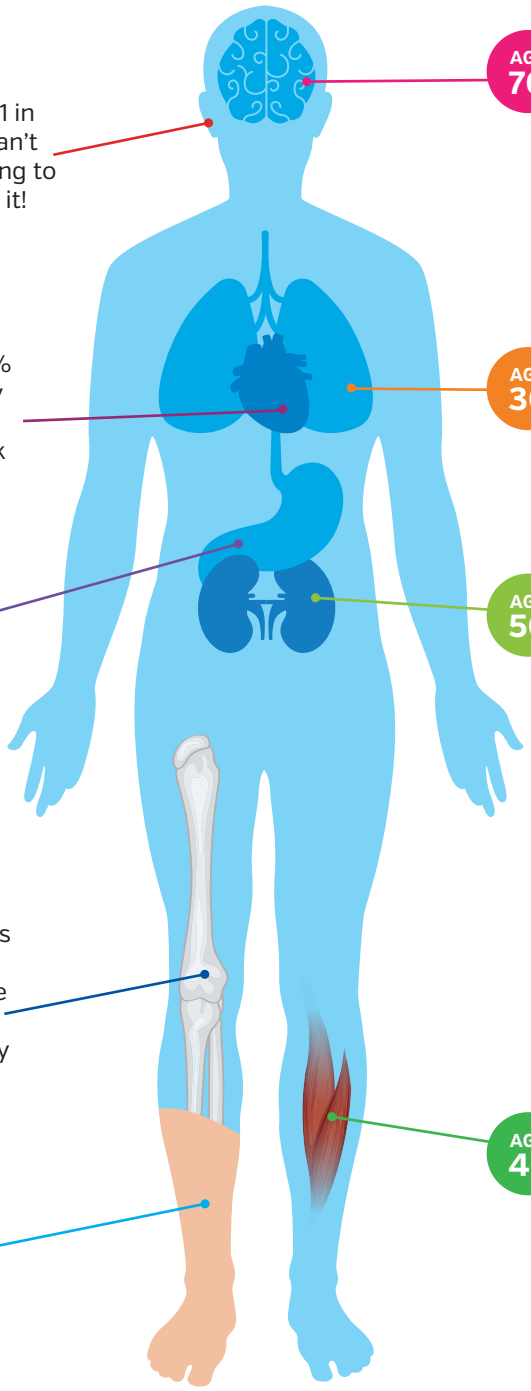
2. Living Better, Living Longer

People living in Ards and North Down generally enjoy good health. Of the Department of Health's 32 measures of health analysed for Ards and North Down, 21 are better than and eleven are similar to the NI average; none are worse.[3] Looking at life expectancy, even though the age profile of Ards and North Down is older than the NI average, women can expect to live 0.7 years beyond the NI average and men 1.6 years.

[3] Health Inequalities: Annual Report 2024. Department of Health.

Here's a rough guide[4] to what happens to our bodies as we age and what we can do to keep well.

[4] Taken from an article in Time Magazine 2015.



AGE 65

EARS

Age-induced hearing loss happens gradually, affecting 1 in 3 people aged 65 to 75. We can't do much to slow it but listening to lots of loud music will hasten it!

AGE 65

HEART

Our bodies' ability to use oxygen reduces by about 10% every ten years from an early age and arteries tend to get stiffer. We can reduce the risk of heart disease by staying active throughout our lives.

AGE 60

GUT

We absorb fewer nutrients as the tiny hairs – villi – in our gut tend to flatten out. Eating well is important to keep our gut healthy.

AGE 35

BONES

After age 35 bone mass tends to reduce by up to 1% per year. Weight-bearing exercise makes a big difference to bone density and is especially important for older people.

AGE 18

SKIN

Our skin starts to be less stretchy. We can slow the process by not smoking and having good eating habits.

AGE 70

BRAIN

By age 70 we start to see age-related brain changes speed up. We can slow these changes by keeping up activities that engage and stimulate us.

AGE 30

LUNGS

Our lung function begins dropping from age 30 by about 1% a year; a sedentary lifestyle increases this but exercise can reduce it.

AGE 50

KIDNEYS

Our key function – waterworks! – reduces from about age 50. Drink plenty of water, around 6 to 8 glasses daily.

We don't stop being active because we grow old, we grow old because we stop being active.

AGE 40

MUSCLES

We all lose muscle and gain fat from around age 40. Regular activity that works our muscles reduces muscle decline.

Sit Less, Move More

Not everyone is naturally active and it can be hard to know where to begin. Start small by finding easy ways to fit being active into your daily life and build up gradually as you begin to see the benefits.

Time constraints top the list of barriers to getting and staying active but with planning it's possible to be active every day; here are three things to think about:

- Being active is time for you! Keep to a daily schedule and you'll see the benefits to your physical and mental health.
- Combine being active with other daily activities, perhaps walking or cycling for the school run, or to work.
- Even short bursts of activity all add up. Think stairs instead of the lift or go for a brisk walk at lunchtime.

Healthy is an outfit that looks different on everybody.

Here are six benefits to embracing an active lifestyle to think about:

1. Enjoy your later years
By the time we reach 60 many of our health outcomes have already been determined. So, getting and staying active throughout our lives really helps us keep well and enjoy our later years.

2. Wellbeing
Being active with family and friends encourages a sense of wellbeing and makes children feel good about themselves whilst reinforcing family bonds.

3. Energy
Whatever our age or ability, even small changes to our active lives will make us feel good and give us more energy.

4. Happier
Active leisure helps us feel happier by reducing feelings of stress and giving us a sense of achievement. It also helps improve sleep and boosts our self-esteem.

5. Reduce risk of major illnesses
Moving more is known to reduce the risk of us developing many common long-term conditions such as heart disease, stroke, Type 2 diabetes and some cancers.

6. Health
Making active leisure a habit can help with breathing difficulties, high blood pressure and bone health.

Every Move Counts

The World Health Organisation tells us that ***'being active has significant health benefits for hearts, bodies and minds whether you're walking, wheeling or cycling, dancing, doing sport or playing with your kids.'***[5]

[5] *WHO guidelines on physical activity and sedentary behaviour (2020).*

LIMIT
Sedentary time

REPLACE
with some physical activity

ACTIVITY
Any is better than none

150
minutes per week

PREGNANT & POSTPARTUM WOMEN

150-300
minutes per week

ADULTS & OLDER ADULTS

60
minutes per day

CHILDREN & ADOLESCENTS

On at least **2 days a week**
muscle strengthening activities

ADULTS

On at least **3 days a week**
multicomponent activities for balance and strength

OLDER ADULTS

More than **300**
minutes per week

EVERYONE WHO CAN

More is better

A YEAR FROM NOW YOU MAY WISH YOU HAD STARTED TODAY

LET'S Be active Everyone Everywhere Everyday | World Health Organization

3. What You Told Us

During consultation for Getting Active, Staying Active we explored active leisure opportunities by speaking with and listening to groups and organisations who deliver activities, and people who participate in them.

We met with local communities across Ards and North Down, with Council staff and with organisations interested in getting people more active. We conducted three surveys to help inform the strategy:

- **Leisure Strategy Community Survey**
- **Activity Providers Survey**
- **Schools Survey**

What we learnt can be summarised as follows:

Partnerships are critical to the success of Getting Active, Staying Active. The results from the three surveys highlight the importance of effective partnership working that engages key agencies, organisations, groups and the community. Partnerships can leverage resources, expertise and outreach capabilities. They can also facilitate the development of programmes that are responsive to community needs, promote shared use of facilities and assist in the move towards active wellbeing.

Inclusive and diverse opportunities for active leisure is a significant theme. Inclusivity is a particular need for individuals with disabilities, mental health challenges and marginalised groups. This can be achieved by partnering with organisations already working with underrepresented groups, helping to design activities that are accessible and welcoming.

Cost emerges as a barrier to participation in leisure activities, noted by activity providers and schools especially. This highlights the importance of creating affordable or subsidised leisure programmes to encourage broad community access.

Community Sports Clubs and Groups in Ards and North Down

There are around 150 community sports clubs and groups delivering active leisure opportunities across the Borough. Around 20,000 people, or 12% of Ards and North Down's population, are involved in these clubs and groups, people of all ages and abilities. With around 100 different sports and activities represented across all the clubs and groups, ranging from angling to volleyball, disability sports to pickleball, there's a sport or activity to suit everyone.

20,000
PEOPLE IN ARDS AND NORTH DOWN ARE INVOLVED IN COMMUNITY SPORTS CLUBS

In people's minds 'sport' usually conjures up competition, either as a team or as an individual. However, the community sports clubs' purpose in Ards and North Down is primarily participation and fun, then competition. Sports clubs and groups are constantly evolving in recognition of how they contribute to their local communities; as Sport NI says: **'Sport changes lives and we know of its enduring ability to support health and wellbeing, educational attainment, cohesive communities and instil pride in our region.'**

Whether the activity has a high profile or is less well known, all 150 community sports clubs and groups in Ards and North Down have a part to play in Getting Active, Staying Active.

A survey of the Borough's sports clubs undertaken by Sport NI in 2019/20 revealed *'there are nearly twice as many males as females in the community sports clubs and groups, however, this gap is closing as more girls and women get involved as participants and as coaches and administrators; around 4,500 people are volunteers in the Borough's sports clubs and groups, nearly half of whom are females. People volunteer mostly because they 'love the sport', they 'want to give something back' and they 'have a child involved in the club/group.' Half of the volunteers are aged 19 to 49 years and a third are over 50 years. This age profile, coupled with the top reasons why people volunteer, highlights the community nature of sports clubs and groups; the social aspect clearly adds to the activity. Looking at coaches there are 1,100 coaches involved, of whom about 40% are female.'*[6]

[6] *Club Survey 2019/20. A Headline Report for Ards and North Down. Sport NI.*

The Borough's community sports clubs and groups are well organised with most – but not all – having the essential policies and procedures for community organisations such as insurances, a constitution, safeguarding code of conduct and safety procedures.

Perhaps surprisingly, only about half have policies on members' health and wellbeing and on volunteers, whilst less than half have a development plan in place. However, by their very nature they have a positive attitude and a passion for what they do and how they help people.

Thinking ahead, they aspire to:

- Increase participation, especially females and young people.
- Grow social aspects to enhance mental wellbeing.
- Ensure members enjoy being part of the club.
- Be financially secure.
- Create greater awareness of 'minority' sports.

Rhys McClenaghan

Olympic Gold Medallist: Paris 2024.

Rhys first tried gymnastics at the Ards Leisure Centre. He loved learning new skills and how to move his body in ways he didn't think were possible.

At age eight he started to really focus on gymnastics, a decision motivated by his ambitions for the future. Early in his career his Russian coach sparked his love for gymnastics. At age 14 he started working with his current coach Luke Carson who turned Rhys into the world's best. Rhys says the following:

'Sport is a great learning experience for any walk of life. Being active and involved in sport develops skills and strategies in children's minds that they can use in whatever they do in the future. Teaching children that failure is a part of success and not to be discouraged by difficult activities but to welcome them is essential in anything they do. Creating a community to encourage as many children and adults to participate in physical activity will improve quality of life. Less illness, stronger bodies and improved mental health will be the outcome of a community driven to regularly exercising and/or participating in sport. This is why it is essential to encourage as many people as possible to pursue a physical activity which they enjoy.'

Rhys trains at the Ards Blair Mayne Wellbeing and Leisure Complex.

Leisure Strategy Community Survey

The survey, conducted as part of the Council's stakeholder engagement process, attracted an impressive 1,564 responses. This level of response is significant as it emphasises the importance that people living in Ards and North Down attach to leisure provision.

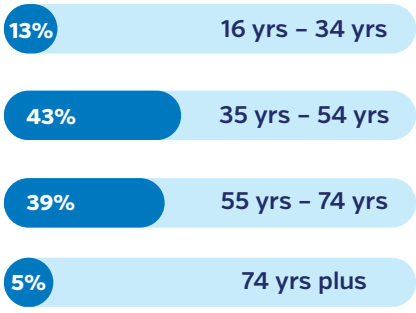
The survey questionnaire asked residents about how active they are, the activities they do, what they think about leisure provision and how important it is to them, the barriers they encounter to being active, and much more.

Age

The largest proportion of respondents lies in the 35 years to 54 years age bracket, accounting for 43% of total respondents. However, this is closely followed by the 55 years to 74 years age bracket which accounts for 39% of total responses. The younger age bracket accounts for only 13% of total responses.

Age Bracket	No of Responses	%
16 yrs – 34 yrs	199	13%
35 yrs – 54 yrs	669	43%
55 yrs – 74 yrs	604	39%
74 yrs plus	92	5%
Total	**1,564**	**100%**

The respondents' age profile may reflect the age profile of the Borough's residents; from 2011 to 2021 the percentage of the Borough's population over 65 years rose from 18% to 22%.



Disability/Long-Term Illness

In the provision of leisure services, it's important to be aware of the percentage of the population living with a disability or long-term condition so that they can be supported in being active. Whilst 83% of respondents do not have a disability or long-term condition, 13% reported that they do.[10] A total of 121 respondents provided some detail on the nature of their condition. These include mobility issues, chronic conditions (e.g., Parkinson's disease, Multiple Sclerosis, Diabetes, Fibromyalgia, Rheumatoid Arthritis), respiratory/cardiovascular conditions, visual and auditory impairments, cancer survivors and autism spectrum disorders.

Frequency

Nearly three quarters (71%) of respondents engage in active leisure either daily or several times each week. However, the remaining 29% are fairly inactive:

Frequency	%
Daily	18%
Several times a week	53%
Weekly	18%
Monthly	4%
Rarely	6%
Never	1%

[7] *The remainder chose not to respond.*

Getting Active, Staying Active aims to make a difference by engaging the inactive so that more people meet the World Health Organisation's recommendation of 150 minutes of active leisure each week to benefit health and wellbeing. Given that 99.9% of respondents agree with ***'enjoying leisure activities can benefit and improve my general health and wellbeing',*** there is a substantial difference between knowing about the benefits and being sufficiently active to get the benefits. This is a key driver for Getting Active, Staying Active.

Leisure Activities

Respondents were asked to list the leisure activity they had participated in within the previous year; below are the most popular activities.[8]

[8] *Respondents were able to 'tick all that apply' from a list of 38 activities.*

Activity	All Respondents	Most Popular Age	Most Popular Gender
Walking for recreation	58%	55 yrs and over	Female
Indoor swimming and diving	37%	35 to 54 yrs	Female
Keepfit, Aerobics, Yoga	35%	55 yrs and over	Female
Jogging/Running	28%	35 to 54 yrs	Male
Weight training/lifting	27%	16 to 34 yrs	Male
Cycling	23%	35 to 54 yrs	Male
Open water swimming	15%	35 to 54 yrs	Female
Golf	13%	35 to 54 yrs	Male
Football	12%	16 to 34 yrs	Male
Dancing	10%	55 yrs and over	Female

Surveys

In similar surveys, walking for recreation is always the most popular active leisure activity; it is easily accessible, inexpensive and, in pairs or groups, very sociable. It's interesting to note that open water swimming, whilst it has been a leisure activity for many years, is growing in popularity with many groups forming in the Borough. In presenting the top ten activities in order of their popularity it is not intended to infer any activity having more importance than another – all active leisure activities are equally valid!

Walking for recreation is enjoyed more by women than men, with a difference of 13 percentage points. Similarly, *swimming/diving and keepfit/aerobics/yoga* are mostly enjoyed by women. The fairly recent popularity of open water swimming has more female participation. Male participation is higher than female participation in *jogging/running, weight training* and *cycling.* The starkest difference in gender-based participation levels is in *football* and in *golf* with both having a greater percentage of male participants. This points to the need for a marketing focus in these activities to encourage more female involvement.

Participation

	Male	Female
Football	23%	5%
Golf	19%	8%

Gym Membership

Nearly half (47%) of respondents are members of a Council leisure centre, with 14% having private gym membership. This leaves 39% of respondents not having gym membership. Analysis reveals that membership of a Council facility is strongly linked to the key activities provided at the Council's leisure facilities – *swimming* and *keep fit/aerobics/yoga.* People who have no gym membership tend to be less involved in structured activities, finding *walking for recreation* more accessible.

Ability and Opportunity

Respondents were asked to what extent they agree or disagree with two statements:

I feel I have the ability to take part in active leisure opportunities

- 69% high agreement

I feel I have the opportunity to take part in active leisure opportunities

- 46% high agreement

This comparison shows a generally positive sentiment towards the ability to participate but highlights a significant gap between ability and opportunity. Asked to comment on their responses, four themes emerge:

- **Lack of accessible information**
- **Cost and affordability**
- **Geographic location of facilities**
- **Inclusivity and accessibility**

The profile of those respondents reporting the lowest level of opportunities includes females, rural residents, people who are inactive, those aged 35 – 54 yrs and those without leisure centre or gym membership. Here again Getting Active, Staying Active can help address the gap between ability and opportunity.

Why do people either participate or not participate in active leisure?

This question was posed to help understand the key drivers behind people's motivations relating to active leisure. The top motivations for being active are to do with how people feel about themselves:

79%	**To improve my overall health and fitness**
63%	**To make me feel better**
55%	**To maintain my mental health**
38%	**To help control my weight**

The top four reasons, or barriers for not being more active are:

30%	**I don't have time**
23%	**I don't have enough money**
23%	**Lack of facilities/activities in my area**
19%	**Don't know what is on in my area**

Bangor Aurora Aquatic and Leisure Complex and Ards Blair Mayne Wellbeing and Leisure Complex

Macmillan Move More

At Bangor Aurora Aquatic and Leisure Complex the Macmillan Move More classes are making a positive difference in people's lives. One lady joined the classes after cancer treatment with very low motivation and feeling down. She improved her fitness/strength and became a great positive influence for other people in her class, even bringing in new members. She was able to return to work full time and is now a regular gym user at Aurora. Another Macmillan Move More client joined classes before his cancer treatment and was able to build himself up enough to have surgery and come back to classes for rehabilitation, attending multiple classes each week. His mood has greatly improved and he brings positive energy to all classes, creating a good atmosphere for everyone.

Other barriers for not being more active:

- ‘I feel self-conscious/embarrassed’
- ‘I feel I can’t commit to a programme’
- ‘I feel my age (over 60) is a barrier’
- ‘My disabilities make it difficult’

It is people who experience these lesser-reported barriers and people who are the least able to take part who have the most to gain from becoming and remaining active. Only 1% of respondents said, *‘I’m just not interested in being more active’,* which suggests that efforts to address the barriers will be viewed positively and result in increasing levels of activity amongst those who need it the most.

Age Range	Biggest Barrier	Second Biggest Barrier
16 to 34 yrs	Time	Money
35 to 54 yrs	Time	Lack of facilities /activities
55 yrs and over	Age	Don’t know what’s on

Finding out about Active Leisure Opportunities

Respondents were asked about their preferred way to find out about locally available active leisure opportunities. Here are the results for all respondents:

75%	Social media platforms
44%	Council Facebook
38%	Leaflet/magazine through the door
13%	Council magazine
12%	Advert in local newspaper

Analysis confirms that social media platforms are favoured by the under 55s to a greater extent than the population at large. Perhaps an unexpected result for over 55s is that, whilst they favour social media platforms less than the population at large (by 12 percentage points), it is their most favoured means of finding out about leisure opportunities.

Where People do Active Leisure Activities

49%	Green/Blue Spaces
38%	Council/Club Facilities
13%	Home/Street/Road

The results confirm that green/blue spaces – public parks, greenways, forests, mountains/hills, rivers, lakes, beaches – are important resources for the enjoyment of active leisure, although not to the exclusion of Council and community sports groups’ facilities.

This highlights the surge in the use of green/blue spaces during the pandemic and in the years that followed. Strategies such as ‘Active Living’ (Department for Communities) and ‘The Power of Sport’ (Sport NI) recognise this development and seek to sustain its growth.

Tourism and Green/Blue Spaces in Ards and North Down

Tourism Northern Ireland’s recent research (October 2024) rates scenic walks as the second highest ‘what visitors do on holiday’ activity, complementing commercial activity and leisure offerings available in Ards and North Down. Tourists place a good deal of importance on wellness in what they do with resulting benefits to economic returns, in line with the economic priority in the Council’s Corporate Plan.

Activity Providers Survey

A total of 66 activity providers – community sports clubs and groups and charitable organisations – responded to the activity providers survey which questioned them on a range of issues. Of these, 60 groups gave information on their membership size.

Membership Size Range	Number of Groups	Approx. Total Members	
		Number	% of Total
0-10	3	15	0.4%
11-50	20	610	15.0%
51-100	11	825	20.4%
100 plus	26	2,600	64.2%
Totals	**60**	**4,050**	**100%**

It's estimated, based on similar research studies, that around 12% of the Borough's population are members of a club or group offering active leisure opportunities, giving a total of around 20,000 individuals. The majority of activity provider groups responding to the survey have 100 plus members, suggesting that a substantial portion of community participation is driven by these groups.

Engaging with the Council

Activity providers engage with the Council in a wide variety of ways, ranging from renting facilities for regular classes (e.g., Ards Table Tennis Club, Let's Do Pilates) to organising large-scale events (e.g., Swim Ulster for national swimming competitions). These collaborations span different sports and community services, highlighting the Council's role in supporting a broad spectrum of activities that cater to diverse interests and needs within the community. Several collaborations emphasise health and wellbeing, particularly targeting underrepresented or vulnerable groups. For instance, Action Mental Health works with the Council to engage clients with mental ill health in leisure activities, and the Alzheimer's Society collaborates to offer dementia-friendly exercise classes. These examples underscore the Council's commitment to promoting inclusive and accessible health and wellbeing initiatives in collaboration with local organisations.

The Council also plays a crucial role in facilitating the organisation of events and providing access to resources. Clubs and governing bodies like Peninsula Triathlon Club and NI Orienteering benefit from sports development event grants and from the Council's assistance with event logistics, such as securing venues, road closures and promotional support. Additionally, grants and access agreements are vital in enabling groups to sustain their activities and attract wider participation, demonstrating the Council's significant contribution to their operational success.

The survey questionnaire addressed the possibility of groups partnering with the Council; it asked, *'would your group be interested in exploring opportunities to partner with the Council to deliver the leisure strategy?';* 90% of the groups responding to this question replied *yes.* Whilst these responses were not probed further, this strong interest indicates a willingness within the community of activity providers to collaborate on the future delivery of active leisure opportunities.

Looking at where activity providers deliver active leisure opportunities, the results evidence the importance of the mix of leisure centre and community (including sports club) facilities and the mix of indoor and outdoor facilities; indeed, outdoor locations accommodate slightly more organised activity than indoor facilities/locations.

Outdoor Locations

This emphasises the importance of the leisure strategy embracing outdoor locations and facilities, a point made by Sport England in stating that *'provision should not be limited to physical assets and facilities but include using parks, green and blue space, community centres, etc.'* Despite recent growth in virtual engagements, the survey results suggest that activity providers deal mostly with in-person activities.

Why do people participate in your group?

Activity providers were asked *'what motivates people to get involved with your group?'* The results demonstrate that people's main motivation for getting involved with an activity provider group is linked to how they feel about themselves, either through better health and fitness or mental health. Meeting people and socialising is also an important aspect that can be enjoyed by participating in activities or even as an administrator. *Developing skills* is also an important consideration, however, *elite performance* is regarded by activity providers as being of much less importance in people deciding to get involved.

Activity provider groups should offer activities that cater to fitness and health improvement whilst also fostering environments that encourage social interaction and a sense of belonging alongside skill development. Also important is the need to incorporate activities, or elements of activities, which promote relaxation, stress relief and mental wellbeing. Activity provider groups are clearly people-focused, favouring in-person activities rather than virtual (online) activities.

How can the Council help your group?

Twenty-four activity provider groups gave open comment responses to the question, *'how could the Council help your group increase its current membership or deliver different activities to a new membership type or partner with your group to help deliver the leisure strategy?'* Here is one response by way of example:

> **ACTION MENTAL HEALTH**
>
> *'We need to ensure the strategy engages those with disabilities including mental ill health. The leisure centres are fabulous for those that are motivated to attend but we need to reach out to those who are not. Suggestion to establish a group to seek views from those with disabilities regarding leisure provision both to suggest new opportunities and congratulate the Council on initiatives that have been successful. Clarify where mental health & wellbeing fits in with leisure strategy and other departments in Council e.g., community, arts, wellbeing etc.'*

This response and other activity providers' survey responses generally emphasise the importance of making active leisure opportunities more inclusive, particularly for girls and women, people with disability, people with mental health challenges, children and young people and those living in deprived areas. Suggestions include tailored outreach, specialised activities and collaborations with organisations already working with these sectors. There is a strong call to reduce barriers to participation by offering more affordable or subsidised activities and addressing psychological barriers like embarrassment or fear of failure.

Schools Survey

In recent years schools have increasingly been reaching out to the communities they serve, encouraging community use of their facilities, including sports facilities. This has significant benefits for the schools and the community, especially in areas where public and other facilities for active leisure activities cannot meet demand.

A total of 22 schools (16 primary, six post primary) responded to the survey. Seven of the 22 schools deliver leisure, sport or wellbeing activities in association with the Council; a further eleven schools deliver these activities independently. Portavogie Primary School advised:

'We have girls' football sessions and P5 and P7 swim weekly in Blair Mayne. As part of our extended schools funding we run:

- an after-school football club for P2 to P7;
- an after-school rounders club for P5 to P7 girls;
- we host a football and rounders tournament each year – 13 primary schools attend;
- we are introducing an after-school gymnastics club for P1 to P7.'

Community Use

In respect of community use of schools, only 45% currently open their facilities for community use outside curriculum time, however, nearly all of the schools not currently open for community use would consider this in the future. The Education Authority and Sport NI encourage community use of schools' facilities outside curriculum time, however, it's up to each school to decide on community use and to make it happen. Community use of schools is not part of the education sector's core function and whilst there may be a willingness to consider community use, school management teams often need to be guided and assisted through the process of setting up community use. Indeed, the survey results confirm this as 12 of the schools advised they don't have the capacity (staff, volunteers, facilities) to accommodate community use.

Partnerships

Nearly all of the schools (95%) expressed interest in exploring partnerships with the Council to deliver Getting Active, Staying Active. This indicates a strong willingness among educational institutions to collaborate on initiatives that promote physical activity, health and wellbeing. While 35% of schools currently deliver leisure, sport or wellbeing activities in partnership with the Council, a larger percentage (55%) run these activities independently of the Council.[9] This suggests there is potential for greater integration with Council resources. Among the schools that do not open their facilities for community use, the primary barriers identified are extra staffing costs (91%) and insurance concerns (64%). These obstacles highlight the need for additional support or funding to enable schools to make their facilities more accessible to the wider community. Nearly half (45%) of the schools indicated they have plans to develop or expand their leisure/sports facilities. Schools referenced a range of potential projects, from building new pitches to upgrading existing ones, but noted that financial constraints are a significant challenge in realising these plans.

[9] *The remaining 10% of schools did not respond to this question.*

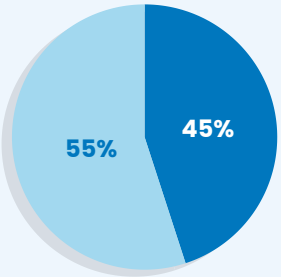
Active Youth NI

Photo courtesy of Active Youth NI

Active Youth NI, getting young people active in Ards and North Down

Active Youth NI, based in Bangor, was born from a passion and desire to get more people active to improve not only their physical health, but also their mental and emotional wellbeing. The group's Business Development Director, Joni, says, ***'Our mission is to ensure every child and young person has access to physical activity and we aim to reduce health inequity by increasing provision for all children regardless of their level of ability, their socio-economic background or gender; our sessions take away the pressure of "making the team" and bring the fun back into being active.' One of the children in the group's Active for All programme, an initiative for children in deprived areas, said, 'The activities planned for us were amazing. Doing the activities has made me feel more comfortable being with groups of people I'm not so friendly with and helped me use problem-solving skills for most activities. I really would want to do something like this again.'***

45%
of schools open their facilities for community use



4. Why We Need a Leisure Strategy

Leisure providers in Ards and North Down do a great job in making active leisure opportunities available, through facilities and programmes, to those in our community who want to be active. Research confirms the positive effect of active leisure on wellbeing, individual development, community and social development.[10]

[10] *Future of Public Sector Leisure. Sport England 2022.*

In recent years, providers of active leisure opportunities have demonstrated how they can help in addressing a range of health conditions including diabetes, some cancers and mental wellbeing. Councils can lead the way in this, but it is only by working in effective partnership with a wide range of providers of active leisure that more people can enjoy the benefits of active lifestyles. Scientists now suggest, ***'We can self-engineer genetic changes to help prevent diseases and boost longevity. Each healthy act switches on youth-promoting genes and switches off ageing genes.'*** [11] Recognition of the connection between engaging in active leisure and positive health outcomes has never been stronger, as demonstrated in the following regional and local strategies.

[11] *The Great Age Reboot; Michael Roizen.*

Obesity levels are a challenging health issue. Through the Ards and North Down Strategic Community Planning Partnership a Whole Systems Approach to addressing obesity is being formulated. Getting Active, Staying Active can play a part by creating opportunities for greater levels of participation in physical activity by everyone regardless of age.

A multi-disciplinary partnership approach is important. Each of the regional and local strategies emphasise a partnership approach to implementing Borough-wide actions. A key challenge for the leisure strategy is establishing effective partnerships on a number of levels that can share responsibility for delivery.

There needs to be a focus on older people, children, females and on people with a disability. It is important that children engage in physical activity to experience the many benefits that will stand by them in adulthood. As people age and have more leisure time they need to have age-specific activity opportunities to remain active. Girls and women and people with a disability are underrepresented in active leisure.

Living in areas of deprivation can impact on levels of physical activity, resulting in poorer health. There is a need to better understand the barriers to participating and learn how to address them.

This leisure strategy is needed now more than ever before to help tackle the health inequalities that impact on individuals and on society. The health sector's prevention programmes focus on the health risks associated with obesity, alcohol and smoking. Being more active can lead to people adopting a healthier lifestyle, helping to reduce these health risks and generating social and economic value for individuals, communities and society. The strategies reviewed here emphasise the need for Getting Active, Staying Active to address these challenges.

Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most. Draft Programme for Government (PfG) 2024-2027

PfG sets out *'an ambitious agenda of change for Northern Ireland; we will make it happen by working in partnership. It is about doing what matters most today and shaping a better tomorrow, together.'*
There are four Missions contained within PfG, one of which focuses on People, as follows:

PEOPLE
Working to support everyone at all stages of their life to ensure they have the chance to succeed by improving life opportunities.

Within the People Mission PfG recognises that *'people from more deprived areas are more likely to suffer from poor physical and mental health, are less likely to be active in their community and are more likely to be the victim of a crime.'*

In addressing this inequality PfG will *'… prioritise sports and physical activity to tackle obesity, which currently costs our health service £500 million each year. These efforts will be tailored to reflect the needs of our increasingly diverse and ageing population. Our investments in new outdoor recreation and sporting facilities will help to ensure we provide quality and modern focal points for our communities and that we can help people to enjoy active social lives.'*

Active Living: The Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for Northern Ireland. Department for Communities 2022

The vision set out in Active Living is one that all leisure providers can relate to:

'Lifelong involvement in sport and physical activity will deliver on an active, healthy, resilient and inclusive society which recognises and values both participation and excellence.'

The challenge for all stakeholders in contributing to this vision is made clear in Active Living's objective: *'inclusion, engagement, community, excellence, partnership, collaboration and shared spaces that collectively maximise the benefits of more people being more active more of the time.'*

Active Living's six key themes resonate with Getting Active, Staying Active as the whole community is considered and there is encouragement for greater levels of physical activity for a broad range of people.

KEY THEMES

1. Recovering from the impact of the pandemic
2. Promoting participation, inclusion and community engagement
3. Promoting excellence in sport
4. Promoting partnership and integration
5. Providing inclusive, shared spaces and places
6. Promoting the benefits of sport and physical activity

The Power of Sport: Sport NI Corporate Plan 2021-2026

The Power of Sport highlights the *'compelling story of the value of sport'* in recent research.

The estimated direct cost of physical inactivity to the NHS across the UK is £1.2 billion.

The CASE programme* with over 12,000 studies on engagement in culture and sport found: Young people's participation in sport improves their numeracy scores by 8% on average above non-participants.

** The Culture and Sport Evidence (CASE) research programme in England led by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.*

Underachieving young people who take part in sport see a 29% increase in numeracy skills and a 12-16% rise in other transferable skills.

Returns on investment in sports programmes for at-risk youth are estimated at £7.35 of social benefit for every £1 spent – through financial savings to the police, the criminal justice system and the community.

The benefits of Outdoor Recreation in NI: Taking central and local government as a whole, spending of £47m is associated with a generated income of £83m, a surplus of 43%. For every £1 that the public sector invests in outdoor recreation there is a return of £1.77.

The Power of Sport has two strategic outcomes:

OUTCOME ONE

People adopting and sustaining participation in sport and physical activity.

OUTCOME TWO

Our athletes among the best in the world

The Power of Sport emphasises that *'Sport NI is more committed than ever to removing barriers to sport and physical activity. For some, the routes into local sports clubs are not always easy or clear, yet our research and engagement insights tell us that the most likely indicator for sustained participation in sport and physical activity has increased in recent years, yet there still remains a significant gap from overall participation rates to those of women, people with a disability or those living in the most deprived areas. Sport NI wants to address the barriers and create opportunities for those underrepresented groups to be more active and to close that gap by making equality and inclusion an integral part of this corporate plan.'*

The Big Plan: Ards and North Down Strategic Community Planning Partnership

The Big Plan is Ards and North Down's Community Plan. It has this objective:

'Creating positive outcomes for everyone by empowering individuals and communities to be more resilient; reducing inequality; promoting good relations and sustainability; while at the same time improving the quality and accessibility of all public services is at the heart of the Big Plan for Ards and North Down.'

The Big Plan's five outcomes, similar to other regional and local strategies, emphasise the need for agencies and organisations to work together to achieve the full potential of shared outcomes.

Outcome 1	All people in Ards and North Down benefit from opportunities to fulfil their lifelong potential.
Outcome 2	All people in Ards and North Down benefit from being equipped to enjoy good health and wellbeing.
Outcome 3	All people in Ards and North Down benefit from communities where they are respected, are safe and feel secure.
Outcome 4	All people in Ards and North Down benefit from a prosperous and inclusive economy.
Outcome 5	All people in Ards and North Down benefit from an environment that is valued, well-managed and accessible.

A Sustainable Borough: Corporate Plan 2024-2028. Ards and North Down Borough Council

The Council's vision of A Sustainable Borough is one *'where economic, environmental and social wellbeing are interdependent and decisions that are taken are well-balanced and fair.'*

The Corporate Plan has the following three priorities, supported by seven outcomes.

1. **ECONOMIC:** Increasing economic growth by attracting more businesses and jobs.
2. **ENVIRONMENTAL:** Reducing carbon emissions as we transition to net zero.
3. **SOCIAL:** Improving wellbeing through social inclusion and reduced inequality.

Of the Corporate Plan's seven outcomes it is *Outcome 6: Opportunities for people to be active and healthy* that is directly relatable to Getting Active, Staying Active with two strategic actions:

Outcome 6

1. **Improving physical and mental wellbeing for people of all abilities.**
2. **Encouraging active and sustainable travel.**

Outcome 1: An engaged Borough with citizens and businesses who have opportunities to influence the delivery of services, plans and investment is also a key driver to delivery of the strategy.

Whilst it is the social priority that Getting Active, Staying Active will mostly influence, it will also contribute to increasing economic growth by helping to grow employment opportunities including leisure service staff, sports coaches, fitness instructors and personal trainers.

Improving wellbeing, that is, people having better physical and mental health, will help economic growth by strengthening the labour force and improving people's livelihoods. Investing in getting people active has been shown to improve educational attainment, reduce crime and increase consumer expenditure and employment opportunities, contributing to a healthier and happier society; for every £1 spent on physical activity and sport, it's estimated that £3.91 of social value is generated.[12]

[12] *Sport England 2020 (Sport England research is referenced in the absence of similar data for Northern Ireland).*

Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2027: Ards and North Down Strategic Community Planning Partnership

Becoming Age Friendly is a priority for the Borough, not least because Ards and North Down's population has a larger percentage of older people than the Northern Ireland average. The term Age Friendly means a community where *'people of all ages can live healthy and active lives and where everyone is treated with respect, regardless of their age.'* This clearly resonates with Getting Active, Staying Active as Age Friendly, whilst focusing on over 50s, is inclusive of all ages.

The four-year Age Friendly action plan prioritises three of the World Health Organisation's age friendly themes:

- **Respect and Inclusion**
- **Social Participation**
- **Outdoor Spaces and Buildings**

The action plan is being delivered by the Age Friendly Alliance, a partnership of public, community and voluntary organisations.

Ards and North Down Local Development Plan (LDP) 2032: Draft Plan Strategy

The Council is formulating its Local Development Plan which will guide the future use of land within the Borough and inform developers, members of the public, communities, government, public bodies, representative organisations and other interested parties of the policy framework that will be used to determine planning applications. The draft Plan Strategy (first document of the LDP) is due to be published for public consultation this year and shall include a strategic policy approach and operational planning policy for Open Space and Outdoor Recreation. The draft Plan Strategy will be accompanied by a technical supplement which will include an Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation strategy reflecting the aim, objectives and policy approach of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland, tailored to the specific circumstances of the Borough. This includes an assessment of existing open space provision against established standards and the distribution and accessibility of such spaces.

Respect and Inclusion

Social Participation

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

A Whole Systems Approach to Obesity in Ards and North Down: Ards and North Down Strategic Community Planning Partnership

A Whole Systems Approach puts in place a collaborative approach to addressing obesity, *'where a multi-agency and partnership approach is adopted.'* Working with the Public Health Agency, Ards and North Down Borough Council is the first early adopter in taking a Whole Systems Approach to obesity in Northern Ireland.

Local analysis highlights the *'strong relationship between deprivation and childhood obesity',* stating that *'obesity prevalence in the most deprived 10% of children is approximately twice that of the least deprived 10%.'*

The approach to addressing obesity levels is complex, however, encouraging everyone to engage in active leisure is an important part of the approach.

Play Strategy 2021-2032: Ards and North Down Borough Council

Play and children's active leisure share benefits that the Play Strategy highlights:

PHYSICAL BENEFITS AND WELLBEING

- Maintains healthy weight to combat childhood obesity.
- Play, recreation and sport contribute to healthy growth and development.

MENTAL HEALTH AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

- Play contributes to a child's self esteem alongside emotional and physical wellbeing and their development.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS

- Play offers opportunities for social interaction for the wider community.
- Families benefit from safe, healthier and happier children.

Active play comprises a diverse range of activities for different play experiences according to age and ability, including climbing, swinging, sliding, balancing, crawling, rocking, spinning, etc. Getting Active, Staying Active complements these and other aspects of active play by offering opportunities for organised activities such as are found in activity programmes delivered by a range of providers and in a range of settings.

5. The Strategy

Vision

Research and consultation have provided statistical insights into what people feel is important in creating a leisure strategy for Ards and North Down. We need to engage the inactive, that is, people of all ages who are presently inactive or not active enough. Inequalities in the wellbeing of people living in the most deprived areas will be tackled by the leisure strategy having a focus on encouraging and enabling them to be more active. We also need to encourage people to remain active throughout their lives to help them enjoy the benefits of an active lifestyle. Listening to what you have told us, the vision and strapline, which is also the strategy's title, leaves no one out:

Getting Active, Staying Active
A Leisure Strategy for Ards and North Down
where everyone can enjoy an active life

Strategy

Getting Active, Staying Active is led by the Council and delivered in partnership with a wide range of agencies, organisations and groups that share an interest in getting people to be more active in Ards and North Down. It's good to keep in mind that Getting Active, Staying Active is set within the context of the Council's Corporate Plan 2024 to 2028 and its three overlapping priorities:

These priorities are interlinked and Getting Active, Staying Active makes an important contribution to each one. Living an active lifestyle helps us to be healthier and happier whatever our circumstances or age, benefiting our physical and mental wellbeing, our community development and our economic development. Being active every day helps us and our communities to thrive, contributing to the Council's vision of A Sustainable Borough. Research by Sport England[13] estimates that the average wellbeing value of sport and physical activity to *fairly active* individuals, per person, per year is:

All adults (16+)	Children & young people (11-16yrs)
£1,200	£3,100

[13] *The Social Value of Sport and Physical Activity in England (2024). 'Fairly active' adults do 30 to 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity per week; 'fairly active' children and young people do an average of 30 to 60 minutes moderate intensity physical activity a day.*

The research also estimates the wider value to society of *fairly active adults,* again per person per year, based on a range of health outcomes, as being:

All adults (16+)	Age 16 to 64	Age 65+
£230	£196	£333

Sport England says, '***wellbeing value to an individual likely captures the sheer enjoyment of being active, the benefits to physical and mental health and knock-on impacts for other aspects of life such as relationships, social connections and work.***'

Four Strategic Themes

The strategy will focus on four themes across the ten-year period. It's an ever-present challenge to encourage and enable the inactive to be active and to encourage everyone to stay active. That's why Getting Active, Staying Active is in place for ten years, giving it every chance to deliver actions that make an appreciable difference in the lives of everyone living in Ards and North Down.

Theme	Outcome
Active Partnerships	All Council directorates or service areas and relevant external organisations have ownership of the strategy and are committed to its delivery. The strategy's potential is realised.
Active Opportunities	All sections of the Ards and North Down population can access active leisure opportunities that suit their age, abilities, interests and circumstances.
Active Communications	Better awareness of opportunities for active leisure through a mix of general and targeted information shared via both traditional and digital channels.
Active Support	Activity providers are supported in their work to deliver active leisure opportunities.

Active Partnerships

Active Opportunities

Active Communications

Active Support

Getting Active, Staying Active will be delivered in a series of action plans. The first of these is to be delivered over two years to facilitate the creation of a Strategy Implementation Group who will then produce future one year action plans. This allows regular assessment of the strategy's impact. It also allows each plan to take account of what has been achieved in the previous year and to address new challenges. Monitoring and reporting of each stage will broadly follow this approach:

What did we do? → How well did we do it? → What difference did it make?

Theme 1
Active Partnerships

Consultation for Getting Active, Staying Active engaged statutory organisations and the community and voluntary sector, around 130 groups in total, some working throughout Northern Ireland, some working at a local level. Enabling more people to be active is common to all these organisations who also share a keen desire to work together. One organisation emphasised this in saying, *'more can be achieved by working together.'*

The Council already works with a wide range of organisations in the delivery of active leisure opportunities, including local activity provider groups, schools, community groups, Sport NI, Disability Sport NI, sport's governing bodies, charities, the Education Authority, the Public Health Agency, the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust and many more. Getting Active, Staying Active will develop existing partnerships and create new ones, all striving to get more people active. Whilst the focus is on residents, it is expected that the outworking of active partnerships will also encourage and enable visitors to engage in the many and varied leisure activities on offer throughout the Borough. Partnerships will be well defined with each partner playing an active role in implementing the strategy during its lifetime.

It's widely recognised that being active contributes to a better society. That's why government directs its departments and agencies to work in partnership in promoting active lifestyles. It is critical that like-minded organisations share responsibility in effective partnerships, ensuring efficient use of resources and maximising the impact of Getting Active, Staying Active. Partnerships can take many forms, from the formal partnership between statutory agencies that will be necessary to implement the strategy, through to agreements with local activity provider groups.

'We need to work with organisations who know and understand the audiences we want to target, including partners who we've traditionally not worked with.'
Active Lives Survey, Sport England

Strategic Actions

- ***Build on existing and develop new working relations and partnerships with statutory agencies.*** Everyone and every organisation has a role to play in Getting Active, Staying Active, with a shared vision of an active, healthy and happy Ards and North Down community. No-one must feel being active is not for them. Partnership arrangements will be designed to encourage and enable everyone to be active. At the outset a Strategy Implementation Group will be set up involving all key stakeholder agencies in a formal partnership, tasked with implementing the strategy, monitoring progress, reviewing and evaluating outcomes and refreshing the strategic approach as necessary.

- ***Involve the Education Authority and schools in partnerships to open up more schools to community use outside curriculum time.*** The Education Authority encourages community use of schools, however, the work to achieve this lies largely with the schools themselves. Given that schools' core purpose is academic study it's often the case that barriers to community use are a particular challenge and cannot be overcome by schools alone. The outworking of this strategic priority is local communities having access to facilities in their neighbourhood, helping to involve more people in active leisure.

- ***Consider partnerships with activity provider groups*** especially groups that target people who are inactive, young people, women and girls, older people and people with physical and/or mental disabilities. These groups, including non-statutory sector groups could become accredited 'agents' working to achieve the same active leisure outcomes as Getting Active, Staying Active. The scope of this strategic action is potentially extensive, including, for example, partnering with care/residential homes to encourage active leisure. It could also involve leasing existing Council facilities to these activity provider groups, ensuring general community access in the terms of the lease.

- ***Partner with local communities in neighbourhoods*** to understand the strengths and weaknesses of leisure provision and how to best address the barriers that discourage or even prevent residents from being active. It is essential that by working in places where stubborn health inequalities persist, community-led solutions for active leisure can be agreed through partnership working.

Success Factors

Everyone working together	**Strong and effective partnerships are in place, making a difference, and being sustained throughout the strategy period.**
New partners	**More and different partners are involved in collective leisure provision, working in new and innovative ways across a range of locations to promote active leisure.**
Shared Access	**The number of education sites making facilities available to the community for active leisure has increased.**

Theme 2
Active Opportunities

There are thousands of active leisure opportunities delivered annually by the Council. Added to this are the opportunities created and delivered by a wide range of groups working in local communities. These opportunities suit a lot of people – people who know what they want to do and have the time and money to take up the opportunities. Yet too many people are inactive or not active enough to benefit their health and wellbeing.

Having listened to what people said about provision for active leisure we better understand how the ten-year strategy can help in ensuring better access to active leisure opportunities for everyone.

'The leisure centres in ANDBC are fabulous for those who are motivated to attend but we need to reach out to those who are not.'
Action Mental Health.

We need to encourage people to be active in their own way – it doesn't have to mean being 'sporty' and indeed we know that walking for recreation is the most popular leisure activity. This highlights the importance of outdoor spaces for active leisure. Survey results tell us that green/blue spaces (public parks, greenways, forests, mountains/hills, rivers, lakes, beaches, sea) are where many people enjoy active leisure, especially older people. They also tell us that most people participate in active leisure to improve their overall health and fitness, their mental health and simply to make themselves feel better. Active leisure opportunities are valued not only for their physical benefits but also for their contribution to mental and emotional wellbeing.

'There are deep-rooted inequalities in sport and physical activity which means there are people who feel excluded from being active because the right options and opportunities aren't there.'
Active Lives Survey, Sport England.

We also know a lot more about why people are not as active as they should be. Time, money and *'lack of facilities/activities in my area'* along with not knowing what opportunities are available are all significant barriers. Being self-conscious, *'bored with the same old things'* and age (over 60) can also be barriers. The key learning point is that in knowing what holds people back from being more active, leisure providers can help address the barriers.

Whether it's a walk with family, a swim in the sea, a night of dancing, a game of pickleball, a gentle jog, armchair exercises, cycle to work or a game of softball, we can all enjoy active leisure opportunities, indoors or outdoors, with others or on our own. We all have a role to play in Active Opportunities – parents, teachers, elected representatives, policy makers, community leaders, coaches, friends, business owners. We are naturally active, so Active Opportunities is about us.

Of the nearly 1,600 people completing the community survey, not a single person selected, 'I'm just not interested in being active' as a barrier!

Strategic Actions

- ***Give a greater focus to hard to reach groups*** – women and girls, people with a disability or long-term illness, older people, young people. It's often the case that they are less active than society in general yet they can benefit the most. Getting Active, Staying Active will seek to encourage and enable these groups towards a more active lifestyle by offering active opportunities that suit their needs.

- ***Widen access to active opportunities throughout the Borough.*** This approach focuses on tailoring services to meet specific local need and ensuring activities are located where they can have the most impact.

- ***Ensure the scheduling of active opportunities enables access by as many people as possible***. A user-centric model of leisure provision as advocated by national, regional and local strategies emphasises the need to understand local demographics. Spreading opportunities for active leisure throughout the day and across the week enables more people to participate.

- ***Widen the understanding of 'active leisure provider'*** to attract new sectors, organisations and groups with new ideas and fresh approaches to designing and delivering active leisure opportunities. The traditional approach to leisure provision is changing as active wellbeing becomes a priority right across society. Getting Active, Staying Active presents an opportunity to encourage existing and new organisations to include active leisure opportunities in their work.

Success Factors

More people enjoy active leisure	An increase in regular participation in active leisure.
Flexible scheduling of active leisure opportunities	Weekday delivery – before 5.00pm – of active leisure opportunities by activity providers increases.
Growth in active leisure opportunities for the wider community	An increase in delivery of opportunities in community centres/sports clubs and parks and open spaces.

Theme 3
Active Communications

Consultation responses for Getting Active, Staying Active told us a great deal about the need for good lines of communication. Perhaps the most pressing need is to constantly promote the benefits of being active to individuals and their communities. This is especially important in areas of deprivation where people are much less likely to have active lifestyles than those living elsewhere.

It is people, at whatever age, who are presently inactive or not active enough who will benefit most from becoming active and remaining active throughout their lives. Getting these people more active is the overarching challenge, widely recognised by all stakeholder organisations. Many statutory and community organisations make every effort to address this challenge yet there are still sections of society that are oblivious to the message of the benefits of having an active lifestyle. Engaging the inactive must be key to Active Communications.

The Department for Communities' 'Active Living' strategy states, *'By promoting the benefits of sport and physical activity we will help to address the inequalities that currently exist with regards to access for many and we will enhance awareness in access to sport and physical activity and enhance awareness of the value to the individual and society of more people being more active more of the time. Inactive or sedentary lifestyles can lead to physical and mental ill-health and to social exclusion. Encouraging those who are inactive to take the first steps to engagement in sport and physical activity can be life changing. This is a key public health message, but getting the message across to inactive groups can be challenging.'*

Active Communications is also about how people find out about active leisure opportunities. In the age of high-tech communications it doesn't suit everyone to get information from social media platforms.

'Social media platforms are favoured by those aged under 55 years to a greater extent than the population at large. Surprisingly, for the over 55s social media platforms are their most favoured means of finding out about active leisure opportunities although to a lesser extent than younger people. Easy access to information is essential; analysis highlights that printed material is more important for over 55s than younger people. One elderly respondent said, 'Information is there if I need it but there are many my age and over who have lost so much confidence, which comes with age, who just don't know where to go to ask and don't like to ask.'

ANDBC Leisure Strategy Community Survey 2024.

In the survey year, 33% of adults living in the most deprived areas in Northern Ireland had participated in sport compared to 61% of adults living in the least deprived areas.

NI Continuous Household Survey 2022/23

Strategic Actions

- ***Challenge the myth that active lifestyles are all about sport.*** Agencies tasked with promoting sport now include physical activity and wellbeing in their marketing and programmes. This is an important development that Getting Active, Staying Active embraces. Messaging will have a focus on physical activity and wellbeing, ensuring no-one feels left out.

- ***Promote the benefits of active lifestyles to specific target groups.*** People at different ages and in different circumstances need to hear about the benefits most important to them. For example, people with Type 2 diabetes can potentially improve their condition through time by being more active. Older people need strength training as they age to help them stay mobile for their daily routine. Young people can reduce levels of stress and anxiety through active leisure. Family bonds are strengthened by exercising together.

- ***Consider a range of communications tools to ensure everyone has access to information about active leisure opportunities.*** We need to ensure that people's differing preferences as to how they access information can be met. It's likely this will be a mix of social media and other forms of communication. As with promoting the benefits, different forms of communication may be suited to different target groups. A 'one stop shop' for information should be considered.

- ***Ensure Getting Active, Staying Active is promoted across all Council services.*** There are already excellent examples of active leisure opportunities promoted in environmental health, tourism and parks. It's important that Getting Active, Staying Active integrates with the Council's many and varied functions.

Success Factors

Awareness of the benefits	**There is a better understanding of the benefits of participating in active leisure, contributing to increased participation.**
Improved access to information	**People find it easier to get information about active leisure opportunities, again contributing to increased participation.**

Theme 4
Active Support

In Ards and North Down Borough, as in every other local authority area, there are hundreds of organisations and groups providing active leisure opportunities; these include around 150 sports clubs and many other commercial operators, charities, community groups and even informal groups with a shared interest in being active.

Activity provider organisations and groups are integral to Getting Active, Staying Active and supporting them in their work will result in more people taking up active leisure opportunities.

Many of these activity provider organisations are mostly run by volunteers who get involved because they have a passion for their activity and for enabling more people to enjoy active lifestyles. Some of these activities are instantly recognisable, such as football, cricket, gymnastics; but others such as softball, pickleball and open water swimming need more support to become better known. All told, these organisations and groups deliver thousands of active leisure opportunities each year to thousands of people across the Borough and it's recognised that the Council already supports many of them in many different ways. As Getting Active, Staying Active looks to support activity providers in their work, we need to understand the impact of and the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The associated lockdowns led to a resurgence in appreciation of outdoor spaces including forests, beaches, parks and waterways. These 'green and blue' spaces are easily accessible for most people and the renewed interest in using them is helping to increase awareness of the physical and mental health benefits of outdoor activities. In sports clubs alone in AND it's estimated there are over 4,000 volunteers (about 60% male, 40% female) delivering active leisure opportunities to around 12% of the population.

'The pandemic has generated a renewed emphasis on community, something which was evident in the way sports clubs and volunteers supported communities and the most vulnerable ensuring that no-one was left isolated. The importance of learning the lessons of its impacts cannot be overestimated. This includes the importance of government departments, local Councils, sport's governing bodies and others working together to support the sector, build capacity, capability and resilience while also overseeing the recovery effort to build back better.'
The Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for NI: Department for Communities.

In its Supporting Sport to Build Back Better (SSBBB) programme in the post-pandemic period Sport NI's objective was to *'Develop a strengthened, more connected sporting and physical recreation sector providing increased capability and develop innovation and confidence with new ways of working.'* In delivering SSBBB important lessons were learnt in the areas of business capability, people development capability, digital connectivity and mental health & wellbeing. In addition, SSBBB awarded revenue funding directly to sports clubs through two projects, ***Team Up*** and ***Activate.***

Team Up awarded an average of £21k to 28 clubs to target specific sections of the population (ethnic minorities, disabled, deprived neighbourhoods, females, over 50s) with activities that took a fresh look at the clubs' offering in the face of challenges presented by the pandemic. Clubs reported an increased capability and confidence in moving forward with fresh and innovative approaches in the design and delivery of activities.

Activate awarded up to £5k to 56 clubs across 17 sports. The unique feature of Activate was the requirement for each club to raise at least the same amount as their award through Crowdfunder UK. The initiative was very successful with all award recipients achieving their Crowdfunding target and some even doubling or tripling their target. One family spoke of their 34-year-old son living with cerebral palsy who, through the Activate project was able to enjoy visits to the beach for the first time since childhood.

Strategic Actions

- ***Support volunteers and volunteering.*** Volunteers are the lifeblood of activity provider organisations and groups. They have skills and experience to plan, organise and deliver active leisure opportunities. They can benefit from support in operational matters and in encouraging them in new ways of thinking and doing things. Volunteers are needed in all age groups.

- ***Support activity providers offering active leisure opportunities in outdoor spaces.*** The use of green/blue spaces has increased in the wake of the pandemic, resulting in activity provider groups emerging where people can join together in the use of these spaces. A good example is the growth in open sea swimming groups, bringing a new awareness to this activity. The Council is already proactive in enabling access to green/blue spaces.

- ***Support activity providers to move forward with digital technology.*** Activity providers, especially sports clubs, tend to communicate with their existing members and wider network of friends and families rather than reaching out to potential new members. Time spent (by volunteers) on administration can contribute to volunteer burn-out. What's needed is a focus on developing digital technology skills to assist with a range of functions.

- ***Empower activity providers in their financial health.*** For many activity provider organisations and groups membership fees and fundraising events are the top income generators whilst facility hire and insurances are the top expenses. Financial health is a key concern for many groups and can often be a barrier to expanding activity programmes; 'help to draw down funding' is cited as the most needed type of support in a recent survey of sports clubs in AND.[14]

  [14] *Club Survey 2019/2020 – A Headline Report for Ards and North Down. Sport NI.*

- ***Promote an understanding of health and wellbeing in activity provider organisations and groups.*** Active leisure's impact on health and wellbeing is significant. It also contributes to addressing challenges such as obesity, reduces risk of illness and it promotes good mental health. Activity providers increasingly recognise their role in promoting health and wellbeing. Getting Active, Staying Active can help them be aware of how to integrate health and wellbeing with their core activity programmes.

- ***Promote innovative monitoring and evaluation.*** Modern methods of monitoring and evaluation follow the principle of Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) – What did we do? How well did we do it? What difference did it make? It's important that activity providers can promote their story to prospective members, to the Council, to stakeholders and to funding agencies. This is often overlooked or not given enough attention; OBA's focus is on people.

Success Factors

Volunteering skills are enhanced	Whether it's digital technology, monitoring & evaluation or governance, activity providers think differently and are more resilient to challenges.
Activity providers are more financially sustainable	Greater confidence in AND sports clubs being able to meet financial demands.
Growth in use of green/blue spaces	An increase in the use of green/blue spaces.
Gap between male and female volunteers in sports clubs is narrowed	An increase in the number of female volunteers engaged in active leisure.
Gap in participation of adults in sport depending on where people live is narrowed	The gap in participation in sport between adults living in the most and the least deprived areas is reduced.

6. What Next?

Getting Active, Staying Active puts in place four strategic themes and high-level actions that reflect what survey respondents stated is needed to improve the provision of active leisure opportunities across the Borough.

Now the Council needs to breathe life into the strategy and monitor how it is making a difference in people's lives. The Council needs a way to deliver the strategy, monitor it and periodically review progress to ensure the strategy is on track to achieve its vision and re-set strategic actions as necessary.

The scale of the task is not to be underestimated if it is to be successful in helping leisure provision (by all providers) move towards an active wellbeing service.

This can only be achieved through agencies, organisations, activity providers and communities working together in effective partnerships. This is not a Council strategy, rather, it is a strategy for the Borough so it requires buy-in and commitment from statutory and non-statutory organisations that are also striving to get more people more active. Shared responsibility for implementation and delivery of the strategy through strong partnerships will ensure that the Council's present provision for leisure is enhanced, not reduced.

What is needed now is:

1. Strategic and Thematic Implementation
2. Monitoring and Reporting of this Ten-year Action Plan
3. Monitoring and Reporting of this Two-year Action Plan

Strategic Implementation

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION GROUP

Set up a Strategy Implementation Group to include, as a minimum, Department for Communities, Sport NI, Education Authority, South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust, ANDBC. The Strategy Implementation Group will advise on and support the implementation of the strategy. The Strategy Implementation Group's role is also to develop annual plans including targets. Members will agree a suitable format for the group, its terms of reference and responsibilities, how it will be governed and how the strategy will be resourced. The group's role is to facilitate the strategy's delivery, oversee and review progress. The Strategy Implementation Group will include Council staff across directorates (and/or contracted partners) to ensure the strategy has internal ownership and is effective across and between service units, complementing and supplementing all relevant Council strategies and plans.

THEMATIC WORKING GROUPS

Establish thematic working groups. The task of the thematic working groups is to advise on and support the delivery of the Action Plans and priorities agreed by the Strategy Implementation Group. Their role is operational so each one will involve people with skills and experience relating to the working group. They will also be responsible for collecting data to help monitor and report on progress, feeding back to the Strategy Implementation Group on a periodic basis.

MONITORING AND REPORTING

Council will measure progress towards the strategy outcomes using a combination of whole population Big Plan indicators (e.g., gap in life expectancy/ obesity rates), Council specific performance measures and repeating surveys which informed the strategy. Council will use a range of methods to monitor the implementation and impact of the strategy as detailed in the tables that follow.

Ten-Year Action Plan

The below table outlines actions to be completed across the strategy implementation period.

Theme 1 - Active Partnerships			
Outcome	**Success Factors**	**Target/KPI**	**Year/s**
All Council directorates or service areas and relevant external organisations have ownership of the strategy and are committed to its delivery. The strategy's potential is realised.	***Everyone working together.*** Strong and effective partnerships are in place, making a difference, and being sustained throughout the strategy period.	Strategy Implementation Group reporting annually on the delivery of the leisure strategy.	Year 1 onwards
		Thematic working groups delivering an annual work plan.	Year 1 onwards
		Internal and external funding secured to enable the delivery of the leisure strategy.	Year 1 onwards
	New partners. More and different partners are involved in collective leisure provision, working in new and innovative ways across a range of locations to promote active leisure.	Two new community organisation partnerships (operating in areas of deprivation) established annually, and delivery undertaken.	Year 1 onwards
		A database of leisure providers created and updated annually.	Year 2 onwards
		Two new leisure provider partnerships established annually and formal agreements in place.	Year 2 onwards
		An active leisure workshop to report on the progress of the strategy and to ensure partners are fully engaged.	Year 3 onwards
	Shared access. The number of education sites making facilities available to the community for active leisure has increased.	Develop and promote a process to assist activity providers to lease Council facilities for leisure delivery.	Year 1 onwards
		An additional one school annually offering community use of their facilities outside curriculum time.	Year 2 onwards

Theme 1
Active Partnerships

Theme 2 - Active Opportunities

Outcome	Success Factors	Target/KPI	Year/s
All sections of the Ards and North Down population can access active leisure opportunities that suit their age, abilities, interests and circumstances.	***More people enjoy active leisure.*** An increase in regular participation in active leisure.	New Sports Facility Strategy developed.	Year 1
		One link between a school and a sport club developed annually.	Year 2 onwards
		Number of Parkruns increased – three new Parkruns by end of Year 5.	Year 5
		Improvement in life expectancy in most deprived areas. The final target improvement expressed in years for 'at birth' and 'at age 65' for males and females is as follows: **MALE** – Current / Target At birth – 77.2yrs / 78.2yrs At age 65 – 17.5yrs / 18.5yrs **FEMALE** – Current / Target At birth – 81.0yrs / 82.0yrs At age 65 – 20.3yrs / 21.0yrs	Year 10
		Improvement in children's obesity rates in school Year 8. The gap between the Borough as a whole and its most deprived areas is eight percentage points, 26% against 34%. Encouraging people from deprived areas to be more active will help reduce the gap by four percentage points.	Year 10
		Increased 'regular' participation in active leisure, a combination of daily and several times a week from 71% currently to 80%.	Year 10
		Increase the number of 'new' activities offered by 20% of provider groups.	Year 10
		Increase the use of greenways and blueways by 200%.	Year 10
		Implement a plan to increase the number of people in sports clubs by 20%.	Year 10
	Flexible scheduling of active leisure opportunities. Weekday delivery – before 5.00pm – of active leisure opportunities by activity providers increases.	A 10% increase in the delivery of weekday before 5.00pm active leisure opportunities by activity providers.	Year 10
	Growth in active leisure opportunities for the wider community. An increase in delivery of opportunities in community centres/ sports clubs and parks and open spaces.	Increased active leisure opportunities delivered by activity provider groups in community centres and sports clubs from 23% currently to 28%.	Year 10
		Increased active leisure opportunities delivered by activity provider groups in public parks, open spaces, greenways and blueways, from 17% currently to 20%.	Year 10

Theme 2 Active Opportunities

Theme 3 - Active Communications			
Outcome	**Success Factors**	**Target/KPI**	**Year/s**
Better awareness of opportunities for active leisure through a mix of general and targeted information, shared via both traditional and digital channels.	***Awareness of the benefits***. There is a better understanding of the benefits of participating in active leisure, contributing to increased participation.	'I feel my age (over 60) is a barrier' reduced from 8% to 4% of survey population as a final target.	Year 1 onwards
		Develop and implement a marketing and communications plan for the leisure strategy.	Year 1 onwards
		Develop and implement a social value benefits framework for leisure provision.	Year 1 onwards
		As the preferred way to let people know about active leisure opportunities, social media platforms increase from 75% to 80% of survey population as a final target.	Year 10
	Improved access to information. People find it easier to get information about active leisure opportunities, again contributing to increased participation.	'Don't know what is on in my area' as a barrier to participation reduced from 19% to 15% of survey population.	Year 10

Theme 3
Active Communications

Theme 4 - Active Support			
Outcome	**Success Factors**	**Target/KPI**	**Year/s**
Activity providers are supported in their work to deliver active leisure opportunities.	***Volunteering skills are enhanced.*** Whether it's digital technology, monitoring & evaluation or governance, activity providers think differently and are more resilient to challenges.	Training needs identified, programmes developed and delivered to 50 activity provider groups.	Year 10
		Increased collaboration between activity providers. Ten pairings of activity providers set up in a 'Buddy' project.	Year 10
	Activity providers are more financially sustainable. Greater confidence in AND sports clubs being able to meet financial demands.	Develop and deliver an enhanced sport capital scheme to assist clubs/groups to develop and sustain their own leased leisure facilities.	Year 10
		Targeted revenue support programme for activity providers in place.	Year 10
		Support and guidance provided to activity providers to improve financial sustainability. Confidence in meeting financial demands (sports clubs) increases from 68% to 80%.	Year 10
	Growth in use of green/ blue spaces. An increase in the use of green/blue spaces.	Increased use of green and blue spaces from 49% to 65% of survey respondents.	Year 10
	Gap between male and female volunteers in sports clubs is narrowed. An increase in the number of female volunteers engaged in active leisure.	Increase the number of female volunteers in sports clubs from 41% of all volunteers to 50%.	Year 10
	Gap in participation of adults in sport depending on where people live is narrowed. The gap in participation in sport between adults living in the most and the least deprived areas is reduced.	Identify two deprived areas and deliver a programme of active leisure opportunities in each area.	Year 1 onwards

Theme 4 Active Support

Two-Year Action Plan

The below table details actions to be completed in the first two years of the strategy implementation period.

Theme 1 (Years 1-2) - Active Partnerships		
Outcome	**Success Factors**	**Years 1-2 Target/KPI**
All Council directorates or service areas and relevant external organisations have ownership of the strategy and are committed to its delivery. The strategy's potential is realised.	***Everyone working together.*** Strong and effective partnerships are in place, making a difference, and being sustained throughout the strategy period.	Strategy Implementation Group established. In doing so, establish and agree governance arrangements to be adopted by all members of the Strategy Implementation Group.
		Thematic working groups established as required. In doing so, establish and agree governance arrangements to be adopted by all members.
		Resources secured for Years 1-2 identified workstreams.
		Resources secured by ANDBC and partners to deliver the strategy in Year 2 onwards.
		Monitoring and reporting framework developed and circulated to partners.
		Further leisure activity provider baseline analysis completed.
		Database of partners in the Borough for the co-delivery of the strategy developed.
	New partners. More and different partners are involved in collective leisure provision, working in new and innovative ways across a range of locations to promote active leisure.	Two new leisure provider partnerships and formal agreements in place.
		A review of what support is provided to activity providers and develop actions for Years 2-5.
		Two new community organisations (operating in areas of deprivation) partnerships established annually, and delivery undertaken.
		One sport identified and engaged with to develop a sport specific strategy for that sport within the Borough.
		Refined and finalised sport specific strategy model from the first sport to develop Borough strategies for additional sports.
		An information session for all sports activity providers on the opportunity to be supported on the development of a sport specific strategy.
	Shared access. The number of education sites making facilities available to the community for active leisure has increased.	An audit of schools offering community use of their facilities outside curriculum time.
		One new agreement in place with schools to offer community use of their facilities outside curriculum time.
		Develop a process to assist active leisure providers to lease Council-owned facilities.

Theme 1 Active Partnerships

Theme 2 (Years 1-2) - Active Opportunities		
Outcome	**Success Factors**	**Years 1-2 Target/KPI**
All sections of the Ards and North Down population can access active leisure opportunities that suit their age, abilities, interests and circumstances.	***More people enjoy active leisure.*** An increase in regular participation in active leisure.	A Sports Facility Strategy for Council-owned facilities 2026 – 2035 to be developed.
		A mechanism developed to identify with funding agencies to keep leisure partners within the Borough aware of upcoming funding opportunities linked to the strategy and the priorities determined by the Strategy Implementation Group.
		One link between a school and a sport club will be developed.
		Develop a plan to increase the number of people in sports clubs.
	Flexible scheduling of active leisure opportunities. Weekday delivery – before 5.00pm – of active leisure opportunities by activity providers increases.	Review of all Council-owned facilities carried out with scheduling recommendations implemented.
		Engagement with activity providers to encourage weekday before 5.00pm leisure programming and delivery.
	Growth in active leisure opportunities for the wider community. An increase in delivery of opportunities in community centres/sports clubs and parks and open spaces.	A targeted active leisure pilot initiative delivered in an area of deprivation to encourage local residents to be more active.
		A programme developed to provide support to activity providers to establish Getting Active, Staying Active sites for Year 2 onwards based on the pilot projects.

Theme 2
Active Opportunities

Theme 3 (Years 1-2) - Active Communications		
Outcome	**Success Factors**	**Years 1-2 Target/KPI**
Better awareness of opportunities for active leisure through a mix of general and targeted information, shared via both traditional and digital channels.	***Awareness of the benefits.*** There is a better understanding of the benefits of participating in active leisure, contributing to increased participation.	Marketing communications plan delivered to launch the strategy and raise awareness of aims/ objectives and opportunities with key stakeholders and target audience.
		Develop a marketing communications plan for the leisure strategy.
	Improved access to information. People find it easier to get information about active leisure opportunities, again contributing to increased participation.	Conduct a leisure communications gap analysis.
		Develop a marketing communications plan for the leisure strategy.

Theme 3
Active Communications

Theme 4 (Years 1-2) - Active Support		
Outcome	**Success Factors**	**Years 1-2 Target/KPI**
Activity providers are supported in their work to deliver active leisure opportunities.	***Volunteering skills are enhanced.*** Whether it's digital technology, monitoring & evaluation or governance, activity providers think differently and are more resilient to challenges.	A survey of support provided to active leisure volunteers, needs analysed, and a three-year delivery plan developed.
	Activity providers are more financially sustainable. Greater confidence in AND sports clubs being able to meet financial demands.	A review carried out of the financial position and needs of non-commercial/voluntary-led activity providers.
		A programme developed to support the non-commercial / voluntary led activity providers to be more financially sustainable.
		Establish a resource to identify and distribute grant opportunities.
	Growth in use of green/blue spaces. An increase in the use of green/blue spaces.	Establish a baseline for the use of green and blue spaces.
	Gap between male and female volunteers in sports clubs is narrowed. An increase in the number of female volunteers engaged in active leisure.	A survey of support provided to female active leisure volunteers, needs analysed, and a three-year delivery plan developed.
	Gap in participation of adults in sport depending on where people live is narrowed. The gap in participation in sport between adults living in the most and the least deprived areas is reduced.	Identify two deprived areas and deliver a programme of active leisure opportunities in each area.

Theme 4
Active Support

Getting Active, Staying Active

LEISURE STRATEGY 2025 - 2034

Ards and North Down Borough Council

www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk
0300 013 3333

For further information please contact us online or by phone.

Illustrations: Freepik/Vecteezy
Icons: The Noun Project

ITEM 5

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	25 June 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Adele Faulkner
Date of Report	27 May 2025
File Reference	CW 22
Legislation	The Food Safety (Northern Ireland) Order 1999
Section 75 Compliant	Yes ☐ No ☐ Other ☒ If other, please add comment below: N/A
Subject	Food Service Plan 2025-26 and Review of 2024-2025
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Food Service Plan 25/26 and review of 24/25

Food Service Plan 25/26

The Food Service Plan has been produced as a requirement of the Food Standards Agency Framework Agreement on Official Feed and Food Controls. All Local Authorities are required to provide a plan of the Council's Food Control function for the Borough and review on an annual basis.

The Plan for 2025/26 and a review of the Food Service Plan 24/25 is attached for Council approval.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council approves the delivery of the Environmental Health Protection and Development services' Food Service Plan.

APPENDIX 1

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Food Control Service Plan 2025/26 & Review 2024/25

Introduction

This plan sets out how the Council will deliver its 2025/26 Food Service. This Service Plan has been produced in response to the Food Standard Agency's Framework Agreement on Food Law Enforcement which sets out how the plan should be structured and what the plan should contain. The Plan explains how the service will protect and promote food safety throughout the Borough using a combination of measures which include the enforcement of food safety law, sampling, advice, education and liaising with other organisations. The mix of enforcement includes aspects that are demand driven, inspection driven, education driven, and intelligence driven. Our activities and procedures take account of the Food Law Code of Practice (Northern Ireland) and its supporting document the Food Law Practice Guidance (Northern Ireland).

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1. SERVICE AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1.1 Aim

The aim of the food control service is to protect health by assuring the production (including composition and labelling), preparation, storage, distribution, and supply of food by businesses within Ards and North Down is safe to eat.

The service aims to provide a comprehensive food safety service to consumers and the operators of food businesses by achieving a good balance between providing advice, information, training, and enforcement.

1.2 The following objectives have been identified for 2025/26.

1. Proactive surveillance to obtain an accurate picture of the local business landscape and identify open, closed, recently re-opened, new businesses and changes of operation, activities, or operators.
2. Undertake appropriate interventions at establishments where there are concerns around public health because of ongoing proactive surveillance.
3. Undertake urgent reactive work including, but not limited to, following up on food incidents, investigating foodborne disease outbreaks, investigating complaints.
4. Monitor and review premises that have been subject to previous enforcement action.
5. Prioritise establishments which are overdue/due an enforcement revisit.
6. For all interventions not already captured in 1-5 above, a minimum of 90% food hygiene /food standards inspections/interventions will be undertaken for:

    - All A, all B, and non-compliant C for hygiene (High risk premises) will be undertaken.
    - New businesses awaiting inspection within 28 days of registration and where intelligence raises no concerns around public health/consumer protection.

7. To implement the FSA mandatory Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS).

8. To implement the new Food Standards Delivery Model and consider the identified National Priorities such as:

- Authencity in takeaway meals
- Additives and unauthorised ingredients in soft drinks
- Allergen information in catering establishments
- Food supplements

9. To act as “Home Authority” to manufacturers and packers of food located within the Borough, providing advice, food hygiene and food standards audit reports.

10. To actively work with our lower rated (Food Hygiene Rated 0,1,2) businesses to improve compliance including consideration of appropriate enforcement action in line with the Council's Enforcement Policy.

11. To respond to a minimum of 90% of food safety service requests within two working days.

12. To ensure all authorised officers are competent as per the requirements of the revised Competency Assessment Framework (as set down in the Food Law Code of Practice).

13. To take part in national and local sampling projects as appropriate.

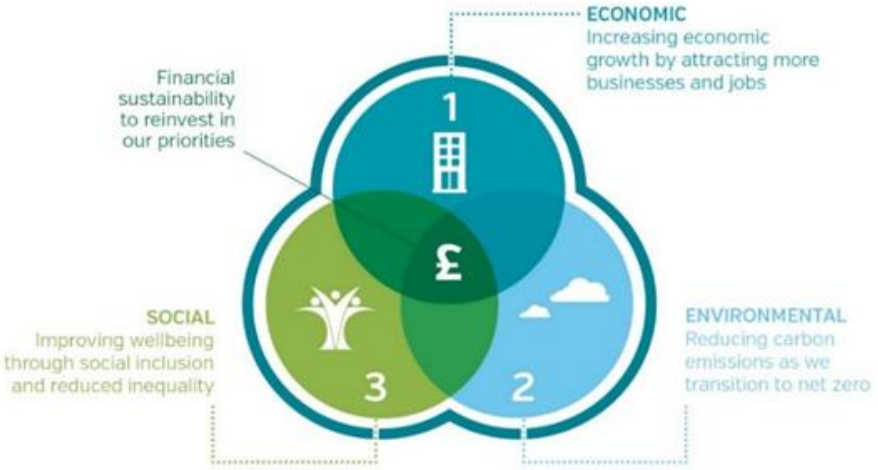
1.3 Links to corporate objectives and plans

1.3.1 Our Council exists to provide civic leadership, promote prosperity and deliver essential services to people who live in, work in, and visit the Borough of Ards and North Down. The Corporate Plan is driven by three priorities:

1.**Economic**- increase economic growth by attracting more jobs and business.

2.**Environmental**-reducing carbon emissions as we transition to net zero.

3.**Social**-improving wellbeing through social inclusion and reducing inequalities.



The Food Control service contribute to these three priorities by:

- Improving health and wellbeing by promoting a healthy, safe, and sustainable environment – Implementation of Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, ensuring businesses are compliant with food safety requirements.

- Supporting business start-up, development, and growth – Providing advice and signposting to other departments and agencies.

- Enhancing the visitor experience to increase visitor spend – encouraging compliance with food safety requirements and a good food hygiene rating gives customers confidence in where they choose to eat. EHO attendance at Council run events to ensure businesses are operating safely.

- Being financially responsible – for our own budget

- Delivering high quality customer focussed services – providing both tailored and generic advice to businesses.

- Establishing and growing productive partnerships – stakeholder engagement with internal and external departments and agencies e.g. Internal - Neighbour Environment Team and external – DAERA / Food Standards Agency

1.3.2 The Food Control Service Plan is key in protecting the community, providing a safe environment, and making a significant contribution to the communities' economy. An effective food control team contributes to these priorities by protecting the health of its residents and visitors through the provision of safe food, the prevention and detection of food borne illness and food poisoning, and by ensuring that responsible businesses are not disadvantaged by non-compliant traders.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Profile of Ards and North Down

On 1 April 2015, the Council for Ards and North Down was set up and currently serves a population of more than 159,000 over 228 square miles. (Appendix 1 Map of Borough).

Although a significant percentage of the local population is employed within the Belfast area, the Borough offers a wide range of employment opportunities in the manufacturing, commercial, hotel, catering, banking, insurance, and retail sectors. The Borough has a vibrant fishing industry which is centred in Portavogie.

The quality of housing stock within the Borough is well above average for Northern Ireland, reflecting the high standard of living. The Borough is an affluent area with a high economically active population with high disposable income.

With over 100 miles of coastline, Ards and North Down is regarded as a major tourist attraction. Among visitor attractions found within the Borough are Bangor Marina, Pickie Fun Park, Mount Stewart, Nendrum, Exploris, Castle Espie, Crawfordsburn Country Park and fourteen golf courses. There are more than 343,000 overnight visits annually, contributing £48M to the local economy. In addition to Hotels, Guest Houses and Bed and Breakfast accommodation, the bays between Cloughey and Donaghadee have almost a third of Northern Ireland's caravan sites. The developing agri-food sector has created significant local employment, and a thriving restaurant scene has resulted in the area becoming a desirable ‘food-tourism’ destination.

Within the Borough there are two established distilleries that are supplying their products internationally.

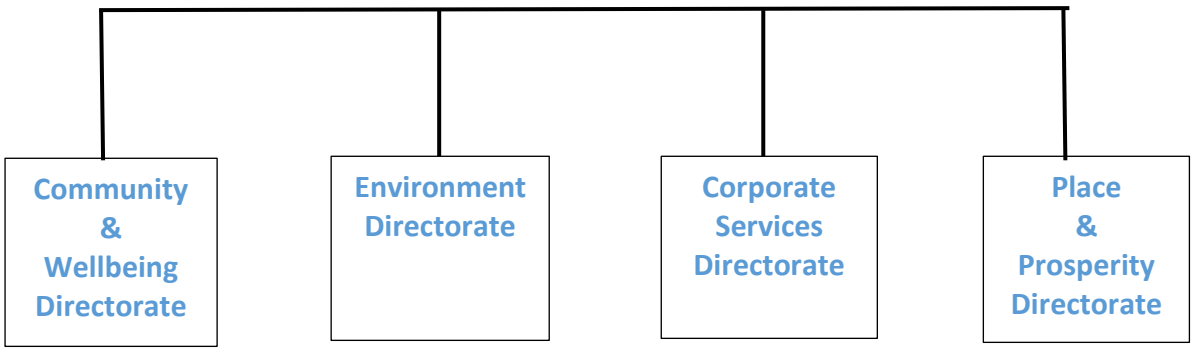
The Borough lays claim to the title of events capital of Northern Ireland and the Council’s events team organise high profile events throughout the year, namely Sea Bangor, Comber Earlies Festival and Tide and Turf, which draw thousands of visitors to the area. In 2022 The Open House Festival officially opened the redeveloped and re-purposed Court House as a new concert venue. This along with the Open House Festival being based in Bangor and the summer music in the park events continues to encourage visitors to the Borough. Northern Ireland’s first five-star Hotel and several top-quality conference and banqueting hotels are also found in the Borough.
These attractions have ensured that the area stays one of the most popular destinations for entertainment, resulting in an expanded customer base with a catchment from County Down and the greater Belfast areas.

In May 2022 Bangor was awarded city status.

2.2 Organisational Structure

COUNCIL COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

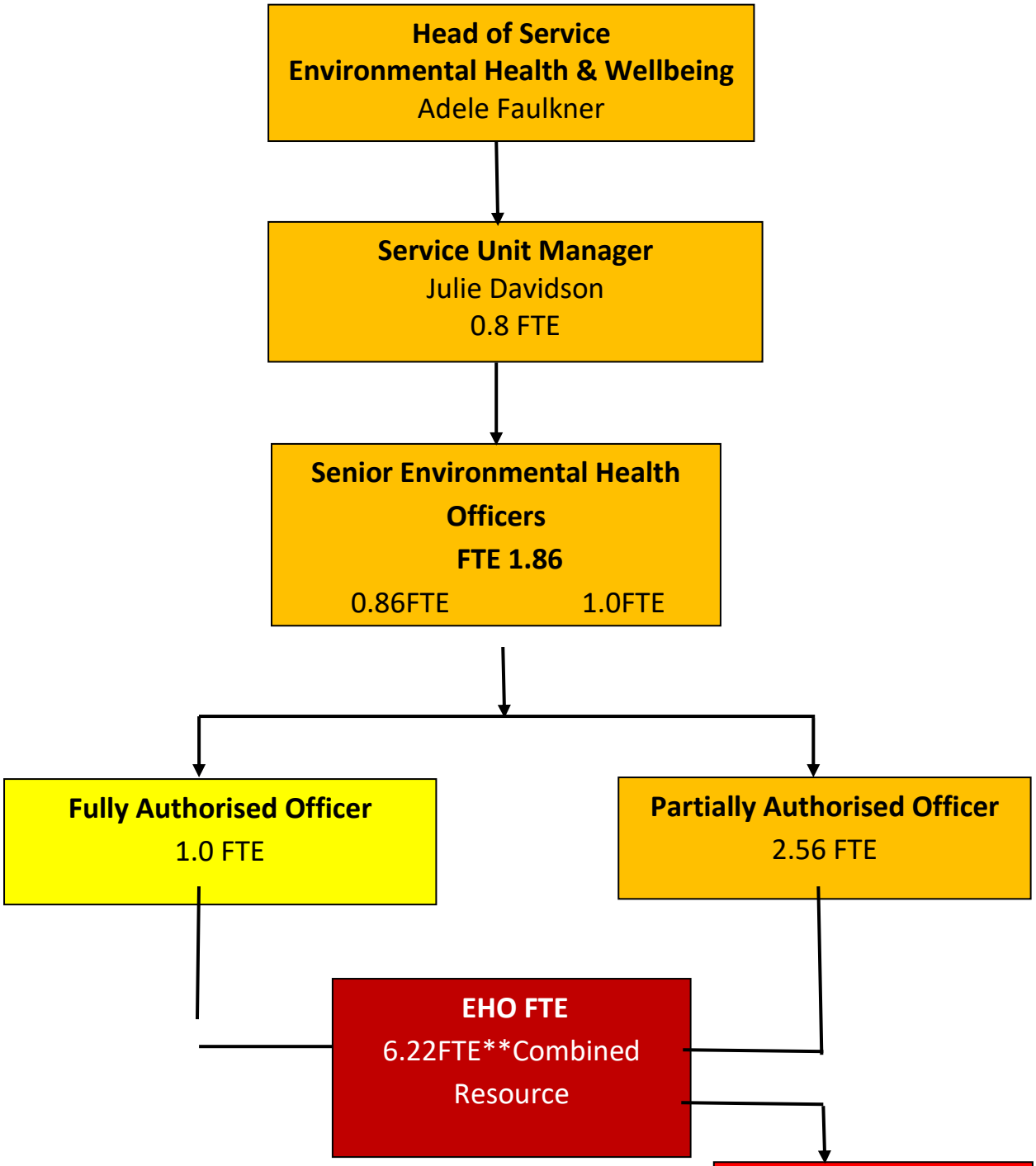
ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL



The food service is part of the Community & Wellbeing Directorate and reports to the Council through the Community & Wellbeing Committee.

Food Control Structure

The Food Control Service is managed by a Service Unit Manager who is allocated 0.8 FTE, and 5.4 Environmental Health Officers and 1.0 Sampling/Fish Hygiene Officer. The diagram below shows the FTEs in post. Partial Authorisation refers to officers not yet fully authorised to inspect all categories of food business.



Key

Fully authorised

Partial authorisation

2.3 Scope of the Food Service

2.3.1 The Council provides a comprehensive service to food consumers and food businesses in Ards and North Down. The following table outlines the types of activities covered by the food control service.

Inspection	*Planned Food Hygiene and Food Standards Inspections* *FHRS Rescore Inspections* *Re-visits* *Allergen assessment inspections*
Response Work	*Advice* *Food Complaints* *Telephone queries* *Advisory Visits* *Food Poisoning and Other Infectious diseases* *Unfit Food* *Food Incidents* *Allergen Incidents*
Sampling	*Bacteriological* *Chemical* *Pesticide residues* *Radiation* *Surveys* *Shellfish*
Service Promotion	*Training* *Research* *Health Education/Allergen Promotion and Education*
Service Management Carried out by Service Unit Manager and two Senior Environmental Health Officers.	*Officer monitoring & supervision* *Co-ordination & consistent approach to enforcement* *Maintenance of Food Hygiene Rating Scheme* *Forward planning* *Reporting to Council* *Document control* *Consultation with stakeholders*

2.4 Demands on the Food Service

In May 2025, **1505,** food premises (including childminders) were registered with the Council. The premises profile is outlined below. Please note that this is a snapshot in time that changes regularly as new businesses open and others close.

Primary Producers	73
Manufacturers & Packers (including EC Approved premises)	74
Restaurants/Other Caterers	923
Retailers (include Supermarkets)	358
Importer/Exporter	7
Distributor/Transporter	20
Not yet rated/Awaiting inspection	2
Outside programme (Markets/Churches)	28
TOTAL	**1505**

In addition:

- Markets – one in Market Square in Bangor on Wednesdays and one in Conway Square Ards on Saturdays. There is a farmer's market once a month in Comber. Monthly Market Fresh in Bangor also and Portaferry Market

- There are several events held within the borough during the year, which require a food safety input including Sea Bangor, Portaferry Gala week, Comber Earlies, Tide and Turf, music festivals and pop-up artisan food markets such as the Continental Food Market.

The service can be accessed by the public and businesses via:

- Calling in person to the Ards and North Down Borough Council, 2 Church Street Newtownards BT23 4FP between 9am to 5pm Mondays to Thursdays and 9am to 4.30pm on Fridays. The office is closed in the evenings and at weekends.

- By telephoning officers through the council switchboard or their direct line telephone numbers.

- By emailing the Food Control Team; foodenquires@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

- Emailing officers directly via their individual email addresses.

- Information and advice can be accessed via the Council's website at www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk.
- Contacting elected members

- The food hygiene ratings of eligible businesses can be found at http://ratings.food.gov.uk/ and via a link on the council website.

2.5 Enforcement Policy

The service works within the Council's generic Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy which includes an appendix providing specific information on food safety and food standards enforcement based on an EHNI approved framework. The current policy was adopted by Council in January 2015.

2.6 Scheme of Delegation

The service works within the Councils scheme of delegation which sets out the decisions and authorisations that Members agree can be made or granted without any further reference to Council.

3. SERVICE DELIVERY

3.1 Food Hygiene & Food Standards Interventions

Programmed food hygiene and food standards interventions are carried out in accordance with the minimum inspection frequencies defined in the Food Law Code of Practice, and priority will be given to inspections of higher risk premises and approved premises.

3.1.1 Food Hygiene & Food Standards Interventions Programmed for 2025-2026

The profile of premises by risk rating is outlined in the table below. This is a snapshot of the premises as of May 2025. The profile can change because of an intervention meaning that a premises risk category and therefore inspection frequency can be moved either up or down. The number of "A" rated businesses can vary significantly during the year.

The two tables below set out the premises profile by risk category:

Premises Food Hygiene	Number of premises	Frequency of inspection
Cat A	6	6 months
Cat B	60	12 months
Cat C	234	18 months
Cat D	502	24 months
Cat E	702	36 months
Unrated	1	
Total	**1505**	

Premises Food Standards	FREQUENCY OF INSPECTION
10	1/3/6 months
15	12
164	24
155	36
40	48
5	72
TOTAL	**389**

*** This is subject to change due to the implementation of the new Food Standards Delivery Model.**

- 2 extra premises inspected for standards which are honey producers. These premises are primary producers and are inspected by DAERA officers.

3.1.3 Food Hygiene and Food Standards inspections due in 2025-26

The table below shows the details of this year's inspection programme. As the Service Unit Manager, I am confident that the team will be able to complete the inspection programme.

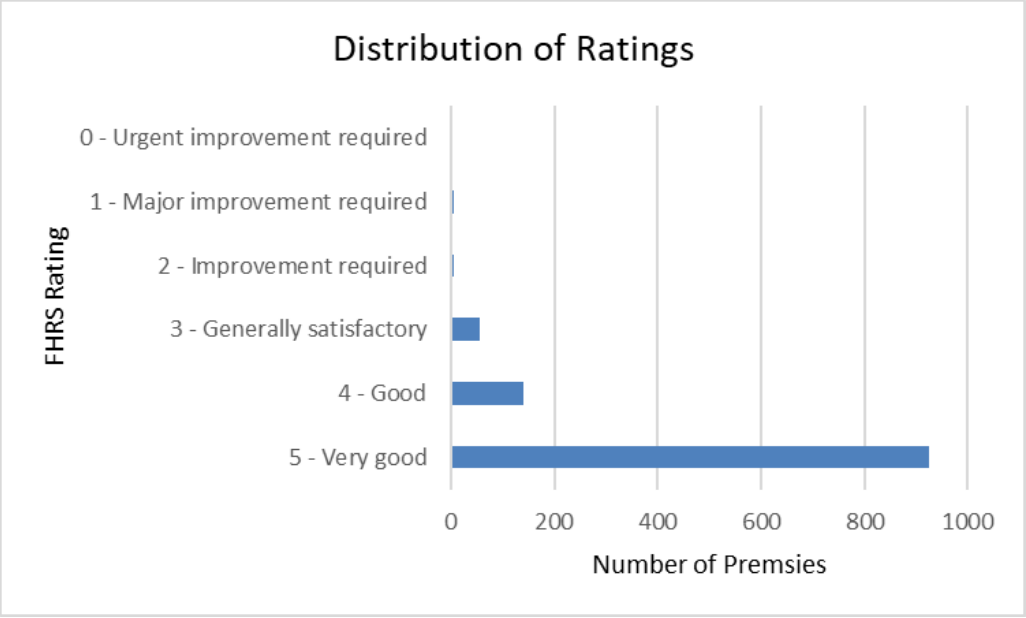
Risk Category	Food Hygiene	Inherent Risk Profile Compliance Assessment	Food Standards
A	3	Priority 1/3/6 months	10
B	63	12 months	15
C	165	24 months	164
D	265	36 months	155
E	191	48 months	40
		72 months	5
TOTAL	**694**	**TOTAL**	**389 ***

Inspection Programme for 25/26.

*** This is subject to change due to the implementation of the new Food Standards Delivery Model. Projected figures currently indicate that 389 inspections will be due this year under the new model.**

3.1.4 Food Hygiene rating

The chart below shows the hygiene rating of all businesses at a point in May 2025 and may be subject to change. The scheme is designed to help people choose where to eat out or shop for food by providing information about the hygiene standards in restaurants, pubs, cafes, takeaways, hotels etc as well as supermarkets and other food shops. The Food control service works closely with those businesses who score a low rating to improve standards. There are currently **9** businesses with a food hygiene rating of either **1** or **2.**



3.2 Food Complaints

Food complaints or complaints relating to the hygiene of food premises are investigated following the Food Complaints Procedure (Northern Ireland Food Managers 2019). The depth and scope of investigation required will depend on the nature of the complaint.

All food complaints involving an imminent risk to health will be responded to as quickly as possible and others within the two working day target. Where appropriate, complainants will be advised of the outcome.

3.2.1 Potential Impacts on the Food Control Service

The service is facing several emerging challenges in 2025/26.

1. The FSA is currently developing a new Food Standards Delivery Model. This will change the way inspection frequency is categorised. Previous inspection data will be converted and migrated to the new model. As a result, there may be a significant increase in food standards inspections due over the next 2 years which will have resource implications. Inspections will have to be prioritised to ensure that resources are being directed to areas of greatest risk. (Ref 3.1.3 Food Hygiene and Food Standards Inspections due)

2. Officer time may be needed to support local manufacturers and Approved establishments about the Windsor Framework as the legislation aligns.

3. Increase in FHRS re-rating inspections for less than broadly compliant premises (FHR 0,1,2). To assist these businesses, achieve a satisfactory rating of **3 or more** officers may need to spend more time assisting the food business operators achieving compliance by increasing visits. There is also the potential for enforcement action to be taken against these businesses if compliance is not achieved.

3.3 Home Authority Principle

As Ards and North Down is a council area in Northern Ireland, it would be the home authority for businesses based there. This means that businesses registered or with their main office would receive regulatory guidance and enforcement from Ards and North Down Borough Council, which would then work with other councils if the business also operates in other areas of Northern Ireland.

3.4 Advice to businesses

The Food Control service aims to improve the understanding of food safety requirements by persons handling food and this can be carried out by informal education through the provision of advice and recommendations during visits to premises. The Food Control Service also provides a health education and promotion service to the public to ensure greater awareness of food safety issues in both the commercial and domestic settings.

The increased importance put on information to be provided by food business operators on allergens and the nutrition element of restaurant and takeaway meals will require engagement with food business operators to ensure that there are other choices available for the consumer. The food safety section regularly shares food safety and awareness campaigns that the FSA promote on social media platforms.

3.5 Food Sampling Procedures

The Northern Ireland Food Managers Group Policy for food sampling, as agreed by EHNI, has been implemented within the Council's Food Control Service.

3.5.1 Food Standards

Food standards includes sampling, food and packaging, such as special surveys or complaint samples, to meet the Public Analysts Service Level Agreement with the Council. The service needs to prioritise by risk the samples that are sent for analysis with manufacturers, approved premises and complaints about products which are potentially hazardous.

3.5.2 Food Hygiene

The target number of bacteriological food samples for routine analysis is 12 samples per week, (650 approx. per annum). Samples are processed at the Northern Ireland Public Health Laboratory in Belfast.

3.6 Food Safety Incidents

Ards and North Down Borough Council will act on all food safety incidents, Food Alerts, Allergy Alerts and Product Recall Notices in accordance with Food Law Code of Practice and will deal with all notifications in accordance with the 'For Action' or 'For Information' categorisation, as allocated by the Food Standards Agency Northern Ireland.

3.7 Liaison with other organisations

The service actively takes part in liaison arrangements with several other local authorities, agencies, and professional organisations to ensure consistent enforcement.

Currently ANDBC has representation on Northern Ireland Food Managers Group, Food imports Exports & FH Subgroup. These are subgroups which report to Environmental Health Northern Ireland. ANDBC are also represented on the Fish and Shellfish Working Group and Approvals Forum which are FSA groups. NI Intertidal Hand Gathering of Shellfish Fisheries Management Plan Working Group, EHNI, obesity prevention steering group.

3.8 Food Safety and Standards Promotion

The Food Control Service aims to improve the understanding of food safety requirements by persons handling food, through informal education during visits to

premises, in the provision of advice and recommendations. In addition, the need to aid those whose first language is not English has been recognised and the presentation of the Food Standards Agency's Safer Food Better Business pack using interpreters has already been undertaken with the Chinese community.

The Department also provides a health education and promotion service to the public, to ensure greater awareness of food safety issues, both in the commercial and domestic setting.

In the coming year, officers from the Food Service will be involved in:

- Facilitating food hygiene training in schools by supplying materials, advice and in some cases, lecturers as there are modules on the Environmental Health Officer role in AS level examinations.
- Providing free training for volunteer caterers in Churches and similar organisations.
- Ongoing advice and education to food premises in the Borough.
- Engaging with community groups to promote food safety in the home such as The Cook it Programme.
- Working collaboratively with a range of organisations to embrace the aims and goals of the Whole Systems Approach to Obesity
- Compliance monitoring of food hygiene rating display.

3.9 Control and Investigation of Outbreaks and Food Related Infectious Diseases

The Council aims to investigate individual cases and outbreaks of food borne illness, as notified by the Public Health Agency and members of the public, following the Agency's guidance on the subject.

This involves reporting to the Consultant in Gastrointestinal Illness, who is under the general control of the Public Health Agency. Normally there approx. 82 individual cases per year, based on previous years data, although this can fluctuate.

ANDBC provides an out of hours on-call service for food poisoning and food incidents which is shared with LCCC. This means that officers can respond to urgent public health risks when they arise which includes evenings and weekends.

4. RESOURCES

4.1 Financial Allocation

The allocation of the Environmental Health Protection and Development's budget on Food Control for the year 2025/26 includes the following:

Budget Allocation	**2025/26 £**
Salaries	660,200
FSA Grant Money (including allocation for carrying out Shellfish Official Controls)	134,120
Sampling	25,000
Equipment	1200
Training	600
Total	821,120

FSA Grant Funding

The Food Control Service provides certain services relating to HACCP and EC Directives on Shellfish and Fish Hygiene which are supported by grant money provided by the FSANI under the Food Safety (NI) Order.

4.2 Staffing Allocation

The staffing resources for Ards and North Down Borough Council Food Control Service for 2025/26 are as follows:

Resource Allocation Hours

Head of EHP&D	7% of 1403	=	98 Hours
EH Manager (Food Control & CP)	80% of 1403	=	1122 Hours
Senior EHO X 1	86% of 1403	=	1206 Hours
Senior EHO X 1	100% of 1403	=	1403 Hours
District EHOs X 3.56	100% of 1403	=	4995 Hours
Temp EHOs X 1	100% of 1403	=	1403 Hours
Tech. Assistant/Fish Hygiene Officer	100% of 1403	=	1403 Hours
	TOTAL	=	**11,630Hours**

Officer resources and inspection targets- Key Performance Indicators

The workload for the incoming year indicates **1083** food hygiene and food standards inspections which estimates at **15** inspections per officer per month which is achievable along with reactive and other work.
The Service Unit Manager tracks inspection numbers ahead of the Local Authority Food Law Enforcement return for the Food Standards Agency which allows the Service unit Manager to ensure there are available resources to ensure effective use of officer time.

Competency and Authorisation

Position	**FTE**	**Level of Authorisation**
Env Health Manager	0.8	Full
SEHO	1.86	Full
EHO	1.86	Full
EHO	2.6	Partial
TOTAL FTEs EHO	**6.22**	
Technical Assistant Food	1.0	Full as per duties needed

Documented evidence is held proving officers meet the competencies and authorisation, relevant to their role, and the activities they will undertake as detailed in the Competency Framework and Chapter 3 of the Food Law Code of Practice (Northern Ireland).

4.3 Staff Development Plan

4.3.1 As part of the Council's Investment in People Initiative, an employee development scheme has been implemented. At present, staff training programmes are produced following an annual review of the training needs of each officer, as part of the internal monitoring processes used in the Food Control Service. Training is tailored to the needs of both the department and the individual members of staff, and they are provided with opportunities as they arise. A structured training programming is provided through the NIFMG in conjunction with FSA, which Ards and North Down Borough Council fully supports. Delegates from Council's Food Control Service attend many courses organised by the Group. Staff have access to an online training platform to help with CPD requirements and have access to Campden BRI for any specialist or technical requirements.

4.3.2 The Food Standards Agency Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement requires Local Authorities to appoint enough authorised officers to carry out food enforcement work and states that they shall have suitable qualifications,

training, and experience consistent with their authorisation and duties following the relevant Food Law Code of Practice.

4.3.3 The Food Safety Code of Practice requires the Local Authority to ensure that every officer receives structured on-going training, which is managed, assessed, and recorded. The minimum on-going/update training for each officer should be at least 20 hours per year, of which at least 10 hours must be food based. Officers can attend funding training courses and log on to ABC Food Law to keep CPD requirements up to date.

4.3.4 Each member of staff receives one annual mid-year review and one-to-one meetings every six to eight weeks at which time development needs are shown and a plan agreed to address these.

5. Quality Assessment

5.1 For the Food Control Service, the Environmental Health Manager monitors inspection and scores and accompanies officers on monitoring visits, undertakes a one-to-one meeting with each member of the food team on a regular basis or as required and checks on all food businesses who have been rated from A or B into lower risk categories and counter signs the changes in risk category.

Any issues are used to develop service delivery mechanisms for next year and the development of a Performance Improvement Plan and shows any training needs.

The FSANI undertakes a programme of regular audits of specific areas of the Food Service of district councils in respect of compliance with the Food Law Code of Practice and the Framework Agreement on Official Feed and Food Controls by Local Authorities. Ards and North Down Borough Council were last audited by the Food Standards Agency in 2018. A bi-annual return is submitted to the Food Standards Agency, October (Q1 and Q2) and April (Q3 and Q4). The purpose of the return is to:

- provide information on staff resources and on the delivery of food controls,
- Identify rates of compliance and any risks and concerns
- provide aggregated data on trends.

FSA Audit 2024

The Food Standards Agency conducted an audit on Service Planning (August to September 2024) which focused on examining the evidence to verify service planning activities and assessed whether the planned arrangements are suitable to achieve the objectives.

The audit feedback regarding service planning acknowledged good practices, highlighted improvements, and celebrate successes. An area highlighted for improvement was to include the Key Performance Indicators from the Environmental Health Service Plan.

The Food Service Plan links with the overall Environmental Health Service Plan which identifies a target of 90% of high-risk food businesses (category A or B for Hygiene and category A for Food Standards to be inspected within the year. This is a performance measure for the Food Control Section and is reported on a 6-month frequency.

6. REVIEW of 2024-2025

6.1 Review against the service plan

The review performance against last years' service plan is detailed below.

6.2 Identification of any variation from the service plan

The Food Control team fully eliminated the inspection backlog that had built up over a period including during covid. Two new temporary members of staff were recruited to assist with the lower risk premises to allow experienced officers to complete the higher risk premises.

This was a significant achievement for the team and the impact has been that all inspections for 25/26 will be completed within the required time frame meeting the regulatory requirements.

In the year 2024/25 the Food Control Service achieved the following:

Food Hygiene

- Inspected all category A & B premises
- Investigated **90** food poisoning identifications on behalf of the Public Health Agency
- Reacted to and actioned **411** complaints and service requests related to premises hygiene or issues with food products.
- Collected **547** food samples for microbiological analysis.
- **159** new businesses received an onsite inspection.
- Served **1** Hygiene Improvement Notice.
- Served **4** Fixed Penalty Notices
- Served **2** Emergency Prohibition Hygiene Notices (1 pending)
- **2** Food businesses voluntary closed.
- **1** successful prosecution (£2400 + costs)

Food Standards

- **4** A rated premises inspected for food standards.
- Collected **141** food samples for chemical analysis.
- Investigated **84** complaints about allergens, composition, and labelling irregularities.
- Served **3** Improvement Notices.

- Issued **1** Formal Caution.
- Participated in Operation Opson to identify peanut protein in garlic granules and chilli powder.
- Participated in a survey regarding the nutritional analysis of sausage rolls
- Carried out an in-house survey on gluten free products

6.3 Areas of Improvement

Workloads will continue to be prioritised by risk and officers will be tasked with a target figure for inspections to be achieved within a calendar month.
In line with the Corporate Plan and the priority area of reducing carbon emissions we are working in developing ways mobile working, and the use of technology to help officers and ensure compliance with the Food Law Code of Practice. Areas for improvement identified are the development of mobile working applications which will involve sharing best practice and shadowing colleagues in the Republic of Ireland that have introduced mobile working.
Retention of qualified and competent food officers within the food section has been challenging and will be prioritised for 2025/26 by offering more training initiatives and ensuring all officers gain experience in a variety of premises.

6.4 Contingency plans

The Councils, Business Continuity Management Plan sets out potential incidents and identifies how the service will manage risks to ensure it can continue to deliver essential services in case of an emergency, or during a disruption of normal day-to-day activities.

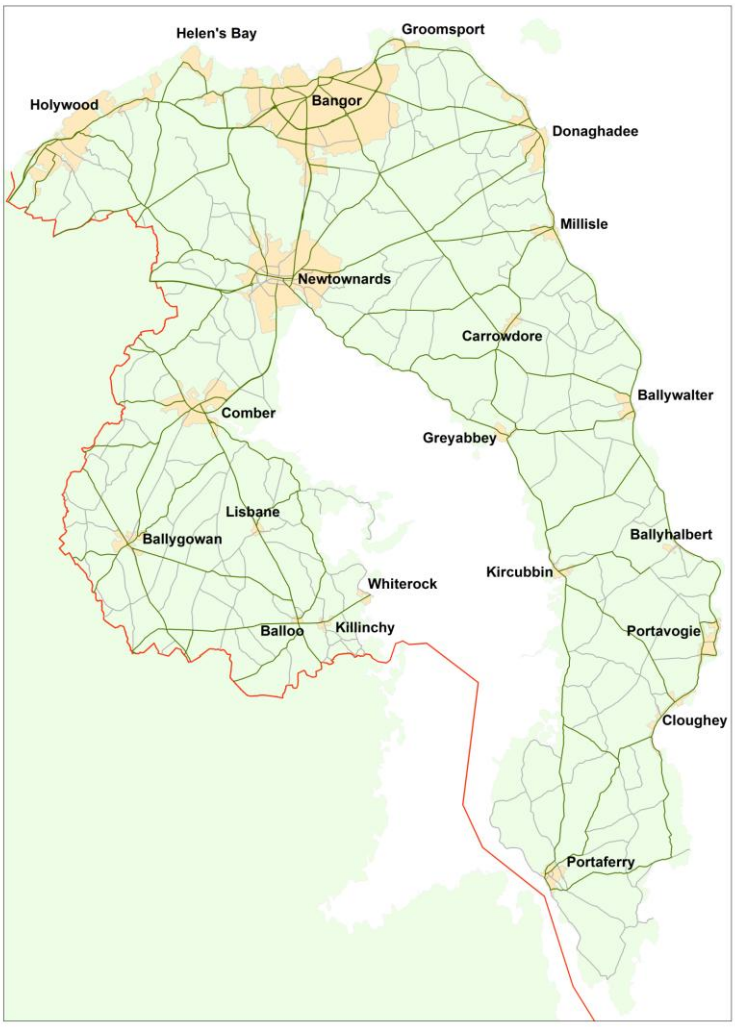
The channels and procedures for sharing information between Competent Authorities and agencies involved are set out in Memorandums of Understanding which are discussed and reviewed at Northern Ireland Food Managers. The MOU with the Public Health Agency for dealing with infectious disease notifications is currently under review.

Head of Environmental Health Protection and Development

June 2025
AF/JD

Date adopted by Council: _____

Appendix 1


Helen's Bay
Groomsport
Holywood
Bangor
Donaghadee
Millisle
Newtownards
Carrowdore
Ballywalter
Comber
Greyabbey
Lisbane
Ballygowan
Ballyhalbert
Kircubbin
Whiterock
Portavogie
Balloo
Killinchy
Cloughey
Portaferry

ITEM 6

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	18 June 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community and Culture
Date of Report	04 June 2025
File Reference	CW 103
Legislation	The Local Government Act (NI) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes ☒ No ☐ Other ☐ If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Response to Notice of Motion 519 - Queens Hall Holywood
Attachments	None

The following Notice of Motion was previously agreed by Council:

“That this Council recognises the opportunity that a return to Council management of the Queen's Leisure Complex, Holywood presents to develop the potential for a revitalised local asset that benefits the whole community, - a space for health, arts, culture, recreation, events and learning.

In light of this opportunity, this Council resolves to facilitate engagement with relevant community stakeholders, the purpose of which will be to ascertain community need and desires in respect of the Queen’s Leisure Complex asset.
A report, to include a costed plan, should be presented to Council before the end of 2022”.

Not Applicable

Progress to date
Community consultation took place on 24th September 2024 with a report being brought to Committee in December 2024.

At that meeting it was recommended that Council note the report and agrees to produce a feasibility study that will be brought back to Council for consideration, subject to budget availability/rate setting process.

Subsequently it was agreed in December 2024 that the recommendation be agreed and furthermore Council undertakes further community engagement to share information and to address the questions raised at the community event, via open dialogue, ensuring that this opportunity is communicated with plenty of advance notice to local groups and residents via email and social media to ensure engagement. Furthermore, Council agrees to work together with those local groups and residents in Holywood to agree the scope and carry out a feasibility study as soon as practical, that will then be brought back to Council for consideration.

Two subsequent meetings have been held between officers and elected representatives of the Holywood DEA to ascertain the focus for the scope of the feasibility study. The initial notice of motion referred to Queens Leisure Complex, but further discussions have focused on the community wing of the Centre, rather that the Leisure centre and therefore officers have focused on this part of the Centre at this time.

It is also worth noting that SERCO currently manage the running of the whole Queens Complex and this contract is in place until March 2028.

At the consultation event a number of concerns were raised in relation to the condition of the Queens Hall itself, the adjacent toilets and kitchen. It was suggested that initial works to these areas could be undertaken prior to a full feasibility study being prepared.

Costings
Officers have gathered costs for initial repairs to this area of the Centre as follows:

1. **Hall flooring**: The Hall in Queens is at the end of its lifespan. Hard boarding and carpet tiling. Estimated to be around **£10,000 + VAT.**

2. **Kitchen:** Full strip out and refit estimated to be circa **£10,500 + VAT**

3. **Staging Area:** Cost to replace what was removed and bring stage back to useable standard including stage lighting and control desk (specification in line with Queens Hall in Newtownards) estimated at circa **£83,000 +VAT**

A budget has been allocated for 2025/2026 to produce a business plan for the Centre. There is no budget at this time to carry out initial works of this scale prior to a feasibility study. A case can be made on the basis of that studies recommendations.

Not Applicable

Next steps
Clarification is sought on the focus of the feasibility study being for the whole of the Queens Leisure Complex or the “community” part of the complex only. Once clarified, further community engagement can be undertaken by the Community Development section of Council as requested to agree the scope of the feasibility study.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council confirm the scope of the feasibility study and thereafter officers undertake community engagement on the development of a brief for the feasibility study.

ITEM 7

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	18 June 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community & Culture
Date of Report	17 April 2025
File Reference	PCSP209
Legislation	Northern Ireland Justice Act (2011)
Section 75 Compliant	Yes ☒ No ☐ Other ☐ If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Response to Notice of Motion 549. White Ribbon Charter.
Attachments	None

Background
Council agreed in December 2022 to adopt the White Ribbon Pledge to 'Never commit, condone or remain silent about violence against women and girls'.

Organisations seeking accreditation are required to develop a three-year action plan, reviewed annually, which offers achievable goals to bring about genuine change. Once a Listen, learn, lead 3 year action plan has been approved by White Ribbon NI, an organisation will be granted White Ribbon Status. After the three-year period, the plan will be revisited with the hope that all objectives have been achieved and the White Ribbon pledge can be renewed.

To take the pledge staff need to go through a series of training to help them better understand the root causes of violence against women and girls and how to signpost to relevant agencies.

Not Applicable

At this time Safe Place training was provided for both staff and public via the PCSP with a view of completing Listen, learn and lead action plan.

Current status
Ending violence against women and girls (EVAWG), White Ribbon, and Nexus all share a core mission of promoting gender equality, preventing gender-based violence, and supporting healthier, safer communities. While each initiative or organisation operates with a distinct focus, they complement each other.
In 2024 Council was awarded £60,000 Momentum funding from TEO to raise awareness of the Change Fund. £120,000 of Change funding was granted to Council to undertake a tiered grants programme open to community and voluntary sector organisations and grassroots groups in the area.

As agreed by TEO, a portion of Momentum funding has been used to procure the delivery of training to all employees in ANDBC to raise awareness of the End Violence Against Women and Girls and the associated behaviours.

Following a procurement exercise, Nexus was the successful applicant and it will role out a programme of training to staff throughout 2025-2026 as follows:

- Specialist Workplace and Organisational training to raise awareness of the root causes of violence against women and girls
- Help ANDBC to create safer environments by developing and embedding best practices, policies, and procedures to prevent violence against women and girls.
- Identify EVAWG Champions who will be nominated representatives within the organisation who will be trained on handling disclosures of abuse and signposting survivors to specialist organisations.

The points listed above complete the requirements necessary to sign the Nexus Ending Violence Against Women and Girls pledge and therefore Nexus have approached Council to request that it formally endorse the EVAWG pledge.

The EVAWG pledge includes:

- A Pledge Certificate and physical and digital ‘sticker’ to display to highlight ANDBC’s commitment to Ending Violence Against Women and Girls in NI.
- ANDBC logo would appear on Nexus’ website and social media platforms to highlight that it has ANDBC signed up to the EVAWG Pledge (this is optional).

Next steps
To progress, Council should consider adopting the Nexus regional pledge and continue to support the White Ribbon appeal, and then at a point in the future it may wish to give further consideration to applying for accreditation status.

Nexus are also one of the eight community and voluntary sector organisations who were successful in receiving regional funding from TEO. The aim of Nexus and the other 7 organisations, Women’s Aid Federation NI (WAFNI), Women’s Resource and Development Agency (WRDA), Relate NI, White Ribbon NI, Youth Action, NSPCC,

Not Applicable

and Barnardo's NI will be to raise awareness of the EVAWG strategy and to bring expertise and learning across Northern Ireland to make a difference.

The Councils draft Domestic and Sexual Violence policy will be updated to include this commitment and brought to a future meeting of Council for approval.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council adopts the Nexus Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) Pledge.

ITEM 8

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	18 June 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community and Culture
Date of Report	27 May 2025
File Reference	CD35C
Legislation	The Local Government Act (NI) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes ☒ No ☐ Other ☐ If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Christmas Grant Scheme approval
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Guidance and criteria Appendix 2 - Application form

The Christmas Festival Programme is available for those towns and villages in the Borough that receive a Christmas Tree from Council. The purpose of the programme is to enable communities to run local festivals to celebrate the festive period and MUST include switching on of Christmas Lights.

The following towns and villages are eligible to apply for funding:

Villages – Ballygowan, Ballyhalbert**,** Ballywalter**,** Carrowdore**,** Cloughey**,** Conlig, Greyabbey**,** Groomsport**,** Helens Bay**,** Killinchy**,** Kircubbin**,** Millisle**,** Portaferry and Portavogie

Towns – Donaghadee**,** Comber and Holywood

The maximum amount of funding for each of the villages is £1,000 and £3,000 per town.

Not Applicable

Under the new Grants Policy, the scheme requires approval from Council prior to launching. The updated application form and guidance notes are attached.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council approves the Community Development Christmas Grant Scheme attached.

APPENDIX 1

Ards and North Down Borough Council

CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL FUND GUIDANCE AND CRITERIA 2025/2026

1. Purpose & Eligibility

Ards and North Down Borough Council have established a Christmas Festival Fund. The purpose of the fund is to enable communities to run local festivals to celebrate the festive period and MUST include switching on of Christmas Lights.

2. Restrictions

The fund is restricted to the towns and village detailed below, where the Council provides Christmas trees and lights, but does not organise and run Christmas Festivals for the community.

Applications are welcome from the following towns and villages:

Villages –

Ballygowan	Cloughey	Kircubbin
Ballyhalbert	Greyabbey	Millisle
Ballywalter	Groomsport	Portaferry
Carrowdore	Helen's Bay	Portavogie
Conlig	Killinchy	

Towns –

Comber	Donaghadee	Holywood

The Christmas fund is restricted to constituted community groups only.

Only one application per town or village will be supported. Therefore, where more than one constituted community group is active within a town or village, potential applicants are advised to collaborate and work in partnership with each other to run a Christmas Festival.

This funding is for Christmas Festivals **only**. Applications for other festivals will not be considered. The Christmas grants cannot be used in conjunction with any other Council funding streams.

Applicants need to be aware that the date you have entered on the application may be subject to change due to availability (alternative dates would be offered) of Councils Works Team/Electricians.

Ards and North Down Borough Council

3. Time frame

The Christmas Festival applications open once a year with the opportunity to apply for up to £1000 for Villages and £3000 for towns (as listed above), subject to funds being available. They shall be advertised in the local press and on the council's website and social media.

Opening/closing dates – grant opens **14th July 2025 at 9am and closes 4th August 2025 at 12pm** for local festivals/Christmas light switch on taking place from 1st November 2025 to 31st December 2025.

The Council will also notify those groups/organisations registered on the Community Information Register. If you would like to be registered please follow this link and complete the form: https://bit.ly/ANDBC-CIR

Council officers cannot complete application forms on behalf of applicants.

4. Financial Information

A Letter of Offer (LoO) will be issued to all successful applicants, outlining the details of the funding and the conditions of the award including adhering to publicity requirement, evaluation and monitoring returns. Advance payments of up to 50% may be paid to the applicant once the signed acceptance has been returned. An advance payment is subject to a written request outlining the need of an advance along with the submission of the most recent bank statements and a projected cashflow statement. All applicants will be required to submit original invoices, receipts, and bank statements in order to verify all funding awarded. If this information is incomplete or not provided or the funding is not spent in line with approved costs, the funding must be repaid to council. **The maximum amount available is £1000 for villages and £3000 for towns, per group per application.**

5. Exclusions

The Community Festivals Fund will not provide funding for the following activities:

- Individuals
- Political organisations
- Festivals taking place outside the Ards and North Down area
- Festivals of a commercial nature, organised to make a profit
- Trade or professional conferences/conventions

Ards and North Down Borough Council

- Festivals that are primarily fundraising events, are heavily branded with charity branding or deploy potential sources of income from a festival to a charity
- Awards ceremonies or industry events
- Residential courses and associated events
- Festivals that are social events for an organisation
- Primarily tourism focused events where the organisation cannot demonstrate significant community involvement
- Retrospective festivals/events that have already taken place
- Festivals/events which conflict with any Council run festival/event
- Sports clubs
- Non-constituted community groups
- Communities of interest

In addition to the above exclusions, examples of eligible and ineligible expenditure are outlined below:

Eligible expenditure	**Non-eligible expenditure**
Insurance for the festival (day or period of time the festival happens)	Gratuities, gifts and prizes
Venue Hire	Charitable donations
Entertainment costs – Such as: Bouncy Castles, face painters, balloon modelling etc.	Cash payments unsupported by an appropriate petty cash system or committee expenditure forms.
Equipment hires	General running costs
Catering	Any costs not approved by the assessment panel
Advertising and marketing	Any costs not in the application form
Printing	Alcohol
Administration related to the festival (stationery, postage etc)	Staff salaries/Professional fees

Ards and North Down Borough Council

6. Assessment Criteria and Scoring of Applications

Completed application forms and supporting documentation should be submitted to the Community Development Grants Team by the closing date: **4 August 2025 at 12 noon**.

Please note: Late or incomplete applications unfortunately will not be considered. Please ensure you are submitting the 2025/26 version of the application form. Any adjustments to the application or previous applications versions used will unfortunately be deemed ineligible.

Applicants must complete the following sections of the application form:

Section 1 - About your group / organisation – Questions 1 to 4 to be completed by **all** applicants but not scored

Section 2 – About your Christmas Festival including, how you will promote it, volunteer involvement, collaboration and how it promotes inclusion and community relations and the costs. Finance table is not scored but must be completed by all applicants. Failure to complete this table will deem the application ineligible. – Questions 5 to 9 to be completed by **all** applicants. Each question is scored 0-5.

Section 3 – Required information and application declaration. To be completed by **all** applicants but not scored.

Following submission of applications:

- Application forms received will not be reviewed until after the closing date deadline.
- All applications submitted will be acknowledged by email within three working days of receipt of the application and supporting documents.
- Eligible and fully completed applications, received by the closing time/date, will be assessed by a grant assessment panel against the criteria outlined.
- To make the process as fair as possible, questions will only be scored up to the maximum word count. Scoring is based on content of answers. Applicants do not need to reach the full word count.
- Late, incorrect application version or incomplete applications will not be scored.
- Successful applicants will need to submit a risk assessment 4 weeks prior to the Christmas Festival

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Please see the scoring measure below –

Measure	Score
Excellent response that meets the requirement. Indicates an excellent response with detailed supporting evidence and no weaknesses.	5
A good response that meets the requirement with good supporting evidence. Demonstrates good understanding of the requirement.	4
The response generally meets the requirement with acceptable detail but lacks sufficient detail to warrant a higher mark.	3
A response with reservations. Limited detail to demonstrate that the proposed response will meet the requirement.	2
An unacceptable response with serious reservations. Very limited/poor detail to demonstrate that the proposed response will meet the requirement.	1
The applicant failed to address the question.	0

7. Council Land

If your application is successful, you should be aware that if the festival is to be held on Council land, that appropriate permission must be applied for. To apply for permission please contact the Compliance Section, landrequests@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk as soon as possible to make these arrangements.

8. Road Closures

If your application is successful, you should be aware that if a road is to be closed as part of your festival, that appropriate permission must be applied for. To seek further advice and apply for Road Closure permission, please contact the Licensing and Regulatory Services Section, licensingandregulatoryservicesteam@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk or telephone 0300 013 3333.

Ards and North Down Borough Council

9. Risk Assessment

Successful applicants will need to submit a risk assessment 4 weeks prior to the Christmas Festival. Please see a risk assessment template in the link below but you can also use your own -

Risk_Assessment_Template.docx

Return of Completed applications:

Completed applications should be returned preferably via email in pdf format with supporting documentation to communitygrants@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

If emailing your application please enter the name of your organisation in the subject line followed by - Christmas Festival Grant 2025.

Or hand deliver or post to :

Community Development – Christmas Grants 2025
Ards and North Down Borough Council
Signal Centre, 2 Innotec Drive
Balloo Road
Bangor
BT19 7PD

If you have any queries, contact Stephen Archibald – Community Development Officer 0300 013 3333 ext. 40351 or alternatively stephen.archibald@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

APPENDIX 2

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Christmas Festival Grants 2025/26

GRANT APPLICATION

SECTION 1 – ABOUT YOUR GROUP/ORGANISATION (This section is not scored)

1. Name of Group/Organisation: _____

Address for Correspondence: _____

_____ Postcode:_____

Main Contact Name: _____ Position:_____

Telephone: _____ Email:_____

2. Name of Village/Town that Christmas Festival application is for: _____

_____

3. Where will your festival take place? (Address and postcode)

_____

_____

4. When will your festival / event take place? ***(This date may be subject to change due to availability of Councils Works Team/Electricians)***

Date: _____ Time: _____ (duration)

Estimated Attendees: _____

SECTION TWO – This section is scored

5. To help give us an understanding of your festival, tell us about your festival and how the community will be involved. (score 0-5)

Word count 250

6. Tell us about any partnership working or collaboration for running the festival and how you will ensure that the festival is open an accessible to everyone? (score 0-5)

Word count 250

7. Tell us how local volunteers will get involved? What new skills will volunteers gain from taking part in the festival and will any training be completed. (score 0-5)

Word count 250

8. Outline the measures you have taken for the safety and welfare of attendees and participants at your Christmas festival, including accessibility and inclusivity. You will need to provide a completed risk assessment 4 weeks prior to your festival. (score 0-5)

Word count 250

9. Costs - Demonstrate in the table below how the fund will be best spent? Please include benefit in kind in the second column. **The maximum amount available is £1000 for villages and £3000 for towns**. (table not scored but must be completed, ***failure to complete will deem the application ineligible***)

ITEM / ELEMENT TO BE FUNDED (must be an eligible running cost & please include the total cost)	Income from other sources – e.g. other grants, fund raising or benefit in kind	Amount applied for from ANDBC Grant (£)
Example: Selection boxes £200.00	*£100.00*	*£100.00*

Total amount requested from Ards and North Down Borough Council

PLEASE NOTE THIS GRANT CANNOT BE USED FOR THE PURCHASE OR SALE OF ALCOHOL

SECTION THREE – (Required Information, not scored)

10. Do you have the permission of the property owner or landowner where the event is to take place? **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐ (if on Council land, please see point 7 in the guidance and criteria).

11. Do you plan to close any roads during your festival? **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐ (if Yes please refer to point 8 in the guidance and criteria).

If you have already submitted your essential documents for any of the 2025/26 Grants (VE Day, Community Festivals or CD Running costs) then you do not need to submit them again. If your documents have not been submitted already please sent them with your application and complete the tick box below:

Essential documentation for GFD

	Already Submitted	**Submitted with form**
Copy of Constitution or Memorandum of Association	☐	☐
List of Office Bearers	☐	☐
Copy of most recent audited Annual Accounts	☐	☐

Other Essential documentation required at time of application submission:

Most recent AGM Minutes	☐	☐
Most recent Bank Statement	☐	☐
Child Protection Policy/ Statement	☐	☐

You are required to submit a completed risk assessment 4 weeks prior to your Christmas festival. Please see point 9 in the guidance and criteria**.**

Applicants need to be aware that Applications will not be reviewed by the Grants Team until after the closing date and time.

Only one application per town or village will be supported. Therefore, where more than one constituted community group is active within a town or village, potential applicants are advised to collaborate and work in partnership with each other to run a Christmas Festival. To make the process as fair as possible, questions will only be scored up to the maximum word count. Scoring is based on content of answers. Applicants do not need to reach the full word count.

Please note: Late or Incomplete applications will not be considered. Please ensure you are submitting the 2025/26 version of the application form and any adjustments to the application or previous versions used will be deemed ineligible.

Completed applications can be posted or hand delivered. If you are emailing your application and documents we advise you to password protect emails that contain sensitive data in order to keep you and your personal information safe and if requested we can forward you instructions on how to do this. Council also now use Zivver for safe transfer of information and we can assist applicants with doing this

We declare that this application is made with the authority and consent of the above organisation and that the information provided is true, accurate and complete.

Name (in capitals): _____
Position held: _____
Signature (on behalf of the applicant): _____
Date: _____

Name (in capitals): _____
Position held: _____
Signature (on behalf of the applicant): _____
Date: _____

Completed 2025/26 application forms and supporting documentation should be forwarded in pdf format preferably by email by no later than**: 12pm** on **4 August 2025.**

E-mail – communitygrants@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

Community Development – Christmas Grants 2025
Ards and North Down Borough Council
Signal Centre, 2 Innotec Drive
Balloo Road
Bangor
BT19 7PD

Freedom of Information

Ards and North Down Borough Council is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This Act came into operation on 1st January 2005. Applicants should be aware that the information provided in the completed application document could be disclosed in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act.

The Council will proceed on the basis of disclosure unless an appropriate exemption applies. No information provided by applicants will be accepted "in confidence" and Ards and North Down Borough Council will not accept liability for loss as a result of any information disclosed in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act.

Ards and North Down Borough Council does not have a discretion regarding whether or not to disclose information in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act, unless an exemption applies. Decisions in relation to disclosure will be taken by appropriate individuals in Ards and North Down Borough Council having due regard to the exemptions available and the Public Interest. Applicants should be aware that despite the availability of some exemptions, information may still be disclosed if the Public Interest in its disclosure outweighs the Public Interest in maintaining the exemption. Applicants are required to highlight information included in the application documents which they consider to be commercially sensitive or confidential in nature, and should state the precise reasons, why that view is taken. In particular, issues concerning trade secrets and commercial sensitivity should be highlighted. Applicants are advised against recording unnecessary information.

In accordance with the Lord Chancellors Code of Practice on the discharge of public functions, Ards and North Down Borough Council will **not** accept any contractual term that purports to restrict the disclosure of information held by the Council in respect of the contract or grant process save as permitted by the Freedom of Information Act. The decision whether to disclose information rests solely with Ards and North Down Borough Council.

Ards and North Down Borough Council will consult with applicants, where it is considered appropriate, in relation to the release of controversial information.

Data Protection

Ards and North Down Borough Council values your right to personal privacy. We collect this information solely for the purposes of this application and do not share it with anyone. We comply with the DPA (Data Protection Act) 2018 and UK GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation), ensuring that information is collected fairly and lawfully, is accurate, adequate, secure, up to date and not held any longer than necessary**.**
For further information our Privacy Statement can be viewed at https://www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/privacy-and-cookies

Equality of Opportunity, Section 75 and Good Relations.

Ards and North Down Borough Council (the Council) is required to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between

- persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation

- men and women generally
- persons with a disability or without
- persons with dependants or without.

In addition, without prejudice to the obligations above, Council is required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, or racial group.

Council is committed to fulfilling the Section 75 statutory duties across all functions (including service provision, employment, and procurement)

Please tick the box to confirm you have read the Freedom of Information, Data Protection and Equality statements above

☐

Completed applications can be posted or hand delivered. If you are emailing your application and documents we advise you to password protect emails that contain sensitive data in order to keep you and your personal information safe and if requested we can forward you instructions on how to do this. Council also now use Zivver for safe transfer of information and we can assist applicants with doing this

ITEM 9

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	11 June 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	GREL433
Legislation	The Local Government Act (NI) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes ☒ No ☐ Other ☐ If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Updated Good Relations Action Plan 2025-2026
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Ards and North Down Borough Council Good Relations Updated Action Plan 2025-2026

Council approved the Good Relations Strategy 2025 – 2028 and annual Action Plan in March 2025.

Following submission to the Executive Office officers were notified that funding for 2025 – 2026 would be reduced by £42,513.38 and officers were asked to amend the Action Plan accordingly and resubmit TEO before a Letter of Offer would be issued. A significantly reduced Action Plan for 2025-2026 is therefore attached (Appendix 1).

Table 1 outlines the impact of the proposed budget reductions across each activity area. The first line indicates the originally proposed amount and the lines below highlighted in bold/red is the new reduced allocation proposed. Furthermore, it is proposed that AND04 and AND07 be removed from the programme due to TEOs reduction in funding.

Not Applicable

	100%	75% TEO	Council funding
Total cost of Action Plan delivery 2025 - 2026	~~£226,738~~ ~~£185925.16~~ **£170,053.49**	~~£170,053.50~~ ~~£139443.87~~ **£127,540.12**	42,513.37
Total programme costs	~~£107,738~~ **£66,925.16**	~~£80,803.50~~ **£50,193.87**	
Programme costs breakdown			
Children and Young People	~~£26,738~~ **£17,071.33**	~~£20,053.50~~ **£12,803.50**	
Shared Community	**£10,000**	**£7,500**	
Safe Community	~~£6,000~~ **£3,666.66**	~~£4,500~~ **£2,750**	
Cultural Expression	~~£65,000~~ **£36,187.17**	~~£48,750~~ **£27,140.37**	
Total staff and other expenses costs			
Staff cost breakdown	~~£119,000~~ **£103,128.33**	~~£89,250~~ **£77,346.25**	

Table 2 outlines the impact of the reduction on the planned programme:

Code (2.02)	**Programme name (2.01)**	**Key Aim (2.13)**	**Total Cost (2.06)**	**Total TEO Contribution (2.07)**	**Outcome for 2025 – 2026**
AND01	Shared Education	Children and Young People	£10,738	£8,053.50	To be delivered
AND02	Shared Voices	Children and Young People	£1,000	£750	To be delivered
AND03	Youth Empowerment Programme	Children and Young People	~~£7000~~ £5,333.33	~~£5250~~ £4,000	Programme reduced - lack of funding
AND04	Community Relations Through Sport	Children and Young People	~~£8000~~	~~£6000~~	Programme removed -lack of funding
AND05	Living History	Our Shared Community	£10,000	£7,500	To be delivered
AND06	Holocaust and Other Genocides	Our Safe Community	~~£3000~~ £2,666.66	~~£2250~~ £2,000	Programme reduced -lack of funding

Not Applicable

AND07	Getting to Know Your Councillors/ Intergeneration al	Our Safe Community	~~£2000~~	~~£1500~~	Programme removed - Lack of funding
AND08	No Hate Here	Our Safe Community	£1,000	£750	To be delivered
AND09	Cultural Expression Programme	Cultural Expression	~~£60,000~~ £33,333.33	~~£45,000~~ £25,000	Programme reduced - lack of funding but support available through related Council decision to top up
AND10	History Talks	Cultural Expression	~~£5000~~ £2,853.84	~~£3750~~ £2,140.37	Programme reduced - Lack of funding
Total			66,925.16	50,193.87	

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council approves the updated Good Relations Action Plan and budgetary allocations for 2025-2026.

Appendix 1

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DISTRICT COUNCIL GOOD RELATIONS PROGRAMME

2025/26 ACTION PLAN

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Section 1

1.1 Programme information

Number of programmes	10
Name/role/contact details of all staff responsible for programme management	Donna Mackey 07970847772 donna.mackey@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk Nicola Dorrian 07917 544143 Nicola.dorrian@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

District Council: Ards and North Down Borough Council

Chief Executive Officer: Susie McCullough

1.2 Financial information

Name/contact details for staff responsible for financial management of programme	Donna Mackey 07970847772 donna.mackey@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

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	100%	75%
Total cost	~~£226,738~~ ~~£185925.16~~ **£170,053.49**	~~£170,053.50~~ ~~£139443.87~~ **£127,540.12**
Total programme costs	~~£107,738~~ **£66,925.16**	~~£80,803.50~~ **£50,193.87**
Programme costs breakdown		
Children and Young People	~~£26,738~~ **£17,071.33**	~~£20,053.50~~ **£12,803.50**
Shared Community	**£10,000**	**£7,500**
Safe Community	~~£6,000~~ **£3,666.66**	~~£4,500~~ **£2,750**
Cultural Expression	~~£65,000~~ **£36,187.17**	~~£48,750~~ **£27,140.37**
Total staff and other expenses costs		
Staff cost breakdown	~~£119,000~~ **£103,128.33**	~~£89,250~~ **£77,346.25**
Job title and % of role focussing on GR (Job Descriptions to be forwarded to TEO along with completed Action Plan)	GRO-28.75hours-£45,100 GRA-£43,600 GR admin-20 hour- £19,300	GRO-28.75hours-£34875 GRA-£34125 GR admin-20 hour-£15,450
Other expenses breakdown e.g. travel, stationery, phones etc please give details	Overtime £2,500 First Aiders allowance-£100 Benefit in Kind-£100 Mileage-£3,500 Car Parking-£100 Subsistence-£100 Total- £6,400	Overtime £1875 First Aiders allowance-£75 Benefit in Kind-£75 Mileage-£2625 Car Parking-£75 Subsistence-£75 Total- £4,800

1.3 Claim deadlines

It is extremely important that all claims for expenditure are made promptly and that full expenditure is claimed for within six weeks of the end of the financial year. The claim deadlines for 25/26 are as follows:

- Quarter 1 to be with TEO no later than end of July 2025
- Quarter 2 to be with TEO no later than end of October 2025
- Quarter 3 to be with TEO no later than the end of January 2026
- Quarter 4 to be with TEO no later than 11th June 2026

Section 2

2.01 PROGRAMME NAME	2.02 CODE
Shared Education	AND01

2.03 KEY WORDS	Youth, Educational, Historic Shared, Trip
2.04 Programme Summary	Budget cuts and cost of living increases has ended the programme as a journey to the Battlefields however as a substitute GR intend to deliver a similar programme at home. Schools will be approached to learn about WWI through interactive displays, visits and learning about the past. Visits will include but not limited to Clandeboye Estate and the Somme Centre. The programme will continue to be delivered on a cross-community basis, demonstrating the joined effort of all community backgrounds who took part during WWI. The young people will learn about the local people who fought and died during this period, and it will encourage the participants to build friendships with someone from a different background and bring history alive for the participants. The aim of undertaking the programme is to develop increased knowledge and understanding of key anniversaries and develop an appreciation of their social, political and cultural significance for NI and the UK and Ireland then and now. This incorporates knowledge and awareness of the national and European context of this period can help to change participants perspectives of our shared history. Different primary schools from a controlled/ integrated and maintained background will be targeted each year to ensure the project covers different areas around the borough and is cross community focused. These young people will form friendships over the entirety of the programme that they will take with them into post primary and adulthood. The numbers and background of participants will be reflected by the schools chosen. Experience has shown the benefits with schools joining together for Shared Education benefitting the rest of the school and pupils. This programme will build on the experience of previous educational programmes. The programme will be evaluated by pre and post questions and observation

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2.05 Contact details for programme staff	Donna Mackey 07970847772 donna.mackey@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk			
2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)	£10,738			
2.07 Total TEO contribution	£8,053.50			
2.08 Total target no. of participants	**Direct**	180	**Indirect**	400
2.09 Budgeted unit cost of programme	£59.65			
2.10 Targeted participant background analysis	50% PUL 50% CNR			
2.11 Name and post code of Programme HQ	**Location**	Ards and North Down Borough Council	**Postcode**	BT19, BT20, BT21, BT22, BT23
2.12 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact	**Location**	Schools to be selected	**Postcode**	
	Location		**Postcode**	
	Location		**Postcode**	
	Location		**Postcode**	
2.13 T:BUC Key Aim	Children and Young People			
2.14 Link to good relations audit	The Shared Education Programme addresses the persistent educational segregation identified as a significant barrier to good relations in the Ards & North Down Borough. Census data highlights that 68% of the population identify as Protestant and 32% as Catholic, other and non, showing the need for programmes that bring communities together. The use of exhibitions and school assemblies ensures parental and community involvement, meaning that the programme has a wider reach. 62.6% of survey respondents prioritised education in improving good relations.			
2.15 Complementarity- include links with other Strategy's e.g. Peace Plus, Urban Villages, MEDF etc	The Shared Education Programme complements the aims and objectives of multiple other strategies. The ANDBC Corporate Plan and ANDBC Big Plan (Community Plan) both contain outcomes in relation to flourishing and safe communities. By engaging young people and promoting increased understanding of shared history at a young age, increased mutual respect and tolerance will be fostered and carried forward into adulthood.			

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	Multiple other strategies also highlight the importance of promoting good relations and understanding from a young age. These include: • the Education Authority's Local Assessment of Need; • Draft Programme for Government; • Together Building a United Community; • Children and Young People's Strategy; • Racial Equality Strategy; • Refugee Integration Strategy; and • PEACEPLUS Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey Data for 2021-2023 also highlights decreasing sense of belonging within the ANDBC population to their respective neighbourhoods, dropping 3.5 percentage points during the 2019-2021 to 2021-2023 reporting periods.
2.16 Impacted Communities – Urban, Rural or both	Both

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2.01 PROGRAMME NAME			**2.02 CODE**	
Shared Voices			AND02	
2.03 KEY WORDS	Youth Community Diversity Education Rural Urban			
2.04 Programme Summary	This programme, co-designed with GR staff and volunteers from diverse ethnic backgrounds, raises racism awareness in primary schools and groups. Adapted to suit the needs and capacities of each school or group, the programme includes flexible delivery options: three workshops over three weeks, a condensed four-hour session, or a single, informal one-hour session. Initially created for post-primary schools, the programme now includes P4 and upwards, aligning with their celebration of world cultures curriculum. Facilitators and volunteers from ethnic and European backgrounds educate children about their cultures and traditions, fostering understanding and respect. Delivery to post-primary schools includes sessions with the PSNI addressing hate crime and hate incidents. Reflecting local demographics, including asylum-seekers, this enhanced programme builds on past experiences to improve outcomes. Impact will be measured using pre- and post-programme questions and observations.			
2.05 Contact details for programme staff	Donna Mackey 07970847772 donna.mackey@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk			
2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)	£1000			
2.07 Total TEO contribution	£750			
2.08 Total target no. of participants	**Direct**	200	**Indirect**	100
2.09 Budgeted unit cost of programme	£5pp			
2.10 Targeted participant background analysis	75% PUL 25% CNR			
2.11 Name and post code of Programme HQ	**Location**	Holywood Ards Ballyhalbert	**Postcode**	BT18 9ER BT23 8EY

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				BT22 1DQ
2.12 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact	**Location**	Redburn, Palace Barracks,	**Postcode**	BT18 9EZ BT18 9RA
	Location	Scrabo, West Winds, East End	**Postcode**	BT23 4NR BT23 4QT BT23 8LF
	Location	Donaghadee Millisle Ballywalter Portavogie	**Postcode**	BT21 0AY BT22 2DR BT22 2PJ BT22 1EB
	Location		**Postcode**	
2.13 T:BUC Key Aim	Children and Young People			
2.14 Link to good relations audit	This programme aims to address the issues of racism and cultural understanding across the Borough. With 143 racist crimes recorded from 2019 to 2024, the programme's focus on raising awareness in schools is essential. The demographic makeup of the Borough's population shows 5% of residents born outside of Northern Ireland, further emphasising the need for cultural education. In the focus group sessions, participants noted "entrenched divisions" and "stereotypes" as barriers to good relations. Programmes such as this will provide young people with the opportunity to learn more about people from diverse backgrounds. Shared Voices provides support to schools and communities. Sessions with PSNI will enhance understanding of hate crimes, addressing the community's need for safety and inclusion. The programme's capacity to engage children from P4 onwards ensures early intervention, supporting the 68.2% of survey respondents who wanted more "social interactions" to improve good relations across the Borough.			
2.15 Complementarity- include links with other Strategy's e.g. Peace Plus, Urban Villages, MEDF etc	The Shared Voices complements the aims and objectives of multiple other strategies. The ANDBC Corporate Plan and ANDBC Big Plan (Community Plan) both contain outcomes in relation to flourishing and safe communities. By engaging young people and promoting increased understanding of shared history at a young age, increased mutual respect			

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	and tolerance will be fostered and carried forward into adulthood. Multiple other strategies also highlight the importance of promoting good relations and understanding from a young age. These include: • the Education Authority's Local Assessment of Need; • Draft Programme for Government; • Together Building a United Community; • Children and Young People's Strategy; • Racial Equality Strategy; • Refugee Integration Strategy; and • PEACEPLUS In addition, there were a combined total of 253 hate incidents recorded in the ANDBC area between 2019 and 2023, of which 143 were incidents of a racist nature and 110 incidents of a sectarian nature. There is an overall trend with each of these categories that of recorded crime that show that incidents are lower in 2023/24 when compared to 2022/23, but are higher than 2019/20 levels – evidence of a need to continue to promote better racial and cultural awareness.
2.16 Impacted Communities – Urban, Rural or both	Both

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2.01 PROGRAMME NAME	2.02 CODE
Youth Empowerment Programme - REDUCED	AND03

2.03 KEY WORDS	Young, Skills, Shared
2.04 Programme Summary	The Youth Empowerment Programme is a holistic programme designed to support young people in building resilience, developing positive relationships, and developing essential life skills. The programme aims to divert youth from negative influences, such as involvement with paramilitary groups, by offering structured, engaging, and transformative activities in a safe and inclusive environment. The main objectives of the programme are to equip young people with the skills and tools to manage stress, adversity, and change in a healthy and constructive way, foster personal development through the enhancement of communication, problem-solving, decision-making, and leadership skills, encourage youth to become active, positive contributors to their communities, and support mental, emotional, and physical well-being, promoting a sense of purpose and self-worth. The programme will include workshops, and mentorship opportunities. It will include life skills workshops that deliver sessions on decision-making, communication, goal setting, emotional intelligence, and conflict resolution. Mentorship and role model support will offer access to positive role models, community mentors, and peer support networks to inspire and guide youth. The programme will be delivered in collaboration with community organisations, youth clubs, schools, and sports clubs. A drama to help them understand the consequences of paramilitary activity will be delivered to a number of schools if funding is successful from other sources
2.05 Contact details for programme staff	Donna Mackey 07970847772 donna.mackey@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk
2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)	~~£7,000~~ £5,333.33
2.07 Total TEO contribution	~~£5,250~~ £4000

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2.08 Total target no. of participants	**Direct**	~~200~~ 150	**Indirect**	20
2.09 Budgeted unit cost of programme	~~£35pp~~ £35.55pp			
2.10 Targeted participant background analysis	75% PUL 25% CNR			
2.11 Name and post code of Programme HQ	**Location**	Bangor	**Postcode**	BT20 4TD
2.12 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact	**Location**	Portaferry	**Postcode**	BT22 1DQ
	Location	Newtownards	**Postcode**	BT23 7HA
	Location	Glastry	**Postcode**	BT22 1RB
	Location		**Postcode**	
2.13 T:BUC Key Aim	Children and Young People			
2.14 Link to good relations audit	This programme aims to tackle anti-social behaviour and paramilitary influence among young people, which was highlighted as a key concern across all of the focus groups. Anti-social behaviour and lack of activities for young people were noted as challenges in survey findings, with 35% identifying "lack of engagement opportunities for children and young people" as a barrier to good relations. This programme's holistic approach to skill-building, mentorship, and developing resilience will help support the development of young people. Education and skills deprivation is a concern in 12 of the Council area's 86 statistical districts, all of which fall within NI's 25% most deprived areas in relation to this measure.			
2.15 Complementarity- include links with other Strategy's e.g. Peace Plus, Urban Villages, MEDF etc	This programme complements the aims and objectives of multiple other strategies. The ANDBC Corporate Plan and ANDBC Big Plan (Community Plan) both contain outcomes in relation to flourishing and safe communities. By engaging young people and promoting increased understanding of shared history at a young age, increased mutual respect and tolerance will be fostered and carried forward into adulthood.			

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	Multiple other strategies also highlight the importance of promoting good relations and understanding from a young age. These include: • the Education Authority's Local Assessment of Need; • Draft Programme for Government; • Together Building a United Community; • Children and Young People's Strategy; • Racial Equality Strategy; • Refugee Integration Strategy; and • PEACEPLUS
2.16 Impacted Communities – Urban, Rural or both	Both

2.01 PROGRAMME NAME		**2.02 CODE**
Community Relations Through Sport- REMOVED		AND04
2.03 KEY WORDS	Youth Schools Sport Rural Urban facilities	
2.04 Programme Summary	This programme will work with pre and post primary schools in the borough. The Community Relations Through Sport Programme is designed to introduce young people to sport with which they may not normally associate. The programme will run across the borough in both urban and rural areas. Similar to the Game of 3 Halves the programme includes a 'fourth half' on community relations. Over the 5 weeks the 'fourth half' addresses issues on sectarianism and racism while the sporting element introduces the young people to new sports often associated with a particular community background. Building on the work from previous years, this cross-community programme of activity with schools across ANDBC continues to build links between rural and urban communities and maintained and controlled schools in the AND area. The numbers and background of participants will be reflected by the demographics of the area and schools/ clubs engaged. If required, the programme can include transport enabling rural schools/clubs to engage.	

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	The programme will also work closely with local sporting clubs to deliver a one day Game of 3 Halves event. The event encourages coaches and participants to take part in new sports. Programme will be evaluated by pre and post questions and observation			
2.05 Contact details for programme staff	Donna Mackey 07970847772 donna.mackey@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk			
2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)	£8,000			
2.07 Total TEO contribution	£6,000			
2.08 Total target no. of participants	**Direct**	300	**Indirect**	40
2.09 Budgeted unit cost of programme	£26.66			
2.10 Targeted participant background analysis	75% PUL 25% CNR			
2.11 Name and post code of Programme HQ	**Location**	Portaferry	**Postcode**	BT22 1RB
2.12 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact	**Location**	Strangford	**Postcode**	BT22 2GB
	Location	Ballyhalbert	**Postcode**	BT22 1DQ
	Location	Bangor	**Postcode**	BT20 3DS
	Location	Holywood	**Postcode**	BT18 9EW
2.13 T:BUC Key Aim	Children and Young People			
2.14 Link to good relations audit	The focus groups highlighted the importance of engaging children and young people, with 35% of survey respondents identifying 'Lack of engagement opportunities for young people' as a significant barrier to good relations. 62.6% highlighted 'Education' as another area which was key to developing good relations in the area. 68% of respondents also highlighted the need for more social interactions between people in the Borough to develop good relations. Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour, Paramilitarism and Drugs / Alcohol Related Issues were viewed as the most urgent social challenges facing communities in the ANDBC area in need of addressing.			
2.15 Complementarity- include links with other	This programme complements the aims and objectives of multiple other strategies. The ANDBC			

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Strategy's e.g. Peace Plus, Urban Villages, MEDF etc	Corporate Plan and ANDBC Big Plan (Community Plan) both contain outcomes in relation to flourishing and safe communities. By engaging young people and promoting increased understanding of shared history at a young age, increased mutual respect and tolerance will be fostered and carried forward into adulthood. Multiple other strategies also highlight the importance of promoting good relations and understanding from a young age. These include: • the Education Authority's Local Assessment of Need; • Draft Programme for Government; • Together Building a United Community; • Children and Young People's Strategy; • Racial Equality Strategy; and • Refugee Integration
2.16 Impacted Communities – Urban, Rural or both	Both.

2.01 PROGRAMME NAME	**2.02 CODE**
Living History	AND05
2.03 KEY WORDS	Education, Rural, Urban, Trip, Fac, Shared, Summer
2.04 Programme Summary	The Living History Programme is a 5 week programme for participants which includes a series of educational and historical based Rural and Urban visits to places of interest within the local areas and beyond that helps people understand their shared history, breaks down barriers and challenges people to venture elsewhere to learn about their shared past. A calendar of visits will be developed aimed at breaking down barriers and offer opportunities for participants to build an understanding of our shared history. Some of the trips may include visits to places like, Crumlin Road Gaol, Grange Gorman, Dublin Library, Glasnevin. Participants will be introduced to places in Northern Ireland and Ireland that have had an impact on our lives today. Each visit is followed by post discussion to explore the shared history of the visit. It will also focus on visiting places within AND as a

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	way of breaking down some barriers and addressing silent sectarianism. AND is an area with a wealth of diversity with a range of different places where communities of different community backgrounds meet and engage, in many cases with people from their own community background. Creating everyday opportunities for people to meet and engage with people from other community backgrounds is the focus of this programme. It aims to create opportunities for people to learn more about the people, places and communities that make Northern Ireland the diverse and multi-cultural place that it is. The programme will be open to all community backgrounds and faiths and will be publicly advertised. This will ensure a good mix of participants and community background. The programme is much more than a tourist tour because the places visited all have an influence on society today eg Visit to Crumlin Road Gaol followed by discussion with ex combatants – links closely to the Good Friday agreement and the release of prisoners. By advertising it will engage with the different 'class' elements often identified in ANDBC. All visits are followed by in depth discussion on issues that have engulfed Northern Ireland and Ireland over the centuries. This programme is designed to encourage dialogue and address these issues from an up-to-date viewpoint and in a safe environment. The numbers and background of participants will be reflected by the demographics of the area and transport availability. This programme encourages returning participants that has enabled open discussion and a better understanding of the effect the 'troubles' has had on so many. Programme will be evaluated by pre and post questions and observation
2.05 Contact details for programme staff	Donna Mackey 07970847772 donna.mackey@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk
2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)	£10,000

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2.07 Total TEO contribution	£7,500			
2.08 Total target no. of participants	**Direct**	46	**Indirect**	160
2.09 Budgeted unit cost of programme	£217.39pp			
2.10 Targeted participant background analysis	75% PUL 25% CNR			
2.11 Name and post code of Programme HQ	**Location**	Ards	**Postcode**	BT23 4AP
2.12 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact	**Location**	Comber	**Postcode**	BT23 5DF
	Location	Conlig	**Postcode**	BT23 7PR
	Location	Portaferry	**Postcode**	BT22 1PE
	Location	Bangor	**Postcode**	BT19 1SH
2.13 T:BUC Key Aim	Our Shared Community			
2.14 Link to good relations audit	The focus groups revealed that symbolic and physical divisions marked by flags, murals, and graffiti persist, reinforcing sectarian attitudes. 40% of survey respondents identified 'Political Differences' as a key barrier to good relations, while 33.8% highlighted 'Religious Differences.' AND's population is 68% Protestant, 14% Catholic, and 17% non-religious, reflecting the need for programmes that bring the community together.. 62.6% of respondents called for 'Education' as a priority for improving good relations.			
2.15 Complementarity- include links with other Strategy's e.g. Peace Plus, Urban Villages, MEDF etc	The Living History programme complements the aims and objectives of multiple other strategies. The ANDBC Corporate Plan and ANDBC Big Plan (Community Plan) both contain outcomes in relation to flourishing and safe communities, which this programme will stand to achieve by bringing people from across the Borough together in order to learn and gain greater understanding of the historical perspectives of their neighbours. Promoting better relations and generating increased respect for different historical points of view with the aim of fostering shared, safe communities is considered a priority in multiple other strategies, including: • Draft Programme for Government; • Together Building a United Community; • Children and Young People's Strategy;			

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	• Racial Equality Strategy; • Refugee Integration Strategy; and • PEACEPLUS The most recent Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey Data for the ANDBC area shows that a small but growing percentage of the population believe that community relations were worse than what they were 5 years ago. There was also a strong sentiment towards integration within the survey findings, both in terms of housing and education.
2.16 Impacted Communities – Urban, Rural or both	Both.

2.01 PROGRAMME NAME		**2.02 CODE**
Holocaust and Other Genocides - REDUCED		AND06
2.03 KEY WORDS	Education, Shared, Rural, Urban, Fac	
2.04 Programme Summary	This programme delivers a series of annual events leading to the commemoration of Holocaust Memorial Day, educating schools and community groups on the consequences of hate and genocide. While the Holocaust remains central to the programme, additional genocides from Europe and worldwide will be included, chosen in consultation with participating groups to ensure relevance and engagement. Examples include the genocides in Rwanda, Darfur, Cambodia, and the treatment of Indigenous peoples in various regions. Holocaust Event- An annual event featuring a Holocaust survivor or second-generation speaker. The focus will be on personal stories of survival and resilience, complemented by contributions from local primary schools and guest speakers. Exhibition- A two-week exhibition at Bangor Carnegie Library showcasing creative works such as artwork, poems, and writings from local schools and community groups. All post-primary schools and registered groups within the ANDBC area are invited to contribute. Online materials and recordings from previous projects will highlight genocides' effects on survivors from diverse cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds.	

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	Genocide Talks- Online talks addressing genocides worldwide, including European examples, as well as global genocides in Rwanda, Darfur, and Cambodia. Each session will conclude with a facilitated Q&A to promote reflection and understanding. Schools talk with Holocaust survivor or second-generation speaker depending on available budget. Work in partnership with BCC and HMDT to produce the Belfast event. The numbers and background of participants will be reflected by the demographics of the area and based on previous programmes. Programme will be evaluated by pre and post evaluations and observation.			
2.05 Contact details for programme staff	Donna Mackey 07970847772 donna.mackey@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk			
2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)	~~£3000~~ £2666.66			
2.07 Total TEO contribution	~~£2250~~ £2000			
2.08 Total target no. of participants	**Direct**	400	**Indirect**	300
2.09 Budgeted unit cost of programme	~~£7.50pp~~ £6.66pp			
2.10 Targeted participant background analysis	75% PUL 25% CNR			
2.11 Name and post code of Programme HQ	**Location**	Ards	**Postcode**	BT23 4JT
2.12 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact	**Location**	Portaferry	**Postcode**	BT22 1LE
	Location	Bangor	**Postcode**	BT20 4BT
	Location	Holywood	**Postcode**	BT18 9HQ
	Location	Ballyhalbert	**Postcode**	BT22 IDQ
2.13 T:BUC Key Aim	Our Safe Community			
2.14 Link to good relations audit	The survey results highlighted the need for more educational programmes to improve good relations across the borough and this programme will aim to build awareness and increase understanding of historical events. There were 253 sectarian and racist crimes recorded in the Borough from 2019 to 2024, this highlights the need for the programme.			

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	Focus groups all highlighted the importance "shared history education" as a tool to promote good relations across the Borough. This programme aims to foster intergenerational understanding and contribute to a broader culture of acceptance and inclusion. The programme also addresses key barriers to Good Relations identified during consultation, namely lack of engagement and opportunities for awareness raising.
2.15 Complementarity- include links with other Strategy's e.g. Peace Plus, Urban Villages, MEDF etc	Similar to other historical related initiatives contained within this Action Plan, The Holocaust Memorial and other Genocides Programme complements the aims and objectives of multiple other strategies. The ANDBC Corporate Plan and ANDBC Big Plan (Community Plan) both contain outcomes in relation to flourishing and safe communities, which this programme will stand to achieve by bringing people from across the Borough together in order to learn and gain greater understanding of the historical perspectives of their neighbours. Promoting better relations and generating increased respect for different historical points of view with the aim of fostering shared, safe communities is considered a priority in multiple other strategies, including: • Draft Programme for Government; • Together Building a United Community; • Children and Young People's Strategy; • Racial Equality Strategy; • Refugee Integration Strategy; and • PEACEPLUS
2.16 Impacted Communities – Urban, Rural or both	Both.

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2.01 PROGRAMME NAME	2.02 CODE
Getting to Know Your Councillors/ Intergenerational - REMOVED	AND07

2.03 KEY WORDS	Shared, Youth, Diverse
2.04 Programme Summary	This programme is open to people of all ages, including schools, community groups, and individuals, to develop a better understanding of the role of Good Relations within local councils, the role of regional and local government in Northern Ireland, and the importance of active participation in the democratic process. Participants of all ages will gain insights into how local and regional government operates, including the roles and responsibilities of councillors, council structures, and decision-making processes. The programme will also educate participants on the voting system in Northern Ireland, the electoral process, and the importance of voting in shaping their communities and influencing change. The programme will include interactive sessions where participants can meet and question their local councillors. This dialogue will not only educate participants but also allow elected members to hear firsthand the concerns of their constituents, fostering transparency and accountability. All political parties and independent councillors will be invited to participate. Groups registered on the community database, as well as all schools, community organisations, and interested individuals, will be invited to take part. The programme will be adapted to suit all age groups, from school-age children to adults, using age-appropriate workshops and materials. The programme will be evaluated through pre- and post-programme surveys, observation, and feedback from participants and councillors. The numbers and backgrounds of participants will reflect the demographics of the area.
2.05 Contact details for programme staff	Donna Mackey 07970847772 donna.mackey@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk
2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)	£2,000
2.07 Total TEO contribution	£1,500

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2.08 Total target no. of participants	**Direct**	60	**Indirect**	
2.09 Budgeted unit cost of programme	£33.33pp			
2.10 Targeted participant background analysis	75% PUL 25% CNR			
2.11 Name and post code of Programme HQ	**Location**	Holywood	**Postcode**	BT18 9ER
2.12 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact	**Location**	Bangor	**Postcode**	BT20 4TH
	Location	Portaferry	**Postcode**	BT22 1RB
	Location		**Postcode**	
	Location		**Postcode**	
2.13 T:BUC Key Aim	Our Safe Community			
2.14 Link to good relations audit	This programme aims to enhance public awareness of local government, addressing the focus group's call for "community leadership programmes". In the NILT survey- 46.6% of survey respondents stated that relations between Protestants and Catholics had stayed "about the same" over five years, programmes like this that increase transparency, and dialogue will be key to improving relations going forward. The community survey also noted that "awareness raising" (74.8%) was important to improve relations and this programme aims to build connections between councillors and constituents. The programme also addresses key barriers to Good Relations identified during consultation, namely lack of engagement and opportunities for awareness raising.			
2.15 Complementarity- include links with other Strategy's e.g. Peace Plus, Urban Villages, MEDF etc	Contained within the ANDBC Corporate Plan, there is an emphasis on the Council being an 'engaged Borough,' with businesses and citizens having the opportunity to directly influence services, plans and investment. This initiative will bridge a gap between citizens and their elected representatives and increase awareness of the respective roles and responsibilities of Councillors, and what they have the power to change and influence.			

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2.16 Impacted Communities – Urban, Rural or both	Both.

2.01 PROGRAMME NAME		**2.02 CODE**
No Hate Here		AND08
2.03 KEY WORDS	Diverse, Shared, Rural. Urban, Fac, Youth	
2.04 Programme Summary	The *"No Hate Here"* programme delivers a range of diversity and inclusion programmes aimed at building community cohesion, tackling hate crime, and raising awareness of racism and sectarianism across the Borough. It aims to help participants better understand themselves and others, the programme combines creative arts, cultural events, and learning to help foster acceptance, respect, and inclusivity. The programme features a variety of events and activities developed in partnership with statutory agencies, voluntary organisations, and community groups, including PSNI, NIHE, YMCA, and the Intercultural Forum's *No Hate Here* subgroup. It will use innovative approaches to engage participants, including arts-based projects, cultural celebrations, and newly introduced dance and drama workshops. These sessions will provide participants with a safe space to explore themes of identity, diversity, and equality, encouraging open dialogue and positive expression. A series of awareness-raising seminars and talks will also be delivered, featuring guest speakers, survivors of hate incidents, and experts who share insights into addressing racism and sectarianism. Schools and local communities will benefit from tailored workshops through the *Shared Voices* and diversity programmes, promoting cultural understanding and challenging stereotypes. The programme will also support asylum seekers and refugees arriving in the Borough. Working in partnership with YMCA and local networks, newcomers will receive practical support, including access to local information, ESOL (English for	

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	Speakers of Other Languages) classes, and advice to help them integrate and thrive within their new communities. Targeting a wide range of participants, including local communities, schools, and individuals seeking asylum, the programme will engage with all age groups. Creative workshops, cultural activities, and awareness campaigns will empower participants to challenge hate and build better relationships with others, promoting inclusion across the Borough. The outcomes of the programme will include increased understanding of diversity and cultural traditions, reduced incidences of hate crime, and strengthened relationships between communities and statutory organisations. To measure success, the programme will be evaluated through pre- and post-surveys, observations, and feedback from participants. Participation numbers and the background of attendees will reflect the demographics of the area, ensuring inclusivity and representation.			
2.05 Contact details for programme staff	Donna Mackey 07970847772 donna.mackey@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk			
2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)	£1,000			
2.07 Total TEO contribution	£750			
2.08 Total target no. of participants	**Direct**	150	**Indirect**	300
2.09 Budgeted unit cost of programme	£6.66pp			
2.10 Targeted participant background analysis	75% PUL 25% CNR			
2.11 Name and post code of Programme HQ	**Location**	Ards	**Postcode**	BT23 4EN
2.12 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact	**Location**	Bangor	**Postcode**	BT20 5AY
	Location	Portaferry	**Postcode**	BT22 1RB
	Location	Holywood	**Postcode**	BT18 9ER
	Location		**Postcode**	
2.13 T:BUC Key Aim	Our Safe Community			
2.14 Link to good relations audit	There were a combined total of 253 hate incidents recorded in the ANDBC area between 2019 and 2023, of which 143 were incidents of a racist nature			

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	and 110 incidents of a sectarian nature. There is an overall trend with each of these categories that of recorded crime that show that incidents are lower in 2023/24 when compared to 2022/23, but are higher than 2019/20 levels – evidence of a need to continue to promote better racial and cultural awareness.
2.15 Complementarity- include links with other Strategy's e.g. Peace Plus, Urban Villages, MEDF etc	The 'No Hate Here' programme complements the aims and objectives of multiple other strategies. The ANDBC Corporate Plan and ANDBC Big Plan (Community Plan) both contain outcomes in relation to flourishing and safe communities. By engaging young people and promoting increased understanding of shared history at a young age, increased mutual respect and tolerance will be fostered and carried forward into adulthood. Multiple other strategies also highlight the importance of promoting good relations and understanding from a young age. These include: • the Education Authority's Local Assessment of Need; • Draft Programme for Government; • Together Building a United Community; • Children and Young People's Strategy; • Racial Equality Strategy; • Refugee Integration Strategy; and • PEACEPLUS
2.16 Impacted Communities – Urban, Rural or both	Both.

2.01 PROGRAMME NAME	**2.02 CODE**
Cultural Expression Programme - REDUCED	AND09
2.03 KEY WORDS	Hard to reach, Urban, Rural,Shared
2.04 Programme Summary	The Cultural Expression programme has been developed and builds on previous programmes with hard-to-reach groups and key influencers from perceived ex paramilitary backgrounds. The programme supports cultural expression festivals to encourage the positive promotion of PUL and CNR culture to the wider society. Festivals and bonfires

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	will be regularly monitored, and any negative issues addressed before they become more challenging. The cross-community Cultural Expression programme gives the PUL community a sense of belonging that they feel is being eroded and the CNR community a sense of inclusion. While bonfires are always going to be contentious if Good Relations can work with the groups to minimise the negativity seen around bonfires it will develop greater respect among communities and cultures in the local areas; the aims are that by reducing the negativity this may also influence wider society and those who would not normally be associated with cultural festivals. The programme maintains and builds relationships between the Council and retains engagement. This will also enable and encourage engagement around other hard issues (e.g., paramilitarism, flags, murals), and find alternatives means for dialogue, training and capacity building. The programme will also help engage hard to reach groups positively when external negative influences effect certain communities (e.g., Brexit, NI Protocol and Irish Sea Border). The programme and its activities are designed to include the wider community and create a sense of belonging, reducing the fear of intimidation often associated with bonfires. The programme aims to offer young people more opportunities locally, addressing the sense of hope that some feel and the lack of educational attainment faced by many young protestant boys. While the delivery of programme will not directly address this, it acts as important link and engagement mechanism for council and other agencies to progress their interagency activities in these areas with a focus on the community planning. Cultural festivals supported through the programme continue to be well attended by many members of the community. All statutory agencies agreed that although there are still some concerns especially with the size and

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	location of a few traditional bonfires, community engagement in association with the CE Agreement and the CE programme has significantly reduced negative incidents that previously occurred during bonfire season. The numbers and background of participants will be reflected by the demographics of the area and groups that can engage through the programme. The programme will be evaluated by pre and post questions and observation, monitoring and reports. The Council's Good Relations team will actively seek guidance from Stormont and the recommendations outlined in the FICT (Flags, Identity, Culture, and Tradition) report to address issues related to flags.			
2.05 Contact details for programme staff	Donna Mackey 07970847772 donna.mackey@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk			
2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)	~~£60,000~~ £33,333.33			
2.07 Total TEO contribution	~~£45,000~~ £25,000			
2.08 Total target no. of participants	**Direct**	~~30 groups~~ 25 groups	**Indirect**	8000
2.09 Budgeted unit cost of programme	~~£2,000 per group~~ £1333.33 per group			
2.10 Targeted participant background analysis	75% PUL 25% CNR			
2.11 Name and post code of Programme HQ	**Location**	Ards	**Postcode**	BT23 4YH
2.12 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact	**Location**	Portaferry	**Postcode**	BT22 1PE
	Location	Comber	**Postcode**	BT23 5DF
	Location	Holywood	**Postcode**	BT18 9PB
	Location	Ballygowan	**Postcode**	BT23 6NA
2.13 T:BUC Key Aim	Our Cultural Expression			
2.14 Link to good relations audit	Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey Data highlight a strong willingness for further integration within the ANDBC population, however also highlights a high level of discomfort in relation to cultural symbols, highlighting a need for further work in this area in order to address areas of concern and to break down barriers and misconceptions.			

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2.15 Complementarity- include links with other Strategy's e.g. Peace Plus, Urban Villages, MEDF etc	There are a number of strategies and policies which promote increased confidence and respect for the various cultural traditions which exist in Ards and North Down, as well as Northern Ireland as a whole. In particular, Together Building a United Community includes a specific strand dedicated to acknowledging the richness of cultural heritage and celebrating cultural expression. Promoting a society where all citizens feel secure in celebrating their respective cultural identities is also a key theme within the ANDBC Corporate Plan, ANDBC Big Plan, the Draft Programme for Government and the Northern Ireland Racial Equality Strategy.
2.16 Impacted Communities – Urban, Rural or both	Both.

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2.01 PROGRAMME NAME	**2.02 CODE**
History Talks – Understanding ourselves and others - REDUCED	AND10
2.03 KEY WORDS	Fac Hard to reach Sin- Id Urban
2.04 Programme Summary	Ards and North Down Borough Council will deliver a series of History Talks throughout the year, focusing on shared history, remembrance, gender equality, and peace and reconciliation. These talks will align with significant historical and cultural dates, offering opportunities for learning, dialogue, and reflection across the Borough. The programme will include talks and workshops around key events such as St Patrick's Day, Ulster Scots Week, Good Relations Week, and International Women's Day, as well as ongoing discussions addressing Peace and Reconciliation. Each talk will aim to provide participants with a deeper understanding of our shared history, encouraging open, unbiased conversations about the complexities of Northern Ireland and Ireland's

	past. Previous talks have included the Decade of Centenaries, Partition, Brexit, and the NI Protocol. The programme will also include talks on remembrance and diversity, focusing on how historical events shape identities and community relations today. Participants will be introduced to multiple perspectives, helping individuals better understand “the other side” and encouraging mutual respect and shared understanding. These sessions will explore how history has impacted gender, cultural traditions, and community development, fostering conversations that celebrate diversity while acknowledging challenges. Participants will be invited through the Council’s Good Relations database, social media platforms, and website to ensure representation reflective of the Borough’s demographics. Each event will aim to engage a wide range of individuals, creating opportunities for communities to come together and reflect on their shared history while respecting differing identities. The programme will be monitored through pre- and post-event evaluations, measuring participants’ understanding, attitudes, and perceptions.			
2.05 Contact details for programme staff	Donna Mackey 07970847772 donna.mackey@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk			
2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)	~~£5,000~~ £2853.84			
2.07 Total TEO contribution	~~£3,750~~ £2140.37			
2.08 Total target no. of participants	**Direct**	~~200~~ 80	**Indirect**	200
2.09 Budgeted unit cost of programme	~~£25pp~~ £35.67per person			
2.10 Targeted participant background analysis	75% PUL 25% CNR			
2.11 Name and post code of Programme HQ	**Location**	Ards	**Postcode**	BT23 4DQ
2.12 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact	**Location**	Portaferry	**Postcode**	BT22 1PE
	Location	Comber	**Postcode**	BT23 5DF
	Location	Holywood	**Postcode**	BT18 9PB
	Location	Ballygowan	**Postcode**	BT23 6NA
2.13 T:BUC Key Aim	Cultural Expression			

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2.14 Link to good relations audit	This programme is key for tackling racism and sectarianism, given the increase in racist and sectarian incidents in the Borough. With 143 racist and 110 sectarian incidents recorded between 2019-2024, there is a clear need for workshops and awareness-raising programmes. The programme's focus on cultural events, arts-based projects, and ESOL support for asylum seekers addresses the socio-economic and cultural diversity in the area, where 5% of the population was born outside the UK or Ireland. Focus group participants identified "cultural expression" as a key issue, and this programme's partnership with PSNI, YMCA, and others provides a coordinated response.
2.15 Complementarity- include links with other Strategy's e.g. Peace Plus, Urban Villages, MEDF etc	Similar to other historical related initiatives contained within this Action Plan, The Holocaust Memorial and other Genocides Programme complements the aims and objectives of multiple other strategies. The ANDBC Corporate Plan and ANDBC Big Plan (Community Plan) both contain outcomes in relation to flourishing and safe communities, which this programme will stand to achieve by bringing people from across the Borough together in order to learn and gain greater understanding of the historical perspectives of their neighbours. Promoting better relations and generating increased respect for different historical points of view with the aim of fostering shared, safe communities is considered a priority in multiple other strategies, including: • Draft Programme for Government; • Together Building a United Community; • Children and Young People's Strategy; • Racial Equality Strategy; • Refugee Integration Strategy; and PEACEPLUS
2.16 Impacted Communities – Urban, Rural or both	Both.

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Section 3

Action Plan Programme Outcome Summary Table 2024/25

Programme name (2.01)	Code (2.02)	Key Aim (2.13)	No. direct participants (2.08)	Total Cost (2.06)	Total TEO Contribution (2.07)	Post Codes (2.11)
Shared Education	AND 01	Children and Young People	180	£10,738	£8,053.50	BT19, BT20, BT21, BT22, BT23
Shared Voices	AND 02	Children and Young People	200	£1,000	£750	BT18 9ER BT23 8EY BT22 1DQ BT18 9EZ BT18 9RA BT23 4NR BT23 4QT BT23 8LF BT21 0AY BT22 2DR BT22 2PJ BT22 1EB
Youth Empowerment Programme Programme reduced lack of funding	AND 03	Children and Young People	~~200~~ 150	~~£7000~~ £5,333.33	~~£5250~~ £4,000	BT20 4TD BT22 1DQ BT23 7HA BT22 1RB
~~Community Relations Through Sport~~ Programme removed lack of funding	~~AND 04~~	Children and Young People	~~300~~	~~£8000~~	~~£6000~~	~~BT22 1RB~~ ~~BT22 2GB~~ ~~BT22 1DQ~~ ~~BT20 3DS~~ ~~BT18 9EW~~
Living History	AND 05	Our Shared Community	46	£10,000	£7,500	BT23 4AP BT23 5DF BT23 7PR BT22 1PE BT19 1SH
Holocaust and Other Genocides	AND 06	Our Safe Community	400	~~£3000~~ £2,666.66	~~£2250~~ £2,000	BT23 4JT BT22 1LE BT20 4BT

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Programme reduced lack of funding						BT18 9HQ BT22 1DQ
~~Getting to Know Your Councillors/ Intergenerational~~ Programme removed Lack of funding	~~AND 07~~	~~Our Safe Community~~	~~60~~	~~£2000~~	~~£1500~~	~~BT18 9ER~~ ~~BT20 4TH~~ ~~BT22 1RB~~
No Hate Here	AND 08	Our Safe Community	150	£1,000	£750	BT23 4EN BT20 5AY BT22 1RB BT18 9ER
Cultural Expression Programme Programme reduced lack of funding	AND 09	Cultural Expression	~~30 groups~~ 25 Groups 2000 attendees	~~£60,000~~ £33,333.33	~~£45,000~~ £25,000	BT23 4YH BT22 1PE BT23 5DF BT18 9PB BT23 6NA
History Talks Programme reduced Lack of funding	AND 10	Cultural Expression	~~200~~ 80	~~£5000~~ £2,853.84	~~£3750~~ £2,140.37	BT23 4DQ BT22 1PE BT23 5DF BT18 9PB BT23 6NA

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Section 4

The Executive Office
www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk
T:buc Changing for the better, together
T:buc Councils Delivering together for the better

T:BUC Strategic Outcome

	C&YP	Shared community	Safe community	Cultural Expression	Council Total	TEO Total
Total no. of programmes	~~4~~ 3	1	~~3~~ 2	2	~~10~~ 8	~~10~~ 8
Total no. of direct participants	~~880~~ 530	46	~~610~~ 550	~~230~~ 105	~~1766~~ 1231	~~1766~~ 1231
Unit cost of programme activity	~~£30.38~~ £32.21	£217.39	~~£9.83~~ £6.66	~~£282.61~~ £344.64	~~£135.05~~ £13.59 pp	~~£540.21~~ £40.77pp
Total Council cost of programmes	~~£6684.50~~ £4,267.83	£2500	~~£1,500~~ £916.66	~~£16250~~ £9,046.80	~~£26934.50~~ £16,731.29	
Total TEO cost of Programmes	~~£20,053.50~~ £12,803.50	£7,500	~~£4,500~~ £2,750	~~£48,750~~ £27,140.37		~~£80,803.50~~ £50,193.87

Annex A to be completed to cover the Section 75 categories for each programme.

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ANNEX A

		Section 75 Categories										
Programme Name	**Programme Number**	**Persons of Different Genders**	**Persons of Different Religious Beliefs**	**Persons of Different Political Opinion**	**Different Racial Groups**	**Different Age Groups**	**Persons of Different Marital Status**	**Persons of Different Sexual Orientations**	**Dependants**		**Disabilities**	
									Persons With	**Persons Without**	**Persons with**	**Persons without**
Shared Education	AND01	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
Shared Voices	AND02	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
Youth Empowerment Programme	AND03	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
Community Relations Through Sport	AND04	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
Living History	AND05	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
Holocaust and Other Genocides	AND06	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
Getting to Know Your Councillors/ Intergenerational	AND07	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
No Hate Here	AND08	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
Cultural Expression Programme	AND09	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
History Talks – Understanding ourselves and others	AND10	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	

ITEM 10

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	18 June 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community and Culture
Date of Report	03 June 2025
File Reference	ART 19 - 25/26
Legislation	The Local Government Act (NI) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes ☒ No ☐ Other ☐ If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Ulster Scots Action Plan 2025 - 2026
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Ulster Scots Action Plan 2025 - 2026

In December 2023, Council agreed to develop an action plan to develop the Borough's Ulster-Scots heritage and to provide subject to annual rates setting, a £10,000 budget for the Action Plan.

Officers from the Good Relations, Tourism and Arts and Heritage section, in consultation with the Ulster Scots Community Network, have produced an Action plan for the 2025 -2026 financial year based on the £10,000 budget awarded by Council. The plan is based on a review of the 2024/25 programme and those engagements that proved successful or popular in the programme.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council agrees the attached Ulster Scots Action Plan for 2025-2026.

Suggested Activity	ANDBC Ulster Scots Action Plan	Timeline	Budget
Launch and Typography **Lead Officers** Corp Comms/Multimedia	A launch event/PR opportunity/photography and print Typography designed in-house by ANDBC	October	£400
Education Programme **Lead Officer:** **Donna Mackey**	Ulster Scots Agency visits to 4 schools: 200 participants Rabbie Burns School's Programme x 4 schools	Leid Week January 2026	Funded by Ulster Scots Agency £2,400
ND Museum: **Historical Talk and Exhibition** **Lead Officer:** **Moira O'Rourke**	North Down Museum – Historical Talk and exhibition on Ulster-Scots working in the Canadian gold mines in mid 1800s.	Autumn	£400
Music Event/s **Lead Officer:** **Emily Crawford**	Bangor Castle: **Trú** - Musical trio exploring the intersection between traditional folk material, original songwriting styles and contemporary production techniques. The band's name nods to their shared heritage. The trú was a mythological trio of poet-musicians in ancient Ulster. They were revered throughout the Celtic world. Ards Arts Centre: ***Way Between*** by **Lisa Dawson** – readings/talks/music *A collection of songs inspired by the stories and emotions which rise from the landscape including Strangford Lough.*	5 November 14 November	£1,500 £500

Suggested Activity	ANDBC Ulster Scots Action Plan	Timeline	Budget
	The songs are influenced by traditional Irish music, interweaving Gaelic and Ulster-Scots languages, and incorporate more modern song elements		
Literary Event/Reading **Lead Officer:** **Patricia Hamilton**	Anne McMaster – Ulster Scots Literary event as part of Aspects Festival	September	Covered by Aspects
Tourism	Cockle Row Cottages, Groomsport are open for the summer season letting people see what life was like for a family living in the little fisherman's cottages. The Ulster Scots Agency works along with the Council and provides entertainment once a month, form Scottish Dancers, to pipes and drums or traditional craft – they also use the opportunity for outreach and send a member of their staff with a promotional stand. This is always very well received by visitors. The Cottages are also used as a base for the Discover Groomsport Walking Tour, the tour is scheduled to happen each Saturday July and August and covers some of the local links with the Ulster Scots Heritage.	June-Sept	Covered by Tourism and a grant
Newtownards - Ulster Scots Walking Tour	Commissioning of a living history walking tour by Valhalla Street Theatre 2 x tours to take place during Leid Week.	Leid Week	£1,000

Suggested Activity	ANDBC Ulster Scots Action Plan	Timeline	Budget
Ulster-Scots Talk Grants **Lead Officer:** **Moira O'Rourke**	Ulster-Scots grants administered by the Museum These go to Heritage Groups/Historical Societies to organise their own talks/events 10 x £100 grants	Autumn	Covered by Museum
Ulster-Scots Event Grants	Ulster-Scots grants for Community Groups to host their own events	Autumn	£1,500
Community Activity Ceilidh/Tea Dance	Ulster-Scots themed Tea Dance delivered in partnership with Decorum NI Ceilidh with Ballywalter Seniors	Leid Week	£500
NMNI Folk Museum Partnership	A series of events at the Ulster Folk Museum supported by ANDBC and promoted jointly: **Whiskey tasting** An event in McCuskers pub where participants will indulge in Scottish and Northern Irish whiskey. Edible Flower would also create a bitesize menu of Ulster Scots inspired nibbles to accompany the tasting. **National Flower Embroidery** Workshop participants will embroider the national flower of Scotland the thistle and national flower of North Down, the Spring Squill either on a new piece of cloth or an existing piece of clothing. **Joshua Burnside does the Baird of Moneyreagh**	October /November	£3,000

Suggested Activity	ANDBC Ulster Scots Action Plan	Timeline	Budget
	A commissioned piece of original song and music created and performed by Joshua Burnside (Newtownards) based on Archive material from Robert Huddlestons writings. Huddleston, The Baird of Moneyreagh, was a well-known farmer, writer, poet and thinker. **Rabs Rhyming Ramble** An opportunity for visitors to roam the Ulster Folk Museum guided by the Ulster Scot writings and poetry of Robert Huddleston. **Ulster-Scots discussion with UFM and Ulster University** Join National Museums NI Libraries manager Donal McAnallen and Ulster University Frank Ferguson will speak to the writings of the Baird of Moneyreagh, the museum archives and its relevance today. **Showcase of Ulster-Scots Films** Film screenings in the Folk Museum picture house in collaboration with Ulster Scots Broadcast Fund.		
		Sub Total **Est Income**	**£11,200** **£ 1,200**
			£10,000

Other Activity Taking Place in the Community – funded via Community Festivals Fund:
Under assessment at time of writing

ITEM 11

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	18 June 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community and Culture
Date of Report	03 June 2025
File Reference	HER 01 R2 25/26
Legislation	The Local Government Act (NI) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes ☒ No ☐ Other ☐ If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Heritage Grants
Attachments	None

Background
Round 1 of the 2025-26 Heritage Grants were awarded in February 2025. There were seven applications to the grant, of which, six were awarded £500 (£3000 in total). This left £2000 of the budget remaining.

Round 2 opened in April 2025 and closed on 13 May 2025. Eight applications were received. The applications were assessed by a Panel comprising Mr Billy Carlisle (Arts and Heritage Panel), the Community Arts Development Officer and the Heritage Development Officer.

There is a total of £2,000 available in grant money with a maximum of £500 per application awarded. As shown in the accompanying Scoring Matrix, each application is scored out of 100. Recommendation for award of grant is based on a minimum score of 60.

Not Applicable

The unsuccessful applicants will be provided with feedback on their application to assist them with future applications.

Application Assessment Scoring

GRANT REF:	ORGANISATION	PROJECT TITLE	SCORE	AWARDED
HER-PG008/2526	Kilcooley Women's Centre	Restoration of clock and outreach - Market Street: Step Back in Time	40	£0
HER-PG009/2526	Ards Historical Society	Booklet - The History of Scrabo Hill and Tower	85	£0 Already in receipt of grant for 2025-26
HER-PG010/2526	Donaghadee Parish Church Halls	Publication - Donaghadee Parish Church, Quadricentennial Anniversary, 1626-2026	72	£500
HER-PG011/2526	Portavogie Cultural and Heritage Society	Booklet - 12th Heritage Booklet Publication	79	£500
HER-PG012/2526	Friends of Columbanus Bangor	Columbanus Peace Walk	54	£0
HER-PG013/2526	Portaferry WI	Archive - Echoes from the Past: 90 Years of Portaferry WI	85	£500
HER-PG014/2526	Holywood u3a History & Archive groups	Archive - Storage of Holywood District u3a History Archive	85	£500
HER-PG015/2526	Boom Studios	Celtic Wheel of the Year Art and Craft Club	45	£0
		Total awarded		**£2000.00**

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council approve the funding awarded as outlined in the table above.

ITEM 12

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	18 June 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Parks & Cemeteries
Date of Report	02 June 2025
File Reference	PCA4
Legislation	Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes ☒ No ☐ Other ☐ If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Commemorative Tree Planting for Sound Around Ards Talking Newspaper
Attachments	

Members will be aware that Council have facilitated the planting of commemorative trees on Council land in conjunction with local groups and organisations in Line with the Commemorative Tree Planting Policy.

The policy aims to provide a consistent and fair approach to the decision-making process on whether to approve any request to plant a commemorative tree on Council property. It is critical that all tree planting contributes to the Councils overall Tree and Woodland Strategy. Members are advised that the Commemorative Tree Planting Policy does not apply to or replace the memorial tree planting which takes place in Council cemeteries.

We have received a request for commemorative tree planting as detailed below:

- Sound Around Ards Talking Newspaper – 40th Anniversary Tree. Wishes to have a Fagus sylvatica 'Purpurea' (Purple Beech) tree planted in Castle Park, Bangor.

Not Applicable

Location of Tree Planting
(What3Words: ///look.motel.mercy)

Officers can confirm that this request complies with the criteria in the policy. Planting will take place during the next planting season.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council approves the Commemorative Tree Planting request as outlined in the report.

ITEM 13

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	18 June 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Environmental Health, Protection and Development
Date of Report	02 June 2025
File Reference	CW45
Legislation	Various
Section 75 Compliant	Yes ☒ No ☐ Other ☐ If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Environmental Health Protection and Development Annual Activity Report 2024-2025
Attachments	None

Under the Council's Scheme of Delegation and in order to allow for timely service delivery, the application of legislation relating to Environmental Health matters has been delegated to officers to implement. A condition of this delegated authority is that related activity is reported to Council from time to time. The following is the report for the 2024-2025 year and includes such delegated activity.

Summary of Activity

The role of the Environmental Health Protection and Development Service is to contribute to ensuring a better quality of life for all. From the Health Protection perspective, the service monitors, advises and enforces compliance with Food, Public Health, Pollution, Health and Safety at Work, Consumer Safety and Housing legislation and standards to protect the public from physical, chemical and biological agents, and conditions that may cause ill health or harm.

Not Applicable

Functions within the department
The range of statutory and non-statutory functions delivered on behalf of the Council are as follows:

1. Food Control (including food manufacturing and fisheries).

2. Consumer Protection. (safety of consumer goods)

3. Health and Safety at Work
   - Health and safety in workplaces
   - Caravan Site Licensing
   - Petroleum Licensing
   - Sunbeds
   - Fireworks

4. Pollution Control

   - Noise
   - Air quality
   - Radiation Monitoring
   - Pollution Prevention and Control

5. Public Health and Housing
   - Public Health Nuisance
   - Pest Control
   - Private Rented Housing
   - Bathing Waters

6. Health and Wellbeing / Health initiatives including:

   - Tobacco Control
   - Home Safety
   - Community Planning lead for Age Friendly, Community Resuscitation,
   - Whole Systems Approach to Obesity
   - Health Development including Employee Health and Wellbeing

Service Provision
Service provision includes
- service requests,
- planned inspections & proactive visits to commercial premises and
- wellbeing intervention activities.

Service Requests
Service requests relate to individuals' requests for assistance for example in relation to pest control, or when the activities of one party cause an adverse effect on another for example in relation to nuisance and pollution.

Not Applicable

The number of service requests by category 2024-25.

Department Function	Number of Requests
Pest Control	825
General Environmental Health	600
Food Hygiene and Standards	433
Pollution Control	962
Private Tenancies Complaints	147
Health and Safety	110
Consumer Protection	28
Tobacco Control	31
Caravan/Petroleum Licensing	6
Total	**3140**

A total of 100 statutory notices were issued under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, to secure environmental improvements and abatement of nuisances.

The performance indicator target for a response to service requests is 94% within two working days. For the year 2024/25 the objective was achieved, with 95.2% of requests responded to withing the target period.

The number of service requests received in 2024/25 was 433 lower than for 2023/24, a decrease of 12%.

Planned Inspection and Proactive visits to commercial premises.
There are currently 3984 operating commercial premises on the Environmental Health database. During the year 3730 inspections were made to assess compliance with legislation, to educate business operators on new legislation and requirements and to obtain samples. In order to reduce the burden on businesses many of these visits were carried out concurrently with officers assessing a range of legislative compliance - for example food hygiene, food standards and tobacco control addressed by an officer during one visit. Businesses and premises are risk assessed to ensure that those which might present the greatest potential risk to public health are visited most frequently.

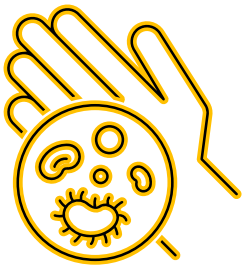
The following sections provide a breakdown of activities per service unit.

Not Applicable

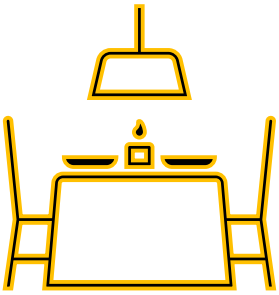
Food and Consumer Protection Activity and Successes 2024 - 25

Food Hygiene, Standards and Safety

Food Hygiene Premises inspected:
All **3** Category A premises
63 Category B
430 Category C & D
191 Category E
159 new food businesses

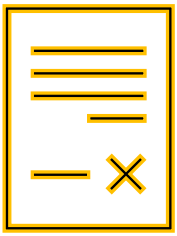


Investigated **90** Food Poisoning identifications on behalf of PHA and
10 alleged food poisoning complaints



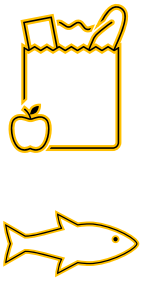
Actioned **411 complaints** regarding premises hygiene and **84** complaints regarding allergens, composition and labelling irregularities

Sampling Collected **547** food samples for microbiological analysis and **141** for chemical analysis



Served **1** Hygiene Improvement Notice **4** Fixed Penalty Notices
2 Emergency Prohibition Hygiene Notices
2 voluntary closures
1 successful prosecution

Food Standards Inspections **5**
A rated premises inspected
69 B rated premises inspected



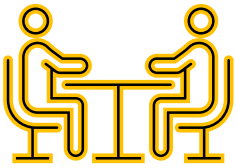
Undertook **2 Northern Ireland** Surveys for identification of peanut protein in garlic granules and illegal dyes in chilli powders.

Completed an in-house survey for gluten free products and participated in sampling sausage rolls for nutritional analysis

Not Applicable

Consumer Protection

4 market surveillance projects:
E -scooters/E-bikes
Christmas Lights
Electric Blankets and electric throws
Cosmetic products- nail varnish



84 new premises registered
82 Butane visits
61 Product alerts dealt with.
3 Port referrals

Not Applicable

Health & Safety, Noise and Petroleum Activities and Successes 2024-25

Health and Safety at Work

2558 Health and Safety premises registered

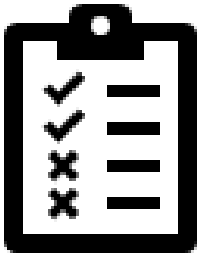
391 H&S Visits completed including;

241 Inspections & Revisits

56 Accidents reported with 0 fatal accidents
55 accident investigations
(1 not reportable)
27 Visits to investigate accidents

8 visits in response to requests for advice &

19 visits in response to complaints about premises or work activity



47 Inspections as part of a Workplace Transport Initiative

30 Overstocking Visits

9 Inspections of Sunbed premises

Issued
14 improvement Notices for serious contraventions or continuing non-compliance
5 Prohibition Notices for imminent risk to injury

3 Firework Licence applications

3 Firework Display application Visits

Not Applicable

2 prosecutions were completed re unsafe premises and work activities and consistently recurring contraventions of Health and Safety legislation. The cases related to a company owning residential and holiday caravan parks, and the owner of a premises made available as a workplace.

Planning

255 consultations from the Council's planning department were responded to on planning matters that could potentially affect public or environmental health

Noise Control

605 noise complaints received

41% proceeded after initial contact

118 resulted in formal investigation

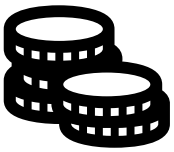
3 Noise Abatement Notices served

3 prosecutions completed; 2 in relation to barking dogs and 1 regarding loud music and bass beat

Pollution Prevention and Control

2 PPC permits were issued during 2024/2025 1 for a mobile crusher and 1 for a cement manufacturer

The total number of permits issued by the end of 2024/25 was 39;
30 Filling stations
4 dry cleaners
3 cement manufacturers
2 mobile crushers



These premises were inspected during the period and application and/or subsistence fees collected

Caravan Site and Petroleum Licensing

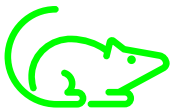
All 27 Caravan Sites inspected for licensing

48 inspections and 13 revisits of petroleum filling stations for licensing

45 Licences issued

Not Applicable

Public Health & Housing Key Activities and Successes 2024-25

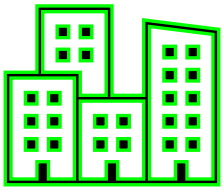


825 service requests relating to pest control, with 522 rodent and 239 flying insect complaints

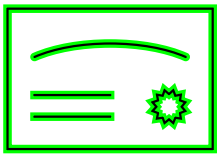
504 service requests relating to housing/drainage

72 wasp nest treatments carried out with a £50 charge

£3600 income generated

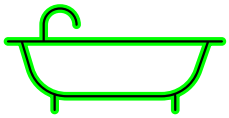


406 service requests relating to neighbourhood nuisance (excluding noise)



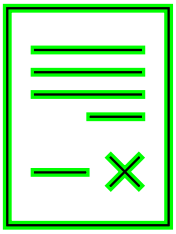
Private Rented Housing Issued 49 Certificates of Fitness

13 properties deemed unfit with Notices of Refusal issued



Interactions with around 150 landlords and letting agents each year to ensure compliance with housing standards legislation.

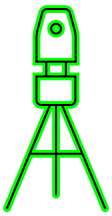
97 Notices served under Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (NI) 2011 following service requests or housing standards inspections



2 Notices of Unfitness and 1 Notices of Disrepair served on landlords in private rented properties

Not Applicable

Radiation Monitoring at our Argus station in Portavogie, as well as regular sampling to monitor radiation levels in our environment.



Air Quality Shared Service with LCCC. We carry out regular monitoring at 16 sites in ANDBC, including an automatic site in Holywood.

Act as beach operator for 7 designated bathing waters in the borough, providing important information to beach users.

Not Applicable

Health and Wellbeing Activities and Successes 2023/24

AGE FRIENDLY

Review of AF Strategy & Action Plan 2019-23
AF Alliance - 4 meetings &1 workshop
1 Positive Ageing Roadshows Newtownards:132 attendees and 58 exhibitors

October Positive Ageing Brochure Delivery of AF Strategy & Extended Action Plan 2023-27
2 Council Tea Dances with 188 attendees
1000+ copies of Big Guide distributed

DEMENTIA FRIENDLY

Consultations with various Dementia Groups for the new Dementia Garden at Ward Park
Information Session (15 exhibitors and 30 attendees)
30 businesses engaged with providing resources, information and support
3 Dementia Awareness sessions for 44 ANDBC staff
2 awareness sessions for

307 homes visited (197 older people, 110 families with children under 5)
Provided over 1,911 pieces of equipment and 346 leaflets.
168 onward referrals to partner agencies
Targets met or exceeded
98% clients rated service as Useful, Important, Very important or Vital
100% rated the professionalism of the staff as V Good/Excellent
36 talks & events to 900+ people

TOBACCO CONTROL

685 Smoke-Free inspections
69 Test Purchasing exercises with 16 sales
177 Age of Sale advice visits
43 Licensed premises inspections
190 signposted to smoking cessation
45 AED (defib) registration visits
Service Level Agreement targets met or exceeded

Not Applicable

Translink staff (Ards & Bangor)
5 Dementia Friendly Partnership meetings
3 Dementia Safeguarding Scheme meetings

OVER 50s COUNCIL
8 meetings with 6 guest speakers
17 consultations
36 information sharing and 15 co-production opportunities
2 walkability audits at castle park by 8 members
Christmas Lunch
7 Intergenerational Project Workshops and 4 Recording sessions

MIND.BODY. BUSINESS
12 businesses received the workplace health and wellbeing initiative small grant, benefitting 738 staff.
27 businesses availed of free health checks (75 places)
16 businesses attended the free first aid courses (23 places).

EMPLOYER PLEDGE
Progressed with the employers Pledge
878 staff March 2024
49% staff aged 50+ (140 Female & 286 Male)
Committed to improving recruitment, retention and development of older workers

EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND WELLBEING
Quarterly Meetings
26 staff from 16 service units

Promotion of Staff Webhub – StayWell
Access to health articles, news, staff events, campaigns, support services, etc. Monthly StayWell Focus circulated for staff

Not Applicable

WHOLE SYSTEMS APPROACH TO OBESITY

We remain actively engaged in the project, although commencement of regional-level activities has experienced some delays. A number of preliminary local-level interventions have taken place.
2 Slow Cooker training and 1 'Cook It' training course held over a number of weeks.
4 Healthy Education talks in 1 school.
Summer Scheme Healthy Eating Programme (14 sessions to over 200 children).
Health Stands at 2 events.

ANDBC is the First Early Adopter site in Northern Ireland.
A PHIRST research study has been completed and results are imminent.
There has been a delay in progressing to stage 3 and 4 and this is being progress early in 2025 with QUB leading on the systems mapping.

EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Delivery of 28 wellbeing activities with over 300 staff participating
10 Be Active events
8 Learning opportunities
4 Take Notice activities
7 Give/volunteering opportunities
All these offered a chance to Connect – Activities give this opportunity

158 health checks at 14 sites (1/3 of appointments allocated to the hard-to-reach groups)
56 flu jabs
Fruit boxes and healthy breakfast mornings

Not Applicable

BEE SAFE

1,600+ P7 children from 42 Schools
4 Schools unable to attend the event were provided with the BeeSafe resources to allow them to facilitate the learning of the key safety messages for the children within the classroom setting.
6 Safety Scenarios covering internet safety, home safety, bus/road safety, fire safety, community safety & mental health.
1700+ work booklets and supporting videos distributed
Event rated as: Excellent (88%) or Good (12%)
100% commitment from schools to return next year

MENTAL HEALTH CHARTER

MENTAL HEALTH CHARTER

27 Mental Health First Aiders Refresher training provided.
Mindful Manager Training arranged for CLT and HoST

Promotion of Here2Help app to staff

Not Applicable

Summary

During the 2024-25 year the service met the majority of KPI's and targets and had a significant positive impact on the community planning outcomes despite the challenges faced with staff shortages.

Work to address recruitment challenges was a priority for 2024/25 and mid year we successfully reached 100% of permanent posts filled. This has contributed to the successful delivery of the service plan and KPI's.

The service units have remained focussed and committed to delivering a high standard to service to residents and businesses alike.

The key successes and activities of the service units as detailed in this report demonstrate the depth and breadth of work undertaken by EHPD and the positive impact it has on Ards and North Down.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes this report.

ITEM 14

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	18 June 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Environmental Health, Protection and Development
Date of Report	21 May 2025
File Reference	PCA100
Legislation	The Quality of Bathing Water Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008
Section 75 Compliant	Yes ☒ No ☐ Other ☐ If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Update on Bathing Waters in ANDBC - Brompton Bay and Donaghadee
Attachments	

Members will be aware that the Environmental Health Protection and Development Service has been working with DAERA to increase the number of designated bathing waters in the Borough. The formal bathing season in Northern Ireland operates between 1 June and 15 September each year. During this period, DAERA regularly monitor water quality at designated sites. The Council acts as bathing water operator (BWO) for several beaches in the Borough, which requires it to display and communicate water quality information to the public, and includes rapidly responding to any poor results.

At the Community and Wellbeing Committee meeting in June 2023, Members agreed that the Council would accept the role of BWO at two new candidate sites, namely Brompton Bay and Donaghadee, following a formal request from DAERA.

Not Applicable

Since accepting the role as BWO, Council staff have communicated water quality information to the public at the two candidate sites, alongside our existing designated beaches.

DAERA has recently written to the Council to say that the two candidate beaches have be formally identified as designated bathing waters, from the commencement of the 2025 bathing season. This will increase the number of designated bathing waters in the Borough to 9, the most of any local authority area in Northern Ireland, with the Council acting as BWO at 7 beaches.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes this report.

ITEM 15

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	18 June 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community and Culture
Date of Report	04 June 2025
File Reference	CW 22
Legislation	The Local Government Act (NI) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes ☐ No ☐ Other ☐ If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Response to Notice of Motion 595 - Bangor Christian Heritage
Attachments	None

Council previously agreed the following Notice of Motion –

"This Council recognises the importance of Bangor's early Christian heritage in the story of our city, and its role in local tourism strategies. This Council requests that officers bring back a report which evaluates how the physical link between two main sites, Bangor Abbey and the North Down Museum, could be improved, to include the renovation and potential remodelling of Bell's Walk, with consideration for improved wayfinding and lighting. The motion also requests that officers consider how Bangor Castle Gardens and The Walled Garden could be better incorporated into the walking route, and how the overall attraction could be packaged to create a more complete tourism and placemaking experience".

Progress to date
A site meeting was held on 9th August 2024 and was attended by officers from Parks and Leisure, Tourism and Community and Culture.

Not Applicable

A further site meeting was held on 26th November 2024 with Councillor McCracken, and officers from Parks and Leisure, Community and Culture, Tourism and Assets and Property in attendance to walk the site and discuss plans for the site.

The first meeting of the Task and Finish Group took place on 7th April 2025 where the following actions were discussed.

Action	Update	Status
• uplighting of Fluctus Angelorum at night, -	Lighting has been repaired	Complete
• uplighting of St Malachi's Wall to make more of this historic feature (the oldest standing structure in Bangor).	Discussions ongoing with HED	Ongoing
• A better link / wayfinding / signage between St Malachi's Wall and the first Bell of Bell's Walk.	A signage audit is to be undertaken for the whole of Castle Park	Ongoing
• Exploration of Bangor Abbey, with improved access and new interpretative signage.	A signage audit is to be undertaken for the whole of Castle Park	Ongoing
• Fluctus Angelorum – a staging post for an enhanced walk to Smelt Mill Bay via Stricklands Glen (St Columbanus Walking Trail).	A signage audit is to be undertaken for the whole of Castle Park	Ongoing
• New wayfinding between Wall and first Bell.	A signage audit is to be undertaken for the whole of Castle Park	Ongoing
• Three existing Bells – sculptures to be cleaned and signage replaced	Cleaning has taken place Included in the signage audit	Complete Ongoing
• First repositioned Bell (St Gallen Bell) to	Discussions ongoing with original sculpture in	Ongoing

Not Applicable

create a new pathway into Castle Gardens.	relation to movement and re siting of some bells	
• Exploration of Castle Gardens and the monastic sundial.	New path to be put in place in 2025-2026	Ongoing
• Second repositioned Bell (Milano Bell) at Cross Hill.	New path to be put in place in 2025-2026	Ongoing
• Cross Hill to be cleared / landscaped with new interpretative signage installed to explain the significance of the site.	New path to be put in place in 2025-2026	Ongoing
• Final Bobbio Bell at entrance to the Museum and Café Cure.	Discussions ongoing with original sculpture in relation to movement and re siting of some bells. QR codes are to be added to each of the Bells which will link to the Heritage literature available for the site.	Ongoing
• Option for a further walk to explore Bangor's Victorian Heritage via the Walled Garden and Ward Park.	Will be considered as part of the Parks departments plans for Castle Park	Ongoing

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council note this report and further updates be brought to Council in due course.

ITEM 16

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	18 June 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community & Culture
Date of Report	15 April 2025
File Reference	PCSP209
Legislation	Northern Ireland Justice Act (2011)
Section 75 Compliant	Yes ☒ No ☐ Other ☐ If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Ending Violence Against Women and Girls
Attachments	None

The Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) Strategic Framework 2024-31 was launched by the First Minister and the deputy First Minister on16th September 2024. The Strategy will support those organisations working to prevent and challenge the attitudes, behaviours and culture that can lead to violence against women and girls.

Council was awarded £60,000 of Momentum funding to be used from January to March 2025 to raise awareness of the Change fund. Funding of £120,000 was allocated for Council to deliver the Change Fund in 2025 – 2026. This was allocated via competitive grants process.

Momentum funding has been used to deliver:

- 3 Change Fund grants workshops to community and voluntary sector across the Borough, including Greyabbey (18 participants), Holywood (22 participants) and Newtownards (24 participants).

Not Applicable

- 1 Change Fund online workshop to community and voluntary sector across the Borough, with 15 participants.
- 1 Business Breakfast in Bangor to businesses and schools across the Borough, with 54 participants.
- 1 Change Fund Launch Event including panel discussion in Bangor to statutory organisations and community and voluntary sector across the Borough, with 113 participants.

Momentum funding has also been used to support the 'Power to Change' message from PSNI and to develop a suite of training for council staff.

Following the workshops the Change fund was opened for applications on Thursday 06 March 2025 and closed on Thursday 03 April 2025.

22 applications were received totalling £315,886.

Applications were scored on Tuesday 08 April 2025 by a scoring panel consisting of Donna Mackey (Externally Funded Programmes Manager), Nicola McClurg (Community Grants & Funding Coordinator) and Emma Keenan (PCSP Officer).

All applications were scored in line with set criteria and £120,000 Change fund awarded to the following groups, with reductions applied to meet the available budget:

Tier 1- £1000-£5000 Group Name	**Applications received**	**Applications Awarded**	**Amount of funding**
	9	5	
Enler Amateur Boxing Club			£4,466.00
Ards Peninsula YFC			£4,336.00
BCM Community Family Support			£2,242.00
Bowtown Community Development Group			£4,482.00
North Down Craft Collective			£4,635.00
TOTAL TIER 1			**£20,161.00**
Tier 2 - £5001-£15000 Group name	Applications received	Applications Awarded	Amount of funding
	4	3	
Neurodiversity UK			£9,108.00
North Down YMCA			£13,200.00
VOYPIC			£11,894.00
TOTAL TIER 2			**£34,202.00**
Tier 3 - £15001-£25000 Group name	**Applications received**	**Applications Awarded**	**Amount of funding**
	9	3	
Gifted Enterprise			£22,000.00

Not Applicable

Lisburn YMCA			£21,644.00
North Down & Ards Women's Aid			£22,000.00
TOTAL TIER 3			**£65,644.00**
TOTAL AMOUNT AWARDED			**£120,007.00**

The following applications were received, but were unsuccessful:

Tier 1- £1000-£5000 Group Name	**Amount of funding requested**
Girlguiding Ulster	£3850
Glenside Farm Comber CIC	£5000
Greyabbey & District Community Association	£2370
The Outdoor Partnership NI	£5000
TOTAL TIER 1 Unsuccessful	**£16,220**
Tier 2 - £5001-£15000 Group name	Amount of funding
Inspiring Yarns	£14,965
TOTAL TIER 2 Unsuccessful	**£14,965**
Tier 3 - £15001-£25000 Group name	**Amount of funding**
Recharge CIC	£24,856
Field Studies Ireland	£22,500
Kilcooley Women's Centre	£25,000
Ladybirds Children's Services	£25,000
Redburn Loughview Community Forum	£25,000
Sustainability Education	£25,000
TOTAL TIER 3 Unsuccessful	**£147,356**
TOTAL AMOUNT Unsuccessful Applications	**£178,541**

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes the report.

ITEM 17

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	18 June 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Leisure Services
Date of Report	02 June 2025
File Reference	SD155
Legislation	Recreation and Youth Services Order (1986)
Section 75 Compliant	Yes ☒ No ☐ Other ☐ If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Ards and North Down Sports Forum Grants
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Successful Coach Education Report for Noting Appendix 2 - Successful Individual Travel Accommodation Report for Noting Appendix 3 - Unsuccessful Report

The Ards and North Down Sports Forum administers grants for sporting purposes on behalf of Council under the Councils Grants Policy agreed in 2024.

£70,000 had been allocated within the 2025/2026 revenue budget for this purpose.

During April 2025, the Forum received a total of 61 applications: (2 Coach Education, 1 Goldcard and 58 Individual Travel/Accommodation).

A summary of the **56 successful** applications are detailed in the attached 2025/26 Successful Coach Education and Successful Individual Travel/Accommodation Appendices.

Not Applicable

2025/26 Budget £70,000	Annual Budget	Funding Awarded **May 2025**	**Remaining Budget**
Anniversary	£2,000	£0	**£2,000**
Coach Education	£3,000	*£300	**£2,700**
Equipment	£22,000	£0	**£22,000**
Events	£10,000	£0	***£6,181.20**
Seeding	£2,000	£0	**£2,000**
Travel and Accommodation	£28,000	*£9,840.71	***£15,242.42**
Discretionary	£1,000	£0	**£660**
Schools/Sports Club Pathway	£2,000	£0	**£2,000**
0 Goldcards Awarded in April 25 (8 Goldcards in total during 2025/26)			

*The remaining budget for coach education of **£2,700** is based on an award of **£300**

*The remaining budget for Travel and Accommodation of **£15,242.42** is based on a proposed award this month of **£9,840.71**

The remaining budget for 2025/26 is **£52,783.62** (75% of the 2025/26 budget).

The report outlines April grants that have been administrated and approved by the Ards and North Down Sports Forum and is for noting purposes only in line with the Councils Grant Policy effective from 5 December 2024.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council note the attached report.

APPENDIX 1 - SUCCESSFUL COACH EDUCATION REPORT FOR NOTING 2025-26

NAME	COURSE	BENEFITS	FACILITATOR	DATES	REQUESTE	PROPOSE	NOTES
Donaghadee Sailing Club (1787)	RYA Senior Instructor course / qualification	As an RYA recognised training centre, we need to comply with RYA training procedures, requiring the club to have minimal mandated Ai, DI and SI to run our 2025 sailing courses for the members of DSC and local residents of ANDBC and beyond. Without the SI training course, we would be unable to run a lot of our club activities and training.	RYA	19-22 April 2025	£300.00	£300.00	**All documentation provided. Recommend funding of £300.**
TOTALS						**£300.00**	

APPENDIX 2 - SUCCESSFUL INDIVIDUAL TRAVEL/ACCOMMODATION REPORT FOR NOTING 2025-2026

APPLICANT	SPORT	EVENT	DATES	LOCATION	REPRESENTING	REQUESTED	PROPOSED	NOTES
Gary Barclay (1770)	Walking Football	N.Ireland vs Wales and vs Isle of Man	6-7 April 2025	Chester	Northern Ireland	£178.48	£178.48	**Gary 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 £178.48**
Freya Boyce (1771)	Athletics	Irish Juvenile Indoor Championships	30-Mar-25	Athlone	Northern Ireland	£100.00	£135.00	**Freya has been selected to represent Ulster & Northern Ireland for the Irish Juvenile Indoor Championships in Athlone on 30 March 2025. Recommend funding of £135.00 subject to a valid selection letter from Athletics NI.**
Nina Laing (1772)	Gymnastics	NDP National Finals	10-11 May 2025	Stoke-on-Trent, Fenton Manor Sports Complex	Northern Ireland	£200.00	£200.00	**Nina 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**

Chris Sittlington (1773)	Blackball Pool	European Blackball Association - Nations Cup of Pool 2025	5 - 11 April 2025	Bridlington Spa, Bridlington, England	Northern Ireland	£200.00	£200.00	**Chris has been selected to represent Northern Ireland at the European Blackball Association - Nations Cup of Pool 2025, Bridlington Spa, England from 5-11 April 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from the Northern Ireland Pool Association. Recommend funding of £200.**
Hollie Aiken (1775)	Gymnastics	NDP National Finals	10-11 May 2025	Stoke-on-Trent, Fenton Manor Sports Complex	Northern Ireland	£183.50	£183.50	**Hollie 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 £183.50.**
Rudi Murphy (1776)	Gymnastics	NDP National Finals	10-11 May 2025	Stoke-on-Trent, Fenton Manor Sports Complex	Northern Ireland	£197.95	£197.95	**Rudi 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 £197.95**

Caitlin Campbell (1777)	Gymnastics	NDP National Finals	10-11 May 2025	Stoke-on-Trent, Fenton Manor Sports Complex	Northern Ireland	£200.00	£200.00	**Caitlin 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.**
Ivy Easter (1778)	Gymnastics	NDP National Finals	10-11 May 2025	Stoke-on-Trent, Fenton Manor Sports Complex	Northern Ireland	£218.88	£200.00	**Ivy 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.**
Kayleigh (1780)	Gymnastics	NDP National Finals	10-11 May 2025	Stoke-on-Trent, Fenton Manor Sports Complex	Northern Ireland	£200.00	£200.00	**Kayleigh 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.**
Emma Houston (1781)	Gymnastics	NDP National Finals	10-11 May 2025	Stoke-on-Trent, Fenton Manor Sports Complex	Northern Ireland	£200.00	£200.00	**Emma 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.**

Anna Dobbin (1782)	Gymnastics	Inter-Regional Championships	26-27 April 2025	Southampton	Northern Ireland	£200.00	£200.00	**Anna has been selected to compete at the Inter-Regional Championships in Southampton from 26-27 April 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.**
Sophie Corbridge (1783)	Gymnastics	NDP National Finals	10-11 May 2025	Stoke-on-Trent, Fenton Manor Sports Complex	Northern Ireland	£200.00	£200.00	**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.**
Evie Corbridge (1784)	Gymnastics	Inter-Regional Championships	26-27 April 2025	Southampton	Northern Ireland	£200.00	£200.00	**Evie has been selected to compete at the Inter-Regional Championships in Southampton from 26-27 April 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.**
Olivia Davey (1786)	Gymnastics	NDP National Finals	10-11 May 2025	Stoke-on-Trent, Fenton Manor Sports Complex	Northern Ireland	£200.00	£200.00	**Olivia 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.**

Olivia Davey (1788)	Gymnastics	British Schools Sports Acrobatics Finals	03-May-25	Stoke-on-Trent, Fenton Manor Sports Complex	Northern Ireland	£200.00	£200.00	**Olivia has been selected to compete at the British Schools Sports Acrobatics Finals in Stoke-on-Trent on 3 May 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.**
Sam O'Hara (1789)	Hockey	Wales Series Hockey U19	17-19 April 2025	Sport Wales National Centre, Cardiff	Ulster U19	£200.00	£200.00	**Sam has been selected to compete at the Wales Series Hockey U19, Sport Wales National Centre from 17 -19 April 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Ulster Hockey. Recommend funding of £200.**
Emily Macafee (1790)	Sailing	Eric Twiname Championships 2025	3-5 May 2025	Rutland Water, England	Northern Ireland	£199.00	£199.00	**Emily has been selected to compete at the Eric Twiname Championships 2025 in Rutland Water, England from 3-5 May 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from RYA NI. Recommend funding of £199.00.**
Emma West-Hurst (1791)	Sailing	Irish Youth National Championships	24-27 April 2025	Royal St George YC, Dun Laoighre, Dublin	Northern Ireland	£68.24	£68.24	**Emma has been selected to compete at the Irish Youth National Championships, Royal St. George YC, Dun Laoighre, Dublin from 24-27 April 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from RYA NI. Recommend funding of £68.24**

Emma West-Hurst (1792)	Sailing	Eric Twinanme Championships,	3-5 May 2025	Rutland SC, England	Northern Ireland	£251.52	£200.00	**Emma has been selected to compete at the Eric Twiname Championships 2025 in Rutland Water, England from 3-5 May 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from RYA NI. Recommend funding of £200.**
Emma West-Hurst (1793)	Sailing	Southern Championships	14-15 June 2025	Waterford Harbour Sailing Club	Northern Ireland	£104.40	£104.40	**Emma has been selected to compete at the Southern Championships, Waterford Harbour Sailing Club from 14-15 June 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from RYA NI. Recommend funding of £104.40**
Leo West-Hurst (1794)	Sailing	Irish Youth National Championships	24-27 April 2025	Royal St George YC, Dun Laoighre, Dublin	Northern Ireland	£68.24	£68.24	**Leo has been selected to compete at the Irish Youth National Championships, Royal St. George YC, Dun Laoighre, Dublin from 24-27 April 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from RYA NI. Recommend funding of £68.24**
Leo West-Hurst (1795)	Sailing	Eric Twinanme Championships,	3-5 May 2025	Rutland SC, England	Northern Ireland	£251.52	£200.00	**Leo has been selected to compete at the Eric Twiname Championships 2025 in Rutland Water, England from 3-5 May 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from RYA NI. Recommend funding of £200.**

Leo West-Hurst (1796)	Sailing	Southern Championships	14-15 June 2025	Waterford Harbour Sailing Club	Northern Ireland	£104.40	£104.40	**Leo has been selected to compete at the Southern Championships, Waterford Harbour Sailing Club from 14-15 June 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from RYA NI. Recommend funding of £104.40**
Holly Evans (1798)	Trampolining	Inter Regional Challenge Cup	11-13 April 2025	Utility Arena, Birmingham	Northern Ireland	£300.00	£200.00	**Holly has been selected to compete at the Inter Regional Challenge Cup, Utility Arena, Birmingham from 11 -13 July 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.**
Tracy O'Hara (1799)	Hockey	Masters Hockey Interprovincial Tournament	25-27 April 2025	Garryduff Sports Centre, Cork	Ulster	£150.00	£150.00	**Tracy has been selected to compete at the Masters Hockey Interprovincial Tournament, Garryduff Sports Centre, Cork from 25-27 April 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Ulster Hockey. Recommend funding of £150.**
Annabel Ridout (1800)	Sailing	RS Feva UK National Championships 2025	24-27 May 2025	Dalgety Bay, Scotland	Northern Ireland	£242.00	£200.00	**Annabel has been selected to compete at the RS Feva UK National Championships 2025 in Dalgety Bay, Scotland from 24 - 27 May 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from RYA NI. Recommend funding of £200**

Annabel Ridout (1801)	Sailing	RS Feva World Championships 2025	26 July - 1 August 2025	Aix les Bains, France	Northern Ireland / Great Britain	£486.00	£250.00	**Annabel has been selected to compete at the RS Feva World Championships 2025 in Aix Les Bains, France from 26 July - 1 August 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from RYA NI. Recommend funding of £250**
Annabel Ridout (1802)	Sailing	RS Feva Irish National Championships 2025	9-10 August 2025	Greystones, Dublin, Ireland	Northern Ireland	£140.95	£140.95	**Annabel has been selected to compete at the RS Feva Irish National Championships 2025 in Greystones, Dublin, Ireland from 9-10 August 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from RYA NI. Recommend funding of £140.95**
Emily Ridout (1803)	Sailing	RS Feva UK National Championships 2025	24-27 May 2025	Dalgety Bay, Scotland	Northern Ireland	£242.00	£200.00	**Emily has been selected to compete at the RS Feva UK National Championships 2025 in Dalgety Bay, Scotland from 24 - 27 May 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from RYA NI. Recommend funding of £200**
Emily Ridout (1804)	Sailing	RS Feva World Championships 2025	26 July - 1 August 2025	Aix les Bains, France	Northern Ireland / Great Britain	£486.00	£250.00	**Emily has been selected to compete at the RS Feva World Championships 2025 in Aix Les Bains, France from 26 July - 1 August 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from RYA NI. Recommend funding of £250**

Emily Ridout (1805)	Sailing	RS Feva Irish National Championships 2025	9-10 August 2025	Greystones, Dublin, Ireland	Northern Ireland	£140.95	£140.95	**Emily has been selected to compete at the RS Feva Irish National Championships 2025 in Greystones, Dublin, Ireland from 9-10 August 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from RYA NI. Recommend funding of £140.95**
Peter Ridout (1806)	Sailing	RS Feva UK National Championships 2025	24-27 May 2025	Dalgety Bay, Scotland	Northern Ireland	£242.00	£200.00	**Peter has been selected to compete at the RS Feva UK National Championships 2025 in Dalgety Bay, Scotland from 24 - 27 May 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from RYA NI. Recommend funding of £200**
Peter Ridout (1807)	Sailing	RS Feva World Championships 2025	26 July - 1 August 2025	Aix les Bains, France	Northern Ireland / Great Britain	£486.00	£250.00	**Peter has been selected to compete at the RS Feva World Championships 2025 in Aix Les Bains, France from 26 July - 1 August 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from RYA NI. Recommend funding of £250**

Peter Ridout (1808)	Sailing	RS Feva Irish National Championships 2025	9-10 August 2025	Greystones, Dublin, Ireland	Northern Ireland	£140.95	£140.95	**Peter has been selected to compete at the RS Feva Irish National Championships 2025 in Greystones, Dublin, Ireland from 9-10 August 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from RYA NI. Recommend funding of £140.95**
Amelia McGill (1809)	Gymnastics	Inter-Regional Championships	26-27 April 2025	Southampton	Northern Ireland	£200.00	£200.00	**Amelia has been selected to compete at the Inter-Regional Championships in Southampton from 26-27 April 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.**
Oscar Bloye (1810)	Boxing	All Ireland Boxing Championships	21-26 April 2025	National Stadium, Dublin	Ulster	£150.00	£150.00	**Oscar has been selected to compete at the All-Ireland Boxing Championships in Dublin from 21-26 April 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Irish Athletics Boxing Association. Recommend funding of £150.**
Polly Robinson (1812)	Sailing	Eric Twinanme Championships	3-5 May 2025	Rutland SC, England	Northern Ireland	£200.00	200.00	**Polly has been selected to compete at the Eric Twiname Championships 2025 in Rutland Water, England from 3-5 May 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from RYA NI. Recommend funding of £200.**

Isla Gawn (1813)	Gymnastics	British Schools Sports Acrobatics Finals	03-May-25	Stoke-on-Trent, Fenton Manor Sports Complex	Northern Ireland	£178.21	£178.21	**Isla has been selected to compete at the British Schools Sports Acrobatics Finals in Stoke-on-Trent on 3 May 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £178.21**
David McEachern (1814)	Walking Football	International Walking Football Federation (IWFF) World Championship	3-7 July 2025	Malmo, Sweden	Northern Ireland	£250.00	£250.00	**David has been selected to compete at the International Walking Football Federation (IWFF) World Championship in Malmo, Sweden from 3 - 7 July 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from the IFA . Recommend funding of £250.**
Nicole Simpson (1815)	Gymnastics	N.D.P National Finals	10 - 11 May 2025	Fenton Manor, Stoke on Trent	Northern Ireland	£200.00	£200.00	**Nicole has been selected to compete at the N.D.P National Finals in Stoke-on-Trent on 10-11 May 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200**
Elizabeth Espey (1816)	Gymnastics	Inter-Regional Championships 2025	26-27th April 2025	Southampton Gymnastics Club	Northern Ireland	£200.00	£200.00	**Elizabeth has been selected to compete at the Inter-Regional Championships 2025 at the Southampton Gymnastics Club on 26-27th April 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.**

Olivia McEwan (1817)	Gymnastics	Inter-Regional Championships 2025	45773	Southampton Gymnastics Club	Northern Ireland	£200.00	£200.00	**Olivia has been selected to compete at the Inter-Regional Championships 2025 at the Southampton Gymnastics Club on 26th April 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.**
Florence McAlister (1818)	Gymnastics	Inter-Regional Championships 2025	26-27th Aril	Southampton Gymnastics Club	Northern Ireland	£200.00	£200.00	**Florence has been selected to compete at the Inter-Regional Championships 2025 at the Southampton Gymnastics Club on 26-27th April 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.**
Grant Dugan (1819)	Tenpin Bowling	European Men's Championships	4-15th June 2025	Aalborg, Denmark	Ireland	£250.00	£250.00	**Grant has been selected to compete at the European Men's Championships in Aalborg, Denmark on 4-15th June 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Irish Tenpin Bowling Association. Recommend funding of £250.**
Grant Dugan (1820)	Tenpin Bowling	National Team, Ireland Training Squads	April - June 202	Alsaa Bowl, Dublin	Ireland	£50.00	£50.00	**Grant has been selected to attend the National Team Ireland Training Squad in Dublin, April - June 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Irish Tenpin Bowling Association. Recommend funding of £50.**

Rudi Murphy (1821)	Gymnastics	BSGA School Gym National Finals 2025	3 - 4 May 2025	Fenton Manor Stoke-on-Trent	Northern Ireland	£170.44	£170.44	**Rudi has been selected to compete at the BSGA School Gym National Finals 202 in Stoke-on-Trent from 3 -4 May 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £170.44**
Samuel Irwin (1822)	Tennis	Tennis Ireland U14 National Training Camp	11th May 2025	National Tennis Centre, DCU, Dublin	Ireland	£50.00	£50.00	**Samuel has been invited to attend Tennis Ireland National Training Camps. Propose £50 for Training Camp.**
Samuel Irwin (1823)	Tennis	Tennis Ireland U14 National Training Camp	8th June 2025	National Tennis Centre, DCU, Dublin	Ireland	£50.00	£50.00	**Samuel has been invited to attend Tennis Ireland National Training Camps. Propose £50 for Training Camp.**
Elizabeth Espey (1824)	Gymnastics	British Schools Acrobatic Gymnastics Championship	3 - 4th May 2025	Stoke-on-Tent	Northern Ireland	£190.00	£190.00	**Elizabeth has been selected to compete at the British Schools Acrobatic Gymnastics Championships 2025 at Stoke-on-Trent on 3 - 4th May 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £190.**
Tallulah Florence Healy (1825)	Gymnastics	British Schools Gymnastics Championships	4th May 2025	Fenton Manor Stoke-on-Trent	Northern Ireland	£190.00	£190.00	**Tallulah has been selected to compete at the British Schools Gymnastics Championships 2025 at Stoke-on-Trent on 4th May 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £190.**

Maddie Johnson (1826)	Gymnastics	British Schools Gymnastics Championships	3-4th May 2025	Fenton Manor Stoke-on-Trent	Northern Ireland	£190.00	£190.00	**Maddie has been selected to compete at the British Schools Gymnastics Championships 2025 at Stoke-on-Trent on 3-4th May 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £190.**
Eden Johnston (1827)	Gymnastics	British Schools Gymnastics Championships	4th May 2025	Fenton Manor Stoke-on-Trent	Northern Ireland	£190.00	£190.00	**Eden has been selected to compete at the British Schools Gymnastics Championships 2025 at Stoke-on-Trent on 4th May 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £190.**
Emmie Johnston (1828)	Gymnastics	British Schools Gymnastics Championships	4th May 2025	Fenton Manor Stoke-on-Trent	Northern Ireland	£190.00	£190.00	**Emmie has been selected to compete at the British Schools Gymnastics Championships 2025 at Stoke-on-Trent on 4th May 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £190.**
Zoe Emerson (1829)	Gymnastics	British Schools Gymnastics Championships	3-4th May 2025	Fenton Manor Stoke-on-Trent	Northern Ireland	£190.00	£190.00	**Zoe has been selected to compete at the British Schools Gymnastics Championships 2025 at Stoke-on-Trent on 3 - 4th May 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £190.**

Sophia O'Kane (1830)	Gymnastics	British Schools Gymnastics Championships	4th May 2025	Fenton Manor, Stoke-on-Trent	Northern Ireland	£190.00	£190.00	**Sophia has been selected to compete at the British Schools Gymnastics Championships 2025 at Stoke-on-Trent on 4th May 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £190.**
TOTALS							**£9,840.71**	

APPENDIX 3 - UNSUCCESSFUL REPORT

APPLICANT	APPLICATION	REQUEST	EVIDENCE REQUIRED	EXPLANATION
Michael Creane (1774)	Goldcard	Applying for Goldcard	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".	**Goldcard not recommended as Michael has not submitted a selection letter to confirm his selection.**
Blake Russell (1779)	Individual Travel/Accommodation	Blake's sport is Ice Hockey and requested £200 for the 'Lions Cup' taking place from 9-14 April 2025 in Helsinki, Finland.	Our guidelines state, applicants must "provide a specific event selection letter for the Event from the relevant SNI/Sport Ireland recognised Governing Body on official Governing Body headed paper or official Governing Body email statement".	**Funding not recommended as Blake has not provided a valid selection letter. Scottish Ice Hockey are not recognised as a National Governing Body by Sport Northern Ireland or Sport Ireland.**

Ards and Donaghadee Cricket Club (1785)	Coach Education	£120 towards the cost of the Sport NI Safeguarding Level 1 Course for x9 participants.	Our guidelines state that, "Coaching projects MUST be booked prior to submitting application (evidence is required) and the application must be submitted prior to the Coaching Course commencing". Application received on 10 April 2025; course commenced 3 April 2025.	**Funding not recommended as the application was received on 10 April for a course that commenced on 3 April 2025. Our guidelines state, "the application must be submitted prior to the Coaching Course commencing."**
Abbey Wallace (1797)	Individual Travel/Accommodation	Abbey's sport is Polocrosse and requested £300 for the 'Ireland V USA U16 International Test Series' taking place from 20-29 April 2025 in Atlanta, Georgia.	Our guidelines state, applicants must "provide a specific event selection letter for the Event from the relevant SNI/Sport Ireland recognised Governing Body on official Governing Body headed paper or official Governing Body email statement".	**Funding not recommended as Abbey has not provided a valid selection letter. The Irish Polocrosse Association are not recognised as a National Governing Body by Sport Northern Ireland or Sport Ireland.**
Zac Foster (1811)	Individual Travel/Accommodation	Zac's sport is Boxing and requested £372 for the 'All Ireland Boxing Championships ' taking place from 25-26 April 2025 in Dublin, Ireland.	Our guidelines state, applicants must "provide a specific event selection letter for the Event from the relevant SNI/Sport Ireland recognised Governing Body on official Governing Body headed paper or official Governing Body email statement".	**Funding not recommended as the selection letter provided from Irish Athletic Boxing Association does not include the dates of the event.**

ITEM 18

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	11 June 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community and Culture
Date of Report	13 May 2025
File Reference	CDV57
Legislation	The Local Government Act (NI) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes ☐ No ☐ Other ☒ If other, please add comment below: N/A
Subject	Response to Notice of Motion 545 - Movilla Coffin Lids Update
Attachments	None

Background
Council agreed the following Notice of Motion in March 2023:
"that Officers write in response to Historic Environment Division (HED) expressing concern that a reinstallation of the Movilla Stones to the Movilla Abbey walls might risk further damage to the stones, what reassurance can HED give that this will not be the case, whether alternative means of display of the stones has been given consideration and, if so, that Council offers assistance in this regard".

Council further agreed in June 2023:
"that the Council, upon completion of conservation repairs, work closely with the Historic Environment Division for return of the objects for display at Movilla Abbey and for them to be located as described in the report".

Not Applicable

Update
Ongoing communication has taken place between the Council's Heritage Development Officer and HED representatives to ascertain when the coffin lids will be returned to Movilla Abbey.

In April 2025 the following update was provided by HED:

"As you may know HED was unable to take forward the conservation and relocation project in recent years due to existing staff pressures, budgetary settlements and more pressing conservation works required across the State Care Estate. However, we are hoping to put the conservation works out to tender in this financial year 25/26 as this will require stone conservation specialists.

Once conserved, HED will liaise with Ards and North Down Borough Council to return the grave slabs to Movilla and install them in an appropriate protective shelter which will be accessible to visitors. This being said, as with all planned expenditure, this project is subject to budget allocations in what has been an extremely challenging budget situation for the Department for Communities in recent years".

Further updates will be brought to Committee in due course.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes this report.

ITEM 19

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	18 June 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Leisure Services
Date of Report	06 June 2025
File Reference	LEI 19
Legislation	Recreation and Youth Services Order (1986)
Section 75 Compliant	Yes ☒ No ☐ Other ☐ If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Quest- Ards Blair Mayne & Wellness Leisure Centre & Comber Leisure Centre
Attachments	None

Quest is Sport England's recommended Continuous Improvement Tool for leisure facilities and active communities. Both legacy Councils historically utilised the process for its leisure centres and since merger both the in-house team and NCLT have continued to avail of the process for the majority of Centres within the Borough. (The value in applying this process to the smaller facilities is difficult to justify)

Members may recall that both ABMWLC and Comber Leisure Centre(CLC) were previously accredited with a **Very Good** rating which was the highest they could achieve on the one day assessment process. As part of the in house teams continuous improvement journey and as identified as part of the business case for the build of ABMWLC the team upgraded to the Quest plus two day assessment for both ABMWLC and CLC in 2024 and secured the rating of "**Very Good**" in May of last year. This was deemed a major success following Covid and with staff transformation ongoing.

Not Applicable

NCLT also secured a **Very Good** rating for Aurora on the two day Quest plus process and also for Queens on the one day assessment process (highest grading possible) in October 2024.

As part of this enhanced process both centres, Aurora and ABMWLC were subjected to both a Quest Mystery Visit and an unannounced directional review visit by Quest Assessors. These visits occurred between March and May of 2025. The assessor identified that both centres achieved an improved overall assessment banding of **Excellent** which is the highest rating that a centre can achieve.

This is a very encouraging endorsement from an external assessor and one that was achieved by the in-house leisure team who received critical support from colleagues across Council and particularly Assets.

The full two-day assessment process will be undertaken around May 2026 at which time the Councils in-house team will seek to achieve an **Excellent** banding for both ABMWLC and Comber.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes this report.

ITEM 20

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	18 June 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Parks & Cemeteries
Date of Report	30 May 2025
File Reference	PCA123
Legislation	Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes ☒ No ☐ Other ☐ If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Response to Notice of Motion 581. Cemetery Maintenance – Six Month Update
Attachments	None

Background
In September 2023 the following Notice of Motion was agreed by Council:

"That Council notes the increasing complaints regarding the poor condition and appearance of our cemeteries across the Borough and tasks officers to bring back a report on options to improve the maintenance of our cemeteries which are places of special significance to those who have lost loved ones."

A response to the Notice of Motion was tabled at the Community and Wellbeing meeting in December 2023 and Members requested a further detailed report to be presented on tangible options to improve the maintenance within Cemeteries. A further report was submitted in June 2024 and again in January 2025. It was further agreed by council that the recommendation be adopted and that the Council review in six months.

Not Applicable

Service Overview
The Parks and Cemeteries Service has responsibility for the maintenance and development of approximately 300 hectares of Parks and other open spaces including responsibility for burials in 12 active cemeteries and the maintenance of a total of 19 cemeteries, spread across the Borough. In the management of the 19 cemeteries the operational Parks and Cemeteries team carry out service activities regarding the burial process and overall cemetery grounds maintenance. This is currently delivered by a multidisciplinary skilled team who work to a suite of Standard Operating Procedures.

The burial service is dictated by the Burial Grounds Regulations 1992 (NI) and all service elements are carried out in line with this legislation. All gravedigging is carried out by skilled in-house teams. Working to the Standard Operating procedures, this element of the service includes the opening and subsequent closing of graves along with the interment service. I am pleased to provide an update on the current status of cemetery maintenance. Our team has made significant progress in ensuring that our cemeteries are safe, tidy, and well-maintained.

The basis of this report is to detail current operational practices and highlight how these have been adapted to ensure continuous improvement and respond to the issues which have been raised and the impacts of changing climate patterns over recent seasons.

Cemetery Management & Maintenance Team
Collaboration and Efficiency: The Parks & Cemeteries Service has been implementing an agreed Transformation process with significant structural changes. Through effective teamwork and communication, we have streamlined our maintenance processes, allowing us to address tasks more efficiently and thoroughly. This collaborative approach has created a positive work environment and enhanced our overall productivity by utilising both Parks and Cemetries operational staff to cover busier times and areas.

Team	Cemeteries Covered	Staff Composition
North Cemeteries	1. Clandeboye 2. Bangor New 3. Ballyvester	• Area Manager • Assistant Area Manager • Cemetery Team Leader • Senior Gravedigger x 6 • Assistant Gravedigger x 3
South Cemeteries	1. Movilla 2. Comber 3. Loughview 4. Redburn 5. Priory 6. Kircubbin 7. Kirkistown 8. Greyabbey	• Area Manager • Assistant Area Manager • Cemetery Team Leader • Senior Gravedigger x 6 • Assistant Gravedigger x 4

Not Applicable

Team	Cemeteries Covered	Staff Composition
	9. Whitechurch	

Utilisation of New and Additional Resources: We have successfully integrated new staff members and resources into our maintenance operations. These additions have provided us with the necessary support to manage our workload effectively. The utilisation of these resources has enabled us to maintain high standards of care and attention to detail across all cemetery sites.

Monitoring: following the previous report and the success of our monitoring system to track our progress and ensure the effectiveness of our maintenance efforts, we are introducing an even more robust monitoring system with a dedicated member of staff using our new task management system 'PSS Ultimate' to monitor and report. This system has allowed us to identify areas for improvement and celebrate our successes. The positive feedback we have received from visitors is a testament to our team's hard work and dedication. Users have complimented the current upkeep, noting the noticeable improvements in the appearance and safety of our cemeteries. The PSS Ultimate System will:

- Centralize and streamline the scheduling, tracking, and management of maintenance tasks across all cemeteries.
- Improve accountability by providing real-time updates on task completion and staff assignments.
- Enable data-driven decision-making by integrating historical and current maintenance records into a single platform.
- The phased rollout of PSS Ultimate is well underway, with trials in select locations showing results of improved coordination among maintenance teams and a reduction in response times for urgent tasks.

Safety and Tidiness: ensuring the safety and tidiness of our cemeteries remains our top priority. Our team has been updating our Risk Assessments and Standard Operating Procedures to ensure safe and efficient working practices throughout. Regular inspections are carried out to identify and address any potential hazards promptly. Additionally, we have focused on upkeep, including landscaping, waste management, and general cleanliness, to create a serene and respectful environment for our visitors.

Infrastructure Improvements: we have also carried out significant resurfacing and drainage work in Greyabbey Cemetery Lane. We were also able to resurface a significant amount of the roadway in Comber Cemetery which needed repair. These improvements have dramatically enhanced the visitor experience, making the cemeteries more accessible and pleasant to visit. We also have started work on a new section in Whitechurch Cemetery with surfacing works also completed. We are seeking to complete the new section within 2025/2026. With the following criteria in mind to create efficiencies in the maintenance requirements while also improving the appearance of the site. These include: the installation of drainage solutions to avoid

flooding; & the increase in spacing within new sections and installing ground reinforcing pathways to reduce the impact of machinery on the grounds.

New Equipment Purchases: to further support our maintenance efforts, we have invested in new equipment for both cemetery areas. This includes advanced Grass cutting machinery that enhance our efficiency and effectiveness in maintaining the grounds. We aim to replace some outdated plant equipment in the year 25/26 through the machinery replacement strategy to ensure burial services are carried out efficiently with up-to-date modern equipment. We are also researching options for up-to-date shoring equipment to assist in areas with cave ins are likely to help reduce the impact for staff and grave owners.

Ongoing Challenges: whilst we have made substantial progress, we continue to face ongoing challenges including environmental factors, busy burial schedules, and seasonal staff recruitment. We continue to actively address these issues through continuous improvement initiatives including strategic planning and resource allocation to ensure that our cemeteries remain well-maintained and safe for all visitors.

Alignment with new Corporate Plan: our efforts align with the Ards and North Down Borough Council's Corporate Plan, which emphasises the importance of creating a sustainable, well-maintained, and welcoming environment for all residents and visitors. Specifically, our maintenance activities support the Council's goals of enhancing community wellbeing, promoting environmental stewardship, and ensuring the efficient use of resources.

Ongoing Improvements: this is now the third report since the original NOM, and we are pleased to highlight the significant ongoing improvements that have been made. Our continuous efforts and dedication have resulted in noticeable enhancements in the upkeep and safety of our cemeteries, and this is reflected in positive comments from our users.

In conclusion, the combined efforts of our dedicated staff, the strategic use of new resources, and our commitment to continuous monitoring have significantly improved our cemetery maintenance operations. We are committed to maintaining these high standards and continuing to provide a safe and fitting cemetery environment at all locations.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes this report.

ITEM 21

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	18 June 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Parks & Cemeteries
Date of Report	30 May 2025
File Reference	PCA131
Legislation	Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes ☒ No ☐ Other ☐ If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Response to Notice of Motion 630. Sports Pitch Maintenance - Six Month Update
Attachments	

In September 2024 the following Notice of Motion was agreed by Council.

"*That Council notes the increasing complaints from local sports clubs regarding the poor annual summer maintenance of football pitches across the Borough and tasks officers to bring forward a report on options to improve the maintenance of our football pitches to ensure our pitches are maintained to a high standard to meet the sporting needs of local clubs and league requirements.*"

A response to the Notice of Motion was tabled at the Community and Wellbeing meeting in November 2024 and Members requested a further report to be presented in June 2025. This update report outlines the current state of our sports pitches, assesses maintenance strategies, and proposes actions aligned with the Council's commitment to sustainability and community needs.

Through this, we aim to ensure that our outdoor sports infrastructure continues to serve as a valuable resource for all residents, supporting a healthy, inclusive, and sustainable future for the Borough.

Service Overview
The Parks and Cemeteries Service has responsibility for the maintenance and development of approximately 292 hectares of Parks and other open spaces including sports pitches. The Council currently maintains thirty-three grass pitches across the borough, serving a wide range of sports such as football, rugby and cricket.

This update provides a summary of progress made on the actions previously outlined in the report to committee in November 2024, which was ratified in December 2024. It highlights key developments in maintenance practices, contractor engagement, and investment in equipment, all of which support the Council's strategic objectives under the Corporate Plan: A Sustainable Borough. Progress on Key Actions are below:

Enhanced Maintenance
In line with the proposed shift toward more responsive and sustainable maintenance practices, Parks have invested in a new direct seeding machine. This enabled Parks staff to carry out direct seeding operations internally, eliminating reliance on external contractors for this critical task. Following the removal of goalposts during the week ending 17 May 2025, all pitches were successfully seeded within one week. This rapid turnaround will significantly improve the likelihood of successful seed establishment and reduced the risk of delays due to weather or contractor availability. Goal posts were removed as scheduled for any repairs and painting prior to the re installation dates in August.

Contractor Engagement and Delivery
The Parks Service engaged early with contractors to ensure timelines and expectations were met. This proactive approach included pre-season planning meetings, clear communication of pitch handover dates, and contingency planning for weather-related disruptions. All contracted renovation works were completed ahead of schedule. Contractors began work on 19 May 2025, and all pitches had end of season maintenance operations completed before the beginning of June—well in advance of the scheduled reopening date of August 2025. Contractors completed the full suite of end-of-season renovation tasks, including Verti-Draining, topdressing with sand, chain harrowing, and direct re-seeding. Parks staff will supplement this with fertilisation and post-renovation care. The early completion will allow for extended establishment time, improving pitch quality and resilience. Feedback from staff and users has been very positive, with noticeable improvements in operations from previous years.

Investment in Equipment
The purchase of new seeding equipment represents a strategic investment aligned with the Council's equipment replacement strategy. This not only enhances operational capacity but also supports long-term cost savings and service quality. By internalising key maintenance tasks, the Parks Service has increased its flexibility and reduced exposure to contractor delays, particularly during critical seasonal windows.

Not Applicable

Outcomes and Benefits
The combination of internal seeding and early contractor engagement has streamlined the maintenance process, reduced downtime and improving pitch availability. Early seeding and extended establishment periods will hopefully result in visibly healthier playing surfaces, with better grass coverage and root development. Internal delivery of seeding has the potential to reduce long-term costs and improve quality control, while also building internal skill sets for staff.

Ongoing Challenges and Community-Based Solutions
Despite recent improvements in pitch maintenance and scheduling, two persistent challenges continue to impact the quality and usability of sports pitches across the Borough: adverse weather conditions and unauthorised use by the public, particularly during rest and renovation periods.

Weather-Related Impacts
Unpredictable and increasingly extreme weather patterns—particularly prolonged rainfall or drought continue to pose a significant challenge. Waterlogging or extreme dry conditions can delay maintenance operations, reduce playable days, and compromise the effectiveness of renovation works. While drainage improvements have been implemented at several sites, including Crommelin Park, some locations such as Islandview Road in Greyabbey remain vulnerable due to their proximity to the coast and rising sea levels. Mitigation Measures include:

- Continued investment in drainage infrastructure and site-specific solutions.
- Strategic rest periods and rotational use of pitches to allow recovery.
- Long-term planning for potential relocation or redesign of pitches at high-risk sites.

Unofficial Use and Community Impact
Unauthorised use of pitches—particularly by dog walkers, casual players, and other non-booked users remains an issue, especially during closed periods when pitches are undergoing renovation. This activity can severely disrupt seed establishment, damage playing surfaces, and undermine the investment made in maintenance. Examples of Impact:

- Foot traffic during seeding periods can prevent grass from taking root.
- Dog fouling and littering create health hazards and increase maintenance burdens.
- Informal play during rest periods accelerates wear and reduces recovery time.

Community Monitoring and Stewardship
To address these challenges, a more collaborative approach involving local clubs and community groups is being undertaken. These stakeholders are well-placed to act as stewards of their local facilities and can play a key role in promoting responsible use. Actions include:

- Club Engagement: Ask clubs to assist in monitoring pitch use, reporting unauthorised activity, and promoting awareness among members and spectators.
- Community Education: our staff are working with our comms team to create awareness and inform the public about the importance of rest periods and the impact of misuse.
- Signage and Access Control: Improve signage around pitches during renovation periods and explore options for temporary fencing or barriers where appropriate.

By encouraging shared responsibility and building stronger partnerships with local users, the Council can better protect and ensure pitches remain in good condition for all users.

Next Steps
The Parks Service will continue to monitor pitch conditions throughout the summer period. The introduction of the PSS Ultimate software will further enhance inspection and reporting capabilities. Engagement with clubs and users will continue through biannual meetings and surveys to assess satisfaction and identify areas for further improvement. Lessons learned from this season will inform future maintenance schedules, contractor engagement strategies, and capital investment planning. Planning for more future investment in pitch maintenance activities, through learning opportunities for staff and more investment in new technology.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes this report.

ITEM 22

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	11 June 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Parks & Cemeteries
Date of Report	20 May 2025
File Reference	NoM 629
Legislation	Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes ☐ No ☐ Other ☒ If other, please add comment below: n/a
Subject	Response to Notice of Motion 629. Clandeboye Park & Pitch Update
Attachments	None

In September 2024 the following Notice of Motion was agreed by Council.

"*That this council notes that significant investment was previously made to deliver a play park, MUGA and amateur league sized football pitch on the Clandeboye road. Notes with regret there have been ongoing issues with the pitch. Instructs officers to reinstate the goalposts and mark out the pitch so that it can be played on by the local community. Furthermore, following consultation with the local community, that a report is brought back regarding the longer-term maintenance and enhancement of the site, to ensure any necessary provisions can be considered during the rate setting process to ensure that the football pitch is fit for purpose and can be used as previously agreed.*"

A report was submitted to the Community & Wellbeing in January 2025, with a number of options and a recommendation. Elected Members decided to progress Option 2 i.e. reinstate the football pitch to intermediate dimensions with full size goal posts. A budget was agreed separately and within the 2025/6 financial year.

Not Applicable

Programme of Works for the Pitch
The following programme of works has been developed following agreement to proceed with the project. The timescale for the programme of works is to prepare the pitch for an opening on the 9th August 2025. This is to coincide with the commencement of the football playing season across all Councils maintained pitches Borough wide.

- New full-size goalposts and sockets have been ordered, and delivery is expected in June.
- An independent assessment from iTurf of the playing surface had been received and determines the long-term maintenance plan for the surface.
- Along with the outcomes of the long-term plan, and in readiness for the August 2025 opening, the following works will be carried out:-
    - Application of spring/summer fertilizer in April and another in July.
    - Regular grass cuts (including steady reduction of grass height) to improve the sward (ongoing throughout the growing season)
    - Overseed the playing surface with 100% perennial rye grass seed mix. formulated with cultivars appropriate to sports pitches of this type. (Took place in May and being monitored)
    - Verti-Drain and Top Dress the pitch with 30 tonne of sand.
    - Erect new goalposts and remark the pitch (1st week in August)

Clandeboye Park Wider Engagement Plan
Part of the Council decision was to have further engagement with the local community. The purpose of the wider Engagement project is to consult the local community regarding the long-term maintenance and future enhancement of Clandeboye recreational area.

The current position of the recreational area consists of a Play Park, a MUGA and a non-bookable grass pitch. Open greenspace around these facilities equates to approx. 4500m2 with pedestrian access between Avonlea Park and Chester Park. There is an active community group representing the area, as well as a Primary School, nursery schools, churches and a sports club with youth teams.

Target Groups
- Clandeboye Primary School
- St Andrews Presbyterian Church
- Bangor Football Club
- Snuggles Day Nursery
- Clandeboye Community and Village Association
- Bangor Abbey Pre-School
- St Malachy's Primary School & Nursery Unit
- Little Acorns Pre-School

Not Applicable

Engagement Approach
Clandeboye Primary School: Practical engagement activity with small groups from each year group will take place, using a map of the site and photos or a site walk, asking what they think, and what's good/important, what's missing or could be better; what could be changed. We will use colour post it notes to add their ideas to the map

St Andrews Presbyterian Church: We plan to work with the Community Litter Picking group, undertake a site walk and discussion, followed up by more practical feedback on opportunities and use of the space on return to the church.

Drop in Sessions
The following groups could be targeted by drop-in sessions by Council staff, by having informal discussions on how much they use the space, if not why not and what would they like to see:

Families - Early Birds 8-9am – Term time – mini café as part of school run
- Mums & Tots
- Sparks (preschoolers)

Adults – Homegroup; Connects (20s & 30s), Knit and Knatter; Sunshine Hour; PW; Blossom; Lads, Dads and Grandads; Mens Shed; Bowling Club; Book Club

Teenagers - Youth & YFC & Ignite

Bangor Football Club: We plan to work in partnership with ANDBC Leisure with a focus on sport, in particular football. This could be done as a site visit or at the Club premises focusing on what is available for local children in sport and football and does the space provide an opportunity

Nurseries / Schools: Posters with QR code asking families and staff for feedback, questionnaire via Citizen Space

Clandeboye Village Community Association: This will be pivotal engagement with regular updates to the group on progress made throughout process and presentation of findings from engagement sessions and consultation sessions.

Timeline
In May 2025 the Parks Development Team engaged with Clandeboye Village Community Association and updated the group on progress, consultation proposals etc. Several group engagements will take place in June:

- Clandeboye Primary School
- St Andrews Presbyterian Church
- Bangor Football Club
- Snuggles Day Nursery
- Bangor Abbey Pre-School
- St Malachy's Primary School & Nursery Unit
- Little Acorns Pre-School
- Additional Drop-In Engagement as required

Not Applicable

July / August

- Re-Engage Clandeboye Village Community Association, update group on progress to date and presenting group with wider engagement findings to association and consultation session.

Autumn

- A further report to Community and Wellbeing committee.
- Development of business case for financial year 2026/2027 if required

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes this report.

ITEM 23

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing
Date of Meeting	18 June 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Leisure Services
Date of Report	6th June
File Reference	CW22
Legislation	N/A
Section 75 Compliant	Yes ☐ No ☐ Other ☐X If other, please add comment below: Performance report
Subject	Performance Report Q3-Q4 2024-2025 Leisure
Attachments	N/A

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

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

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

Not Applicable

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

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

The report for Quarter 4 is attached. At time of compiling this report some critical financial information was not available in time to calculate the relevant KPIs.(the first two detailed below). However based on period 11 financial data the leisure team had there most successful year against budget since ABMWLC opened and both leisure and CCHs continue to build up the attendance levels surpassing historical figures and showing full recovery post covid.

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

Outcome 1
An engaged Borough with citizens and businesses who have opportunities to influence the delivery of services, plans and investment

Key achievements:

- There were 7 engagement sessions held with key stakeholders
- The leisure strategy development provided significant opportunity for all stakeholders in leisure provision.

Outcome 2
An environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough meeting our net zero carbon targets

Key achievements:

- The Leisure and CCHs sites continue to encourage recycling
- The level of recycling rather than landfill continues to increase across the portfolio.

Outcome 3
A thriving and sustainable economy

Key achievements:

- A number of local business continue to operate from our facilities
- Leisure continues to develop partnerships with private business for example Origin.

Outcome 4

Not Applicable

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

Key achievements:

- Leisure contributes to providing a sustainable Borough for all residents and visitors with its management of accessible and affordable services and facilities.

Outcome 5
Safe, welcoming and inclusive communities that are flourishing

Key achievements:

- Leisure provides all communities with access to safe, inclusive facilities nd services across the entire Borough.

Outcome 6
Opportunities for people to be active and healthy

Key achievements:

- Over 2.3 million visits to our leisure and Community Halls highlights the opportunities for residents to be active and healthy.
- Over 100 sport clubs being supported by our Spor Development team to provide opportunities for residents to be active.

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

Key achievements:
- The inhouse team have delivered a quality service significantly under budget

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

- The service is experiencing significant turn over. Quality Staff are deciding to work away from leisure or within leisure but in different organisations.
- The revisit to potential outsourcing in 2025 will provide a major challenge in recruiting/retaining quality staff as it produces uncertainty for the workforce.

Action to be taken:
- The decision on the future leisure operation model needs to be taken as early as possible.
- Further analysis required on how we attract and retain quality staff.

Not Applicable

- The facility maintenance programme needs review both in terms of latent defects in our new buildings and investment in our aging buildings across the leisure estate.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that this report is noted.

Not Applicable

Half yearly Performance Report – Leisure

Generated on: 06 June 2025

Last Update H1 2024/25

Performance Data Traffic Light Icon	PI Short Name	Performance Data Current Value	Performance Data Current Target
	Income per member of staff (FTE) (60)	£31,002.00	£28,432.50
	Net Expenditure Per Head of Pop (163,000) Community Centres	£2.47	£2.05
	Develop a Leisure Strategy for the Borough 2025-2035 by 31st March 2025	30-Sep-2024	

Update H2 2024/25

Performance Data Traffic Light Icon	PI Short Name	Performance Data Current Value	Performance Data Current Target
	% spend against budget	32.91%	100%
	Income per head of population (163,000) Leisure Ards income only	£21.00	£20.93
	Attrition Rate	4.9%	6%
	Retention Rate	96%	94%
	Number of Sports Capital Grants awarded to clubs	10	10
	% spend against budget Community Centres	87.05%	100%
	Increase % sent to recycling rather than landfill for Leisure sites	69%	58%
	% sent to recycling rather than landfill for Community Centres	58%	60%
	Number of fitness classes per week (Leisure Ards and Serco/NCLT)	249	220

Not Applicable

Performance Data Traffic Light Icon	PI Short Name	Performance Data Current Value	Performance Data Current Target
	Total footfall across all Leisure sites (Ards)	1,350,000	900,000
	Total footfall across all Leisure sites (Serco)	913,674	985,966
	Number enrolled in Learn to Swim programme for Aurora Aquatics Complex and Ards Blair Mayne Wellbeing and Leisure Complex	2,470	4,250
	Active Aging Memberships (Ards) *	2,381	450
	Number of Sports Forum Grants awarded	320	250
	Participation in Sports Development Programmes	3,183	70
	Number of clubs affiliated with the Sports Forum	100	110
	Total footfall at Community Centres (cumulative)	161,671	120,000
	% staff attendance	91.78%	94%
	% of completed Employee Appraisals in the period September 2023 to March 2025	100%	100%
	Maintain Quest awards for all 4 leisure sites	4	4
	Number of individuals attending Sports Education Courses	52	100
	Total hours booked in Community Centres (cumulative)	33,944	26,000
	% staff attendance Community Centres	93.51%	94%
	% of completed Employee Appraisals in the period September 2023 to March 2025 Community Centres	86%	100%
	Customer Engagement (Number of groups and engagement sessions)	7	9

ITEM 24

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing
Date of Meeting	Wednesday 18 June 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Environmental Health Protection and Development
Date of Report	2nd June 2025
File Reference	CW22
Legislation	Local Government Act (NI) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes ☐ No ☐ Other x If other, please add comment below: N/A
Subject	Performance Report Q3/Q4 2024-2025 Environmental Health
Attachments	

Not Applicable

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

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

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

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

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

The report for Quarter 3 and 4 is attached.

Corporate Plan 2024-2028
In line with the Corporate Plan 2024-2028, our service has contributed to;

Outcome 1
An engaged Borough with citizens and businesses who have opportunities to influence the delivery of services, plans and investment

Key achievements:
- Monthly survey to service users to assess levels of satisfaction and areas of improvement achieving target rate
- Processed a significant number of service requests made by members, MLA's and MP's particularly relating to pubic health, housing and pest control matters.
- Quarterly meetings of the Over 50s Council (2 afternoon & 2 evening meetings) with representations from NI Public Services Ombudsman Office, NI Assembly Engagement Team and Capital Projects Team, ANDBC

Outcome 2
An environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough meeting our net zero carbon targets

Not Applicable

Key achievements:

- Air pollutants in the Borough remained below the threshold for action throughout the year
- Nitrogen Dioxide sampling tubes changed weekly at 18 sites throughout the Borough with no actionable levels recorded
- Over 400 pledges from pupils in Primary 5 classes to help the environment through the "Engine Off – No Idling" campaign
- During the reporting period supporting Air Quality assessments were considered as part of the planning consultation process for large residential developments.
- Responded to planning consultations for sustainable projects including, Electric Vehicle Charging Points, Biofuel Electricity generation and Storage Units, Wind Turbines and Air Source Heat Pumps which contributes to the Councils commitment to the path to net zero.
- The assessment, through the planning process, of the associated risk assessments for several Brownfield sites. This assists in the promotion and reuse of land affected by contamination, resulting in the return to use of vacant and underused land which can help address local housing need in areas well served by existing infrastructure.
- Inspection of premises licensed for the storage and use of petroleum and assessed compliance with requirements of the relevant permits issued for vapour recovery under the Pollution Prevention and Control (Industrial Emissions) Regulations (NI) 2013

Outcome 3

A thriving and sustainable economy

Key achievements:

- Fully eliminated the food inspection backlog
- Supported businesses providing advice and guidance on compliance with food safety, health and safety and consumer safety;
- Awarded Mind, Body Business health & wellbeing grants to 14 businesses
- Engaged with 30 businesses in Newtownards- Dementia awareness raising for staff and information sharing for public
  89% of planning consultations received were responded to within the target time of 15 working days. Timely and thorough responses impact the overall ability of the Council to provide a planning service that is fit for purpose and attracts developers to the Borough.

Outcome 4

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

Key achievements:

- Inspected 100% of our caravan parks
- All 9 designated beaches remained safe for swimming in during the bathing season.

Not Applicable

- Carried out Fitness Inspections of rented homes in the borough including an assessment of the heating systems.

Outcome 5
Safe, welcoming and inclusive communities that are flourishing

Key achievements:
- Joint sessions between Youth Voice and Over 50s council with focus on ageism, intergenerational work and development of future projects
- Dementia Awareness sessions to staff and development of training on eLearning portal for all staff.
- Tea Dance in Queens Hall
- Representation at all Anti-social behaviour forum monthly meetings
- Home Safety Checks provided to older people, Vulnerable adults and 46 Under 5/vulnerable children) including home safety equipment being provided and onward referrals to organisations including NIFRS, OT, falls team etc.
- Visited tobacco/vape retailers to promote compliance with age of sale legislation and test purchased 25 for vapes (4 sales)

Outcome 6
Opportunities for people to be active and healthy

Key achievements:
- BEE Safe delivered to local schools
- Delivered slow cooker training courses to communities
- Mind, Body Business health stand at SERC Skills for Success event
- Undertook walkability sessions in Castle Park

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

Key achievements:
- Meeting and exceeding KPI's
- Responded to over 95% of service requests within 2 working days (exceeding the target)
- Improved staff attendance level, bringing the service into the target range.

Emerging issues:
As part of the commitment to continuous improvement the annual Service Plan is reviewed on a monthly basis. The Service Risk register has also been reviewed to identify emerging issues and agree any actions required detailed below:
- No amendments

Not Applicable

Action to be taken:

Identified KPI at Risk	Reasons as to why KPI has not been met	Action to be taken	Designated Officer	Date for Review
% spend against budget	Vacant posts Underspend in Food Control budget	All posts are now filled Creation of nutrition post across food and HWB	Julie Davidson	September 2025
% of PTO applications completed within 180 days	Access properties was delayed by agreement, due to known fitness issue. One tenant refused entry to Council staff (both issues now resolved)	None – now resolved	N/a	N/a

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council note this report.

Not Applicable

Half yearly Performance Report - Environmental Health, Protection and Development

Generated on: 03 June 2025

Last Update H1 2024/25

Performance Data Traffic Light Icon	PI Short Name	Performance Data Current Value	Performance Data Current Target
	% spend against budget	92.42%	100%

Last Update H2 2024/25

Performance Data Traffic Light Icon	PI Short Name	Performance Data Current Value	Performance Data Current Target
	% of Caravan and Petroleum Sites inspected annually and licences issued where appropriate	99%	75%
	% of High-Risk Food Premises Inspected	100%	90%
	Complete H&S targeted inspection initiatives	3	3
	% of High Risk (H&S) Premises Inspected	100%	75%
	% staff attendance	95.29%	94%
	% of completed Employee Appraisals in the period September 2023 to March 2025	100%	100%
	% Planning comments made within 15 working days	89%	90%
	% Customers satisfied with service upon completion of service request	97%	90%
	% of PTO applications completed within 180 days	85.3%	90%
	% targets achieved for PHA SLAs	100%	97%
	% of service requests responded to within 2 working days	94.1%	94%

Not Applicable

ITEM 25

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	18 June 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Parks and Cemeteries
Date of Report	04 June 2025
File Reference	CW22
Legislation	Local Government Act (NI) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes ☐ No ☐ Other ☒ If other, please add comment below: n/a
Subject	Performance Report Q3/Q4 2024-2025 Parks and Cemeteries
Attachments	None

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

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

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

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

Reference	Period	Reporting Month
Half Yearly 1	April – September	December
Half Yearly 2	October – March	June

The report for Parks & Cemeteries is attached.

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

Outcome 1: *An engaged Borough with citizens and businesses who have opportunities to influence the delivery of services, plans and investment*

Key achievements:
- Ards & North Down in Bloom Community Competitions took place over the summer with categories for local people, groups and businesses with a Community Awards event delivered in November.
- Community Engagement for Ward Park Projects undertaken including out of scope initiatives such as the Dementia Friendly Sensory Garden and moving the existing play park to an used tennis court.
- North Down Coastal Path Working Group meetings with new membership of the group extended to external groups, business organisations etc.
- Attendance at Local Area Forest School Networks meetings.
- Engagement with local communities along the new greenway.
- Engagement at Bangor City Advisory Group, Age Friendly Forum and AND Heritage Cluster.
- Engagement & Development of Friends of Groups at Linnear Park and Hunts Park including volunteer days.
- AND In Bloom grant funding released improving local communities.
- Attended the Economic Development Conference and a Parks Service stand promoting the teams work and promoting Corporate Volunteering Days.
- Our Service worked with Community Planning Sustainable Tourism group

Outcome 2: *An environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough meeting our net zero carbon targets*

Key achievements:
- 'Go Peat Free' campaign promoted to stakeholders.
- 15,500 plus trees planted in multiple locations including Jacks Cut (Newtownards) - 5000, Greyabbey - 650, Londonderry Park - 1260, Ballywalter - 700, Upper Cresent, Comber - 2500, Cloughey – 1500, Castle Park - 3717 and many more sites.
- A programme of Winter Events including Tree Week (tree tours, woodland crafts and tree seed gathering sessions), weekly tree planting at Lower Cresent Comber in January, Cloughey and Greyabbey in February and

Valentine Playing Fields in March, with additional planting sessions in Valentine by local schools and groups.
- Final tree planting event at Londonderry Park including tree, orchard and hedgerow planting with local school groups.
- Tree Walk at Cairn Wood and Ballymenoch as part of the Winter Walk series
- New Orchards planted at Groomsport, Linear Park, Ward Park and Helens Bay
- Orchard Clean up events at Hunts Park and Greyabbey Village Hall with the local communities.
- Agreement reached with DFI on installation of Urban Street trees when project timescales allow.
- Allotment celebration day held in October.
- Installation of first robotic machinery at Bangor Castle Walled Garden.
- Grassland Management Strategy agreed by Elected Members.
- Successful tender completion for new, more efficient machinery.
- BTO Seabird Report Launch
- Celebration of World Rewilding Day with introduction of new signage and information boards promoted with the Mayor.
- Vigorous removal of invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed.

Outcome 3: *A thriving and sustainable economy*

Key achievements:
- Over 90 events held to increase skills and knowledge for local people.
- Successful free family Halloween & Christmas events attracting 15,000 visitors to the Bangor Castle Walled Garden.
- Partnership working with tourism and local businesses to host events such as Chilli Festival, Garlic in the Garden, Awaken the Garden, Open House etc
- Tree Asset Valuation report compiled and reported to Council Committee.

Outcome 4: *A vibrant, attractive, sustainable Borough for citizens, visitors, businesses and investors*

Key achievements:
- Floodgates Park progressing towards planning application, surveying work undertaken.
- Charles Brand Limited the appointed as greenway contractor working on the Newtownards to Bangor (Green Road) stage of the greenway project.
- Ward Park new Play Park, resource centre building artwork and dementia friendly sensory garden started.
- Whitespots Country Park – team working through RIBA Stage 2 with further environmental surveys being prioritised to inform the concept design.
- Memorandum of Understanding with Peninsula Healthy Living Partnership agreed and Members updated regarding Community Trails.

Outcome 5: *Safe, welcoming and inclusive communities that are flourishing*

Key achievements:

- 5 schools registered for 2024/25 school year i.e. Alexander Dickson, Killard, Kircubbin Integrated, St Patricks – Ballygalget and Loughries Primary. Theme agreed: growing a pizza garden. Plus ongoing support continues for some schools from previous years.
- Shared education programme between Strangford Intergrated College and St Columbas, Portaferry. This involved two classroom based and two practical outdoor workshops across 80 children. In collaboration with Strangford Lough and Lecale Partnership
- Engagement with Dementia support groups undertaken to aid the effective design of our new Ward Park sensory garden.
- Celebrated National Nest Box Week with nest box building with Castle Gardens Primary and North Down Red Squirrel Group.
- Bird Identification Workshop with two local school groups and at Crawfordsburn Glen as part of the RSPB Garden Bird Watch week.

Outcome 6: *Opportunities for people to be active and healthy*

Key achievements:

- Responded to DFI Active Travel Plan consultation.
- Play Park improvements planned for Millisle Outdoor Gym, New Harbour Road (Portavogie), Londonderry Park, Seapark (Holywood) & Ward Park.
- Organised events for the UK wide PlayDay, with events at Londonderry Park, Ballywalter Beach & Castle Park.
- A series of pop-up creative play events were delivered in Autumn/Winter.
- Funding for In Bloom Projects delivered to local groups.

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

Key achievements:

- Chilli Festival makes Irish Times top 25 food and drinks festivals in Ireland.
- Greenkeeper nomination for NILGA Employee of the Year.
- Walled Garden ranked 7th in UK's most beautiful gardens by ‘Love Exploring’.
- Green Flag Awards retained for Castle Park, Londonderry Park, Kiltonga Nature Reserve, Linear Park and Ballymenoch Park. Plus two additional green flags for Clandeboye Cemetery and Cairn Wood.
- Ulster in Bloom awards received for Donaghadee (Town Winner) & Comber (Town Runner-up)
- Northern Ireland Amenity Council Awards for Comber (Best Kept Medium Town), Bangor (Best Kept City) & Donaghadee (Best Kept Small Town).
- Staff Business Planning Day on 29 November took place with 80 plus Parks & Cemeteries staff attending to influence the Service Plan for 2025/6 and ensure we continue to meet and exceeding KPI’s.

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

Identified KPI at Risk	Reasons as to why KPI has not been met	Action to be taken	Designated Officer	Date for Review
% staff attendance	Although staff absence rates have improved, it remains challenging.	Service management team continues to meet regularly with HR, vigorously implement procedures and changed made to reporting sickness has improved rates.	Head of Parks & Cemeteries	October 2025
Amount of herbicide used (litres)	Increased usage of herbicides on pitches and control of invasive species.	Improved training, alternative products continue to be identified including use of stem injection for invasive species. Progressing the centralisation of chemical management.	Head of Parks & Cemeteries	October 2025
% spend against budget	Income favourable variances of 33.3%.	Team to continue to monitor monthly the budget.	Head of Parks & Cemeteries	October 2025

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council note this report.

Director of Community and Wellbeing

Performance Report - Parks and Cemeteries Generated

Last Update H2 2024/25 (**Generated on:** 04 June 2025)

	PI Short Name	Performance Data Current Value	Performance Data Current Target
	% Spend Against Budget	91.90%	100%
	% staff attendance	91.09%	94%
	% of completed Appraisals in the period September 2023 to March 2025	100%	100%
	Implement and embed the new Parks and Cemeteries Structures	100%	100%
	Centralise Cemetery management and Office teams into agreed locations	100%	100%
	Monthly Staff Performance Improvement Meetings organised	100%	100%
	Annual Business Planning Day organised	100%	100%
	Expand our Apprenticeship Scheme in association with Greenmount College with two new apprenticeships	100%	100%
	Number of Green Flag awards achieved	7	5
	Total m2 of Council maintained ground rewilded	132,302	120,000
	Number of trees planted (STAND4TREES Initiative)	15,532	15,000
	Amount of herbicide used (litres)	90.1	60
	Working towards our Service being Climate Change Ready with actions and policies in place to assist wider Corporate Strategies	100%	100%
	£’s investment in funding for In Bloom Projects	£22,472.59	£21,000.00
	Number of in Bloom/ Best Kept awards retained	5	4

Director of Community and Wellbeing

	Create an innovative event programme that delivers internal strategies and the broader corporate strategic objectives	100%	100%
	Report on progress towards the 'Benchmark Standard for Community Growing and Allotment Provision'	100%	100%
	Number of Friends Groups established	2	3
	Number of Community Gardening Projects organised	111	25
	% of available allotments utilised	100%	100%

ITEM 26

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	18 June 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community and Culture
Date of Report	03 June 2025
File Reference	CW 22
Legislation	The Local Government Act (NI) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes ☒ No ☐ Other ☐ If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Performance Report Q3/Q4 2024 - 2025 Community & Culture
Attachments	None

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

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

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

Not Applicable

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

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

The report for Quarter 3 and 4 is attached.

Corporate Plan 2024-2028
In line with the Corporate Plan 2024-2028, our service has contributed to;

Outcome 1
An engaged Borough with citizens and businesses who have opportunities to influence the delivery of services, plans and investment

Key achievements:

- Consultation completed and a new Good Relations Strategy and Action Plan developed.
- Consultation completed and a PCSP Strategy and Action Plan developed.
- Staff continue to attend community meetings to represent Council across the whole Borough.
- Community Development continue to fund and engage with the Youth Council – Youth Voice.
- A series of public information stands have been held in large stores across the Borough.
- Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) Momentum funding has been used to raise awareness of this issue in different locations around the Borough and to promote £120,000 of Change Fund monies which were awarded via a grant funding programme.
- PEACEPLUS Plan – moving forward towards receipt of a Letter of Offer
- A full Arts Programme continued throughout the year including exhibitions, Creative Classes and Workshops, Events, Music (Friday Night Live), Music in the Chamber, Aspects Festival Club, Young Aspects, Theatre presented by Terra Nova Productions, Arts Night at the Museum, Arts Bursaries, AND Arts Network, Arts Project Grants and Individual Artist Grants and support for externally Funded projects - Arts for Older People Programme, Rural Engagement Arts Programme and Beach of Dreams – Our Siren Song.
- The North Down Museum continued with the delivery of its forward Plan including exhibitions, Heritage talks, Tours of the Museum, Outreach visits and a very successful Education Programme.

Outcome 5
Safe, welcoming and inclusive communities that are flourishing

Not Applicable

Key achievements:

- Continue to work with North Down YMCA to offer service to all newcomers
- Weekly patrols carried out by the Community Safety Officers
- Monthly meetings held with the ASB Forum
- Monthly meetings held of the Support Hub
- Shared Voices Programme underway in schools around the Borough.

Emerging issues:

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

- Recruitment to fill vacant posts has been difficult and this had led to an underspend in the staffing budget.
- The introduction of a new CD Strategy and Action Plan has been paused to bring consultation in line with the review of community centre provision.
- No Letter of Offer has yet been received for PEACEPLUS.

Action to be taken:

Identified KPI at Risk	Reasons as to why KPI has not been met	Action to be taken	Designated Officer	Date for Review
Implement a new CD Strategy and Action Plan	Consultation will be carried out in line with community halls review	Work will progress in Q4.	Nicola Dorrian	31.3.25

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council note this report.

Not Applicable

Half yearly Performance Report - Community and Culture

Generated on: 30 May 2025

Last Update H1 2024/25

Performance Data Traffic Light Icon	PI Short Name	Performance Data Current Value	Performance Data Current Target
	% spend against budget	91.64%	100%

Last Update H2 2024/25

Performance Data Traffic Light Icon	PI Short Name	Performance Data Current Value	Performance Data Current Target
	% staff attendance	95.31%	94%
	% of completed Employee Appraisals in the period September 2023 to March 2025	100%	100%
	Implement Good Relations Strategy and Action Plan	100%	100%
	Implement PCSP Strategy and Action Plan	100%	100%
	Implement a new CD Strategy and Action Plan	10%	100%
	Implement the Arts and Heritage Strategy & Action Plan	100%	100%
	Implement the Heritage Forward Plan	100%	100%
	Produce and implement a final PEACE PLUS Local Authority Action Plan	75%	100%

Not Applicable

Not Applicable

Half yearly Performance Report - Community and Culture

Generated on: 30 May 2025

Last Update H1 2024/25

Performance Data Traffic Light Icon	PI Short Name	Performance Data Current Value	Performance Data Current Target
	% spend against budget	91.64%	100%

Last Update H2 2024/25

Performance Data Traffic Light Icon	PI Short Name	Performance Data Current Value	Performance Data Current Target
	% staff attendance	95.31%	94%
	% of completed Employee Appraisals in the period September 2023 to March 2025	100%	100%
	Implement Good Relations Strategy and Action Plan	100%	100%
	Implement PCSP Strategy and Action Plan	100%	100%
	Implement a new CD Strategy and Action Plan	100%	100%
	Implement the Arts and Heritage Strategy & Action Plan	100%	100%
	Implement the Heritage Forward Plan	100%	100%
	Produce and implement a final PEACE PLUS Local Authority Action Plan	100%	100%

Not Applicable

ITEM 27

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	18 June 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community and Culture
Date of Report	23 May 2025
File Reference	HER 08 06/25
Legislation	The Local Government Act (NI) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes ☐ No ☐ Other ☒ If other, please add comment below: N/A at this stage
Subject	Response to Notice of Motion 626 - Recognition of US Regiments based in Ards and North Down
Attachments	None

In September 2024 following consideration at the Corporate Services Committee, Council agreed that following the 80th anniversary of D-Day, recognises the service of US regiment(s) stationed in Donaghadee and our Borough prior to D-Day and officers would bring a report back looking at ways in which our Borough could provide a lasting memory to them.

Introduction

The Arts and Heritage Manager has consulted with a US military specialist, who is a council member at the Northern Ireland War Memorial and author of a book specifically on the US Army in Northern Ireland (publication in 2026), to ascertain the significance of the US regiment(s) stationed in Donaghadee and any connections that they had to D-Day.

Not Applicable

Background

166th Signal Photographic Company
There is only evidence of one US regiment connected in any way with the Borough and that is the 166th Signal Photographic Company. Headquartered at Groomsport House, a company later evidenced in a report (after they moved to England) as having approximately 154 men.

As the 166th was a Signal Corps making film and taking photographs, they would have been attached to the larger units based in Northern Ireland. In the case of the detachment unit based at New Road, Donaghadee the exact number of men is unknown, and the aforementioned report recorded three detachments, numbering seven and six men, then one detachment with a single soldier so it is not believed the numbers based there were substantial. They were not involved with D-Day.

Field Force Replacement System (FFRS)
The Field Force Replacement System had a depot (FFRS Depot No. 8) located at Bangor. This branch of the Army supplied replacement men to other units to bring them up to numerical strength. Depot No.8 was believed to be a largely administrative depot. After basic training in the US, the men came in, got arranged into companies, before assignment to units in England and then were quickly sent off again.

Undoubtedly there were men among them who took part in D-day, but the Replacement Company ID was a transitional designation before they were absorbed into another unit. It is therefore extremely difficult to trace where they went.

There were four depots each overseeing several camps. Depot No.8 at Bangor had ten camps, seven in North Down and three in County Antrim.

Sites used by Depot No.8 were Bangor, Rockport, Crawfordsburn, Portavoe, Rathgael House, Clandeboye, Prospect House, Red Hall, Castle Dobbs and Mount Stewart. Each site averaging 150 men in capacity so not entire regiments and they were not involved with D-Day.

The total of the FFRS camps, if assumed around company sized, would be no more than 1500 US Army personnel the whole of the Ards Peninsula.

The 166th and FFRS would have been in the borough between January to April of 1944. There was not any fixed presence by the US Military before or after that.

There is a war memorial in Portstewart that commemorates the residents of Portstewart who were killed or missing in World War I, World War II and the war in Iraq, it also pays honour to the men of the 508th Parachute Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division of the United States Army. The division arrived in early January 1944 and were leaving by early March of the same year.

They were the only US Army division based in Northern Ireland that took part in D-Day.

Not Applicable

The Northern Ireland War Museum has undertaken an oral history project. Over one hundred interviews have been recorded so far and are freely available to researchers, students, and members of the public interested in hearing first-hand accounts of life in Northern Ireland during the 2nd World War. A similar project locally may duplicate what already exists.

There are existing resources that Council promotes related to the stationing of US Military in Northern Ireland and in Ards and North Down specifically:

1. **World Wars Trail** is available at Visit Information Centres (VICs) and online to download: https://andculture.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-07/Great_War_Trail_online_download_%281%29_0.pdf A trail highlighting the many sites of interest where you can learn how the Borough played its part in World War 1 and World War 2.

2. **GI Trail NI** available at VIC's. The GI Trail NI maps out the sites and locations at which the American GIs were based in Northern Ireland during the Second World War. 3 separate heritage-tourism trails have been created covering Armagh and Down, Antrim and Londonderry and Fermanagh and Tyrone. Ards and North Down is featured in the Armagh and Down map.

Officer's have requested a PDF of the GI Trail that could be downloaded from the Councils Culture and Tourism websites and will ensure that hard copies are readily available in Donaghadee.

Therefore it appears from the research undertaken that there were no US regiment(s) stationed in Donaghadee. However, officers will continue to review details about US regiments in the Borough prior to 6 June 1944 and bring a further report back in the Autumn.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council note the report.