

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

4 March 2026

Dear Sir/Madam

You are hereby invited to attend a hybrid meeting (in person and via zoom) of the Active and Healthy Communities Committee of Ards and North Down Borough in the Council Chamber, 2 Church Street, Newtownards and via Zoom on **Wednesday 11 March 2026 commencing at 7pm.**

Yours faithfully

Michael Steele
Acting Chief Executive
Ards and North Down Borough Council

A G E N D A

1. Apologies
2. Declarations of Interest

Reports for Approval

3. Response to Notice of Motion 671 - Responsible Dog Walking in Public Spaces (March 2026) (Report attached)
4. Response to Notice of Motion 685 - Ruby's Law (Report attached)
5. Community Services Draft Service Plan 2026 – 2027 (Report attached)
6. Environmental Health and Regulatory Services Draft Service Plan 2026-27 (Report attached)
7. Leisure Draft Service Plan 2026-2027 (Report attached)

Reports for Noting

8. Local Air Quality Management Progress 2025 (Report attached)
9. Response to Notice of Motion 687 – Recruitment of additional Community Safety Officers (Report attached)
10. Response to Notice of Motion 668 - Funding for Dance Groups (Report to follow)
11. Sports Forum Grants Quarterly Update (Report attached)

12. Notices of Motion
13. Any Other Notified Business

ITEMS *IN CONFIDENCE*****

Reports for Approval Delegated to Committee

14. Award of the Tender for Summer Scheme Provision (Report attached)
15. Review of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licence Scheme Charges and Proposed Increase in Licence Fee From 1st April 2026 (Report attached)

Reports for Noting

16. Response to Notice of Motion 519 – Queens Hall, Hollywood (Report attached)

MEMBERSHIP OF ACTIVE & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE (16 MEMBERS)

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

Unclassified

ITEM 3**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
	If multiple:
Meeting	Active and Healthy Communities Committee
Date of Meeting	11 March 2026
Responsible Director	Director of Active and Healthy Communities
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Environmental Health and Regulatory Services
Report title	Response to Notice of Motion 671 - Responsible Dog Walking in Public Spaces (March 2026)
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Draft Consultation Document Appendix 2 - Letter received from the Minister of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs of Northern Ireland
File Reference (if applicable)	NoM 671
Legislation	Other Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 The Dog Control Orders (Procedures) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012
Resource Implications	Budget and Staffing Narrative: Depending on option approved, there may be a requirement to provide funding for additional staff (including associated costs), and other expenditure relating to implementation.
Screening Requirements	<i>The Council will commit to consider the implication of all reports under the categories of Section 75, Rural Needs, Data Protection, Climate and Sustainability:</i>

If multiple:

	Screening of report not required
Link to Corporate Plan Priority and Outcome	<p>Priority 2: Environmental</p> <p>4. A vibrant, attractive, sustainable Borough for citizens, visitors, businesses and investors</p> <p>If multiple:</p>

Background

A Notice of Motion relating to Responsible Dog Walking in Public Spaces was agreed by Council in September 2025. It stated that the Council, as a Dog Friendly Borough, recognises the need to balance animal welfare, public safety, and shared use of parks and footpaths. It raised concerns about individuals walking multiple dogs, the rise of unlicensed professional dog walkers without insurance, and the associated risks to people and pets. It noted that other councils, including Belfast City Council, have introduced limits on the number of dogs walked at one time and suggested similar measures be considered.

More specifically, the Notice of Motion proposed that the Council resolves to:

1. Produce a report outlining the costs and steps required to introduce a local restriction under the relevant provisions of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environments Act (Northern Ireland) 2011: Limiting the number of dogs that any one person may be in charge of to a maximum of four at any given time in public spaces.
2. Mandating that professional dog walkers must have dogs on leads at all times to ensure dog control and accountability for dog behaviours.
3. Include in the report, the provision and cost of a complementary public education campaign, to inform residents, recreational and professional dog walkers about the new limit, about what it means to have a dog under your control in public spaces (whether on or off lead), and what promoting responsible dog control and safety in shared spaces should be.
4. To write to the DAERA Minister to ask him to introduce, and provide funding support to Councils to enforce, mandatory registration of professional dog walkers to help to ensure suitable animal welfare standards, the provision of suitable training, experience, insurance, and public safety.

Subsequently, a report was brought to Council in January 2026 through the Active and Healthy Communities Committee, in response to the NoM. The report outlined the legal basis, required steps, and estimated costs for introducing a Dog Control Order (DCO) limiting individuals to walking a maximum of four dogs in all public spaces across the Borough. Key points included:

- Implementation of the DCO would require:

- Statutory public consultation, and estimated costs were provided.
- Investment in signage to alert dog walkers on the restrictions that applied at Council owned sites.
- Possible addition to current enforcement resources; the costs that this would entail were provided.
- Short-term administrative support to manage responses to the public consultation
- Current legislation does not allow the Council to apply restrictions aimed solely at professional dog walkers.
- A public education campaign would be carried out to promote awareness and responsible behaviour.
- A draft letter to the Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs was prepared, and sought:
 - Ministerial support for mandatory registration of professional dog walkers
 - Funding to assist councils with enforcement and public safety initiatives.

A table summarising potential costs was provided in the report and is included below for reference.

Item	Year 1 costs	Year 2 costs	Total cost	Notes
Stage 1				
Public Consultation Exercise	£2,000	-	£2,000	Includes press notices
Stage 2 – Should Council approve following consultation				
Signage for Council sites	£50,000	-	£50,000	New signs at locations frequented by dog walkers
Additional Enforcement Officer (Salary)	£38,000	£38,600	£76,600 (and continuing)	Per full time officer
IT Provision for Enforcement Officer	£5,000	£2,000	£7,000	Initial setup and ongoing costs
Vehicle Provision	£36,000	-	£36,000	Purchase cost
Vehicle Running Costs	£7,000	£8,000	£15,000	Fuel, maintenance
Public Education Campaign	£5,000	£1,000	£6,000	Press and billboard ads
Total (1 officer)	£143,000	£49,600	£192,600	Approximate combined costs
Total (3 officers)	£315,000	£146,800	£461,800	

The recommendation attached to the report was as follows:

It is recommended that Council approves:

- the undertaking of a public consultation exercise on the proposed Dog Control Order; and
- that the draft letter, attached as Appendix 1, is sent to the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs of Northern Ireland.

An alternative proposal which was made at Committee as follows was agreed at Council :

- That a further report be brought back to the Committee to outline the proposed wording and content of the proposed public consultation. This will include, but not be limited to, options with regards to maximum number of dogs and geographical area/scope against which any restriction might apply.
- That the draft letter, attached in Appendix 1, is sent to the Minister of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs of Northern Ireland.

The letter was subsequently issued to the Minister following the January Council Meeting.

A draft consultation document, which includes options as requested in the amended proposal, has been included as Appendix 1.

Key Issues

The recommendation included in this report asks members to approve proceeding with the public consultation exercise. In deciding whether or not to proceed, it is worth noting that only a very small proportion of dog walkers, professional or otherwise, will be impacted by the proposed DCO. It is unlikely that there will be a significant number of detections of non-compliance or fixed penalties issued. To date, very few complaints have been received by the Neighbourhood Environment Team in relation to excess numbers of dogs being walked by individuals.

While the consultation exercise will not incur significant costs, should we proceed in making the DCO following this process, the question of whether to provide new signage at Council owned sites remains. There is no legal requirement to erect signs in this regard, but traditionally the Council has displayed information on restrictions that apply at different locations. Signs can also be useful from an enforcement perspective, and will likely improve the chance of obtaining convictions in court.

The proposal as put forward in NoM 671 applies to all public space; the legislation permits the Council to make a DCO that encompasses private land that requires an admission fee. Some local sites already have their own restrictions in place with regard to limiting the number of dogs walked by an individual. For example, the National Trust

require professional dog walkers to pay £120 for an annual permit, allowing them to walk up to four dogs in Mount Stewart.

A response to the Council's letter was received from the Minister of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs of Northern Ireland on 24th February 2026, and is attached as Appendix 2. The Minister is not inclined to introduce new primary legislation to require the registration of professional dog walkers. He suggests that there are existing powers available to local authorities to safeguard animal welfare and restrict the numbers of dogs being walked, through the DCO mechanism, and that these would have the desired outcomes proposed in the letter.

Next Steps

Should Members wish to proceed with the public consultation, Environmental Health and Regulatory Services will work with the Council Communications Team to undertake the process.

Following this, the results will be analysed and presented to the Committee for further consideration.

Summary

The proposed public consultation will allow the Council to gather views on potential new controls for responsible dog walking, including limits on the number of dogs walked at one time and the scope of any restrictions. While only a small number of dog walkers are likely to be affected, the consultation will provide essential evidence to guide future decision-making. Should a Dog Control Order ultimately be introduced, further consideration will be required on signage, enforcement resources and associated costs. If the recommendation is approved, Environmental Health and Regulatory Services will proceed with the consultation and report back with findings to inform the next steps.

A response has been received from the Minister of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs of Northern Ireland. The Minister is not inclined to introduce new legislation requiring the registration of professional dog walkers.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council **Approves** that officers proceed with carrying out a public consultation exercise, as proposed in the draft consultation document attached as Appendix 1.

Appendix 1

Public Consultation Document – Responsible Dog Walking in Ards and North Down

Proposal to Limit the Number of Dogs Walked at One Time in Public Spaces

1. Executive Summary

Ards and North Down Borough Council is seeking views on a proposal to introduce a limit on the number of dogs that may be walked simultaneously in public spaces.

The proposed maximum is **four dogs per person**.

This consultation aims to gather feedback from residents, dog owners, businesses, professional dog walkers, and wider stakeholders before any final decision is made.

2. Background and Rationale

Walking multiple dogs at once can create challenges related to:

- **Public safety**
- **Dog control and behaviour**
- **Environmental impacts, including dog fouling management**
- **Interactions between dogs, other animals, and members of the public**
- **Professional dog walking practices**

Many UK councils have adopted limits (often 4 or 6 dogs) to ensure dogs remain under proper control in shared public areas, and to support safer, more responsible use of parks, beaches, and open spaces.

Introducing a limit aims to promote responsible dog ownership and maintain safe, enjoyable public spaces for all residents and visitors.

3. The Proposal

It is proposed that:

No person may walk more than four dogs at one time in any public space within the Borough.

Section 40 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environments Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 empowers district councils to make Dog Control Orders (DCO) applying to land

within their district that is open to the air and accessible to the public (with or without payment).

4. What This Means in Practice

If the proposal is adopted:

- Individuals may walk **1–4 dogs** at any one time
- Groups (e.g., two professional walkers) may walk dogs together, but **each person** must not exceed the limit
- Enforcement officers may request details from any individual in control of a dog
- Failure to comply may result in fixed penalty notices or further enforcement action

Exemptions (if any) can be considered as part of this consultation.

5. Impact Assessment

Potential Benefits

- Reduced risk of dogs being out of control
- Improved safety for children and vulnerable people
- Enhanced protection for wildlife and livestock
- Greater confidence among other park users
- More consistent expectations for professional dog walkers

Potential Considerations

- Operational adjustments required for dog-walking businesses
 - Need for clear signage and communication
 - Ensuring enforcement remains proportionate and fair
-

6. How to Respond

We welcome your views on the proposed limit.

You can respond by:

- Completing our online survey via this link <XXXXXXXXXX>
- Emailing comments to: enquiries@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

- Writing to:
Ards and North Down Borough Council
City Hall
The Castle
Bangor
BT20 4BT

The closing date for responses is XXXXXXXXXXXX

7. Next Steps

After the consultation closes:

1. All feedback will be analysed and summarised.
 2. A report will be presented to the Council.
 3. A decision will be made on whether to adopt the limit, amend it, or introduce alternatives.
 4. The Council will publish the outcome and any resulting policy or order.
-

8. Privacy and Data Protection

All responses will be handled in line with data protection legislation.

Personal details will be used only for the purposes of this consultation and will not be published.

Draft Consultation Questions – Responsible Dog Walking / Limit on Dogs Walked at One Time

Section 1: About You

- 1. Which of the following best describes you?**
 - Resident of the Borough
 - Dog owner
 - Professional dog walker
 - Visitor to the Borough
 - Local business owner
 - Other (please specify)

 - 2. Do you currently walk dogs in public spaces within Ards and North Down?**
 - Yes, regularly
 - Yes, occasionally
 - No

 - 3. If you walk dogs, how many do you typically walk at one time?**
 - 1
 - 2
 - 3
 - 4
 - 5 or more
 - Not applicable
-

Section 2: Views on the Proposal

- 1. To what extent do you support or oppose the proposal to limit the number of dogs walked by one person in public spaces to a maximum of four?**
 - Strongly support
 - Support
 - Neutral / no opinion

- Oppose
 - Strongly oppose
2. **Please explain the reasons for your answer above.**
(Open text box)
3. **Do you think an alternative maximum number of dogs that one person can walk at one time is more appropriate?**
- Yes
 - No
 - Not sure

If yes, what maximum number do you believe would be appropriate?

- 1
 - 2
 - 3
 - 4 (current proposal)
 - 5
 - 6
 - Other (please specify)
4. **Please explain the reasons for your answer above.**
(Open text box)
-

Section 3: Public Safety and Dog Control

1. **In your experience, does walking multiple dogs at once increase risks related to dog control or public safety?**
- Yes
 - Sometimes
 - No
 - Not sure
2. **If yes or sometimes, which risks do you think are most significant?**
(Select all that apply)
- Dogs becoming difficult to control
 - Risk to children or vulnerable people
 - Interactions with other dogs
 - Interactions with livestock or wildlife

- Increased likelihood of fouling not being collected
 - Other (please specify)
- 3. Do you believe that introducing a limit would improve safety and responsible dog handling in public spaces?**
- Yes
 - Maybe
 - No
 - Not sure
-

Section 4: Impact on Dog Walkers and Businesses

- 1. If you are a professional dog walker, how many dogs do you currently walk at one time?**
- 1–2
 - 3–4
 - 5–6
 - More than 6
 - Not applicable
- 2. Would the proposed limit of four dogs per person have an impact on your business or daily walking routine?**
- Significant impact
 - Some impact
 - No impact
 - Not applicable
- 3. Please provide any comments on how the proposal might affect dog-walking businesses or individuals.**
(Open text box)
-

Section 5: Location, Exemptions and Practical Considerations

Location-Specific Application

- 1. Do you think the proposed limit on the number of dogs walked at one time should apply:**

- Everywhere in the Borough
- Only in certain locations
- Not sure

If “only in certain locations”, which types of locations do you think should be included? (Select all that apply)

- Busy parks and play areas
- Beaches/promenades
- Nature reserves / wildlife-sensitive areas
- Town centres
- Council-owned parks and open spaces
- Other (please specify)

Please explain your reasons.

(Open text box)

2. Do you think any exemptions should be considered?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

3. If yes, what exemptions do you believe may be appropriate? *(Open text)*

Examples could include:

- Assistance dogs
- Working dogs
- Dogs from the same household
- Other (please specify)

4. What would be the most effective ways for the Council to communicate any new rules? *(Select all that apply)*

- Signage in parks and open spaces
- Council website
- Social media
- Local press
- Email newsletters

- Vet practices / pet shops
 - Other (please specify)
-

Section 6: Final Comments

1. **Do you have any further comments about the proposal or responsible dog walking in the Borough?**
(Open text box)

**From the Office of the
Minister of Agriculture,
Environment and Rural Affairs**



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Department of

**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Michael Steele
Acting Chief Executive
Ards and North Down Borough Council
Town Hall
The Castle
Bangor
BT20 4BT
lorna.watson@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

DAERA Private Office
First Floor, Clare House
303 Airport Road West
Sydenham Intake
Belfast, BT3 9ED
Telephone: 028 9052 4140
Email: private.office@daera-ni.gov.uk

Our Ref: COR-0100-2026
Date: 24 February 2026

Dear Michael

MANDATORY REGISTRATION FOR PROFESSIONAL DOG WALKERS

Thank you for your letter, of 13 February 2026, seeking the introduction of mandatory registration for professional dog walkers and funding to support councils to enforce this requirement.

I appreciate there is significant merit in your proposal. However, if I was to use the Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (the Welfare of Animals Act) to introduce either a registration scheme or a licencing scheme for professional dog walkers, under the ambit of that legislation, - the purpose would be to put in place specific conditions to secure the welfare of the animals. For example, while they were being looked after in a specific business premises prior to, or after, dog walking, or being transported to dog walking.

In line with the intent of the Welfare of Animals Act, such a scheme would have to centre on the care provided to the animals and the conditions they would be kept in. I want to stress that my Department has not been presented with a body of evidence to suggest that the welfare of dogs is being compromised by persons operating as professional dog walkers. Indeed, if that were the case, the Welfare of Animals Act already provides powers for councils to investigate actions of maltreatment, as the legislation does allow action to be taken against any person who is considered to be in charge of an animal, even if that is for a temporary period.

I am conscious that several local authorities in England do require professional dog walkers to obtain a licence if they wish to use specific, council owned public spaces, such as parks. It would appear that these licences are primarily focused on regulating access to those local authority amenities, rather than the specific activity of dog walking or the person running the

If you are deaf or have a hearing difficulty you can contact the Department via the Next Generation Text Relay Service by dialling 18001 + telephone number.

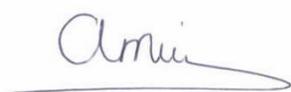
INVESTORS IN PEOPLE
We invest in people Standard

business. A common condition for access to these spaces includes a limit on the number of dogs being walked by a licence holder.

I would also stress that the central tenet of the Dogs (Northern Ireland) Order 1983 (the Order) is that a person who is deemed to be in charge of a dog must demonstrate they are in control of the dog. The Order provides powers for council dog wardens to deal with dogs which stray or attack other dogs, animals or persons. Furthermore, I am also conscious that the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 already contains provisions to enable councils across Northern Ireland to make orders which can limit the numbers of, or exclude, dogs from specified areas of land. These powers enable councils to exercise their own discretion and determine their own needs, in a very specific and detailed way which is unlikely to be achieved by any new overarching mechanism introduced by central government.

I trust this response is helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A Muir', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

ANDREW MUIR MLA
Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Unclassified

ITEM 4

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
	If multiple:
Meeting	Active and Healthy Communities Committee
Date of Meeting	11 March 2026
Responsible Director	Director of Active and Healthy Communities
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Environmental Health and Regulatory Services
Report title	Response to Notice of Motion 685 - Ruby's Law
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Draft letter for Ministers concerning Ruby's Law
File Reference (if applicable)	NoM685
Legislation	Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014
Resource Implications	None
	Narrative:
Screening Requirements	<i>The Council will commit to consider the implication of all reports under the categories of Section 75, Rural Needs, Data Protection, Climate and Sustainability:</i> Screening of report not required
Link to Corporate Plan Priority and Outcome	Priority 3: Social 5. Safe, welcoming and inclusive communities that are flourishing If multiple:

Background

A Notice of Motion relating to Ruby's Law was agreed by Council in November 2025. Ruby's Law is a legislative reform campaign launched in England in January 2025, aimed at closing critical gaps in the Family Law Act 1996 and the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, to protect companion animals used as tools of coercive control. The proposal seeks to grant courts the power to include pets in Non-Molestation and Occupation Orders, allowing survivors to retain custody and legal protection for their animals when fleeing domestic abuse. A parallel campaign to introduce Ruby's Law is underway in Northern Ireland, with the matter debated at Stormont in October 2025. Ards and North Down Borough Council was the first local authority in Northern Ireland to publicly endorse Ruby's Law.

The Notice of Motion read as follows:

"This Council recognises the link between domestic abuse and non-accidental harm to companion animals and the emotional trauma this causes victims and survivors, acknowledging that companion animals are often used as tools of coercion and control in abusive relationships and that their welfare is intrinsically linked to the safety and wellbeing of victims. The introduction and implementation of Ruby's Law, as proposed in other parts of the United Kingdom, seeks to provide legal protection for pets in households where domestic abuse occurs, ensuring that they are considered in protective orders and safeguarding measures.

Therefore, this councils resolves to:

1. Write to the Ministers for Justice, Communities, Finance, DAERA, and Health, calling for:
 1. The introduction of Ruby's Law in Northern Ireland; and
 2. Them to work in partnership to deliver a cross-departmental collaboration with Causeway Coast Dog Rescue charity, and other animal welfare and domestic abuse organisations as required, to ensure the development of robust and enforceable provisions, taking a multidisciplinary approach to identify key stakeholders and government agencies to support victims and survivors of domestic abuse and coercive relationships and the protection of their pets.
2. Promote public awareness of the connection between domestic abuse, coercive control and animal abuse, in collaboration with statutory agencies and animal welfare organisations.
3. Encourage engagement and collaboration within all Councils and other key stakeholders to support the implementation of Ruby's Law in the community to protect animals and people."

Key Issues

With regard to point 1 in the Notice of Motion, a draft letter to the Assembly Ministers has been attached as Appendix 1, which covers all points referred to. Approval is sought to issue the letter to the relevant Ministers.

As for point 2, this aspect of the Notice of Motion closely aligns with work being carried out by the Community Services. Environmental Health and Regulatory Services will work closely with Community Services to identify ways in which Ruby's Law may be incorporated into their existing strategies targeting domestic violence and coercive control. Discussions will also be initiated with Sexual and Domestic Violence Partnership (SEDVP) to establish if any funding could be made available to the Council to help raise awareness of Ruby's Law and the principles behind it.

In relation to point 3, Ruby's Law has been raised with representatives from other councils at a meeting of Northern Ireland Dog Advisory Group (NIDAG). It was found that there was little previous knowledge of Ruby's Law among members of the Group. We will share details of any strategies applied and any progress made by Ards and North Down at future NIDAG meetings.

Next Steps

- Should members approve the draft letter, this will be issued to the relevant Ministers.
- Environmental Health and Regulatory Services will collaborate with Community Development in relation to promoting public awareness of Ruby's Law.
- The Council's representative on NIDAG will update the group on progress within Ards and North Down. It may be necessary in the future to formally write to other council Chief Executives to seek support.

Summary

This report provides an update on the Council's response to Notice of Motion 685 regarding Ruby's Law, a legislative reform campaign aimed at protecting companion animals used in coercive control within domestic abuse situations. Ruby's Law seeks to close gaps in existing legislation by allowing pets to be included in Non-Molestation and Occupation Orders, thereby safeguarding both victims and their animals. The Council previously endorsed this reform and committed to writing to relevant Northern Ireland Executive Ministers to support its introduction and to encourage cross-departmental collaboration with Causeway Coast Dog Rescue and other organisations.

The report also outlines progress on the Notice of Motion's additional commitments. Environmental Health and Regulatory Services will work with Community Services to promote public awareness of the link between domestic abuse and harm to animals.

Engagement has also begun with other councils through the Northern Ireland Dog Advisory Group, where awareness of Ruby's Law was found to be limited. Approval is now sought for issuing the draft letter to Ministers, with further work planned to support wider collaboration and future engagement across local authorities.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council **Approves** that the draft letter, attached as Appendix 1, is sent to the Ministers referred to in Notice of Motion 685.

Appendix 1

Dear Minister,

Re: Support for the introduction of Ruby's Law in Northern Ireland

Domestic abuse continues to have a profound impact on individuals, families, and communities in Northern Ireland. However, one important aspect of this harm remains largely unaddressed, the way in which pets are used as tools of coercion and control. Many victims form deep emotional bonds with their animals, and abusers often exploit this to intimidate, manipulate, and prevent victims from leaving dangerous situations. Ruby's Law seeks to address this gap in our legal framework by ensuring that pets can be properly protected when someone seeks safety.

More than 60% of households in the United Kingdom own a pet, reflecting the central role animals play in many lives. Research from organisations such as Dogs Trust has shown that domestic abuse professionals regularly encounter cases in which pets are threatened, harmed, or used to deter a victim from leaving. In some instances, animals have been killed. For those experiencing abuse, the fear of what might happen to their pet can be a powerful barrier to escape.

Ards and North Down Borough Council believe that Ruby's Law would help address this. By allowing courts to include pets within non-molestation and occupation orders, victims would no longer have to choose between their own safety and the safety of an animal. The proposals would also support clearer routes for emergency fostering or temporary care when someone needs to leave home urgently. This is not simply an issue of animal welfare, it is about recognising coercive control in all its forms and ensuring vulnerable people are fully protected. Where animals are at risk, people are often at risk too.

Across the UK, recognition of this direct relationship is growing. In England and Wales, the campaign for Ruby's Law has prompted consideration of amendments to the Family Law Act 1996 to include pet protection measures. The police and domestic abuse services also recognise threats to pets as a clear indicator of coercive behaviour. However, existing legislation still falls short of offering explicit protections for animals within abuse cases, leaving a gap that perpetrators can exploit.

Ruby's Law proposes practical, targeted amendments, including:

- Inclusion of pets in Non-Molestation and Occupation Orders: allowing victims to retain guardianship of their pets and preventing abusers from using them as a means of control.

- Explicit recognition of pet abuse as an element of coercive control: strengthening the ability of courts to assess and respond to the full pattern of abusive behaviour.
- Emergency mechanisms for the removal of animals from abusive environments: giving police and other agencies the ability to protect pets quickly when necessary.
- Enhanced evidence pathways: making it easier for veterinary records, witness statements, and digital evidence to be used in court proceedings.
-

Causeway Coast Dog Rescue has played a significant role in raising awareness of this issue, working closely with PSNI, Animal Welfare officers, domestic abuse services, and other agencies. Their advocacy has given a voice to victims who previously remained silent out of fear for their animals. The campaign has progressed positively in Northern Ireland, with proposals now at the Bills Committee stage following debate at Stormont on 6 October 2025. In November 2025, Ards and North Down Borough Council became the first local authority in the UK to formally endorse Ruby's Law, demonstrating strong local support for reform.

Ards and North Down Borough Council respectfully urges the Executive, through your office, to progress this important reform and to engage directly with those who have led the campaign. Ruby's Law represents a compassionate, practical step that would offer meaningful protection to victims and their pets. It would ensure our legislation fully reflects the realities of coercive control and reinforces Northern Ireland's commitment to safeguarding those at risk.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Steel

Acting Chief Executive

Unclassified

ITEM 5

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
	If multiple:
Meeting	Active and Healthy Communities Committee
Date of Meeting	11 March 2026
Responsible Director	Director of Active and Healthy Communities
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community Services (Acting)
Report title	Community Services Draft Service Plan 2026-27
Attachments	Appednxi 1 Community Services Draft Service Plan 2026-27
File Reference (if applicable)	CW22
Legislation	Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014
Resource Implications	Budget Narrative: Resources in place for 2026 - 27 to deliver draft Service Plan for Community Halls No Letters of Offer received for PCSP or GR
Screening Requirements	<i>The Council will commit to consider the implication of all reports under the categories of Section 75, Rural Needs, Data Protection, Climate and Sustainability:</i> Screening of report not required
Link to Corporate Plan Priority and Outcome	Priority 3: Social Multiple If multiple: 1, 5 and 6

Background

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 the Performance Planning and Management process as:

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

The Council's 16 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.

Key Issues

Any key issues that the Service may face in 2026/27 have been detailed within the attached Service Plan.

Key outcomes for 2026/27 include:

- the implementation of the Action Plan recommendations following the conclusion of the Review of Community Development and Community Halls and Centres,
- The implementation of the PEACEPLUS plan including 20 revenue projects and 3 new capital projects for the Borough,
- Supporting households to break the cycle of poverty via the Social Supermarket,
- The implementation of the Good Relations Action plan, and
- The implementation of the PCSP Action plan together with the additional funding to deliver the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy in the Borough.

Next Steps

Attached is the 2026/27 Service Plan for Community Services in accordance with the Council's Performance Management Policy and Handbook.

Plans are intended to:

- Encourage compliance with legal, audit and operational context.
- Provide focus on direction.
- Facilitate alignment between Corporate, Service and individual plans and activities.
- Motivate and develop staff.
- Promote performance improvement, encourage innovation and share good practice.

- Encourage transparency of performance outcomes.
- Better enable us to recognise success and address underperformance.

Summary

The attached Plan:

- Has been developed to align with the objectives of the Big Plan (2017 – 2032) and the Corporate Plan 2024 – 2028 and has been developed in conjunction with staff, officers and management, and in consultation with key stakeholders, where relevant.
- Sets out the objectives for the Service for 2026-27 and identifies the key performance indicators used to illustrate the level of achievement of each objective, and the targets that the Service will try to attain along with key actions required to do so.
- Is based on the agreed budget. It should be noted that, should there be significant changes in-year (e.g. due to Council decisions, budget revisions or changes to the PIP), the Plan may need to be revised.
- Will be reported to Committee on a six-monthly basis as undernoted.

Reference	Period	Reporting Month
Half Yearly 1	April – September	December
Half Yearly 2	October – March	June

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council **Approves attached Community Services Draft Service Plan for 2026/27.**

APPENDIX 1

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Service Plan: 01 April 2026 – 31 March 2027



**Ards and
North Down**
Borough Council

APPROVALS

Prepared By	Peer Reviewed By	Approved By Director
Nicola Dorrian	Stephen Daye	Insert Name
Interim Head of Community Services	Head of Parks & Cemeteries	Insert Role
08/01/2026	18/01/2026	Insert Date

Contents

1.	Introduction to Service	4
2.	Context, Challenges and Key Assumptions	7
3.	Strategic Objectives and Collaboration	11
4.	Service Improvement	15
5.	Service Risk Register	15
6.	Key Activities (KPIs) for 2026/27	16
7.	What Services/ Activities will be stopped	19
8.	Reporting, Monitoring and Review	20

1. Introduction to Service

Name of Service	Community Development
Directorate	Active and Healthy Communities
Introduction and Reflection	<p>Community Services</p> <p>The Community Services Department sits within the Active and Healthy Communities Directorate in Council and includes the following service units:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Development • Community Centres and Halls • Externally Funded Programmes <p>The service supports all three of the corporate priorities but is most closely aligned to the SOCIAL priority particularly improving wellbeing through social inclusion and reducing inequalities.</p> <p>Staff engage with individuals and groups across the whole borough to ensure we continuously amend and improve our service in line with the needs of the community in the borough.</p> <p>Community Development Service Unit</p> <p>The Community Development Service Unit offers support directly and indirectly to enable and empower communities. The service facilitates partnership working with a range of community and voluntary organisations.</p> <p>The service provides the direct delivery of a range of community-based programmes including play clubs, special needs clubs, and older peoples groups all held during term time. A number of summer schemes run across the Borough during July, supported by the Leisure Service department. Additional summer provision is supported via several community partners.</p> <p>The Community Development team offers training for community groups and volunteers, including guidance on good governance, attendance at AGM's and interagency meetings. The section also facilitates a wide range of grants including funding towards community festivals, support for running costs and Christmas Festivals.</p> <p>Staff provide support for the Department of Communities, Neighbourhood Renewal Programme in Kilcooley including administrative support for Kilcooley Neighbourhood Partnership.</p> <p>Staff manage a comprehensive list of grant programmes each year to support the community in line with the Councils social</p>

priority improving wellbeing through social inclusion and reduced inequality.

Community Centres and Halls Service Unit

The Council has direct responsibility for the provision of twenty-one Community Centres and Halls across the Borough. These facilities are managed by this section and are responsible for all aspects of the provision including staffing, customer service, budgets, and marketing. The section provides a staffing resource for all bookings to ensure that all customers are provided with a quality service that meets their booking needs whilst also ensuring compliance with Council's health and safety requirements.

The Local Government Act (NI) 2014 requires Ards and North Down Borough Council to initiate, maintain, facilitate and participate in Community Planning for our district. As part of the Community Plan, community services contribute to the wellbeing of our citizens by enabling participation and inclusion through many different means, including offering facilities for communities to meet so improving the quality of life for our citizens.

Whilst there is no statutory requirement for Council to directly provide community centres and halls the Council has obligations under the under the Recreation and Youth Service Order (Northern Ireland) 1986, "Each district council shall secure the provision for its area of adequate facilities for recreational, social, physical and cultural activities".

Externally Funded Programmes Service Unit

The Externally Funded Programmes Service Unit consists of:

Good Relations - The Good Relations Team delivers activities and programmes under an agreed Strategy and Action Plan which includes the following themes from the T: BUC Strategy: Our Children and Young People, Our Shared Community, Our Safe Community and Our Cultural Expression.

Policing and Community Safety - The Policing and Community Safety (PCSP) Team, in line with the Department of Justice and Northern Ireland Policing Board priorities, delivers the functions of the Policing and Community Safety Partnership for the area, to improve community safety by tackling crime and anti-social behaviour and support community confidence in policing.

Community Safety - The Council's Community Safety Team work to make our Borough a safer place to live by tackling anti-social behaviour, such as noisy behaviour, damage to property, road nuisance and nuisance behaviour at events. The team work with community, voluntary and statutory agencies such as Street Pastors, YMCA, the Youth Service and PSNI to patrol anti-social

behaviour hotspots across the Borough and deliver educational programmes for schools and communities.

PEACEPLUS – Funding has been awarded towards the delivery of the Ards and North Down Local Area Action plan totally 5.6m Euro for local projects which will result in shared and inclusive local services, facilities and spaces and make a significant and lasting contribution to peace and reconciliation.

This Service Plan is linked to the Corporate Plan - 'Towards a Sustainable Borough'

Vision: A Sustainable Borough

To achieve our vision of A Sustainable Borough, Ards and North Down Borough Council's Corporate Plan is centred on three priorities, seven outcomes and seventeen strategic actions.

The three priorities we are focused on are:

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

The Seven outcomes we want to achieve will result in:

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

The Community Plan for Ards and North Down 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.'

Published in 2017, the Big Plan runs through to 2032 with actions

	<p>focusing on five outcomes for all people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fulfil their lifelong potential • Enjoy good health and wellbeing • Live in communities where they are respected, are safe and feel secure • Benefit from a prosperous economy • Feel pride from having access to a well-managed sustainable environment
--	---

2. Context, Challenges and Key Assumptions

Political	<p>Political decisions in central Government can quickly impact work in relation to the Community Development section in Council including good relations, racial and social cohesion and heightening tensions, policing and community safety and community development. Members preparing for 2027 elections may see an increase in demand for services and enquiries.</p>
Economical	<p>Externally funded budgets have mostly been maintained but in reality, this is a reduction in funding as funding levels have not increased in line with the cost of living. This is having a major impact within communities in the Borough.</p> <p>Funding from central government can be reactive and Letters of Offer can be received well into the financial year placing additional pressure on a small team of staff to ensure effective and efficient programmes and projects are delivered in line with governance requirements within a very short time scale.</p>
Social	<p>The implications of the cost-of-living crisis on a range of factors including social need, mental health, jobs and economic instability. Poverty, Social Need and Welfare Reform are all major factors in the Borough to be considered via The Big Plan and Corporate Plan.</p>
Technological	<p>Internet - poses both a threat and an opportunity for the community centre and halls service. Many people using social media apps or online training programmes to partake in physical activities such as dance and fitness classes in the comfort of their own homes, reducing the need to travel to facilities such as those provided by the community centre and halls service. The opportunity presents itself through the development of more sophisticated group activities being delivered in community facilities available throughout the Borough.</p> <p>The growing use of Social Networking sites by the public both represents an opportunity and a challenge to the provision of facilities and activities undertaken by the community centre and halls service. Online booking will become an integral part of the book and pay options available at our community facilities. The</p>

	<p>implementation of the new Legend management system opens opportunity to expand this throughout community halls programme of activities.</p> <p>Development of Aland the impact is unknown as Council pilots and develops a policy.</p>
Legal	<p>Council is bound by the rules and regulation of the UK government. For example, Civil Rights Act 1964 and Sex Discrimination Act 1975 for restricting discrimination in hiring, compensation, privileges, conditions and terms of employment on the basis of gender, race, religion.</p> <p>There is a growing threat of litigation for any type of incident that leads to hurt or injury and ensuring the safety of the customers and staff is paramount in any operating environment, including community centres and halls.</p>
Environmental	<p>Community Development will continue to contribute to Council's target of working towards net zero targets Climate Change</p>

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skilled and motivated staff that are passionate about supporting communities. • Strong relationships with statutory agencies, and the community and voluntary sector. • Knowledge of securing funding opportunities and managing that process should funding become available that council can apply too. • A diverse team that brings different experiences and knowledge sets to the table • Listening to our residents and partners to provide and evidence-based approach to delivery and responding to social demand. • Significant £5.6m investment secured for the Borough via PEACEPLUS using co design process. • Proven track record of delivery event when funding is received well into the financial year– ANDBC has successfully 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phased retirement in place for a number of staff lessening the hours of work available in the team. • Could enhance service and delivery with more staff in post. • Annual funding/ letters of offer • Delayed Letter of Offer • Aging portfolio of Community Halls • Heavy dependence on external EU/SEUPB funding, creating long-term sustainability risks. Bureaucratic processes (e.g., procurement rules, monitoring requirements) create administrative burden. • Short delivery windows due to delayed approvals or late release of Letters of Offer. • Complexity of co-ordinating multiple stakeholders and cross-sector partnerships can dilute focus. • Persistent community division – Entrenched sectarian symbols

<p>delivered cross-community initiatives such as Shared Voices, Community Cup, and Holocaust memorial events, demonstrating impact and credibility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust consultation process – Strategies shaped by surveys, focus groups, and one-to-one meetings, ensuring community needs and voices are embedded. • Youth focus – Clear emphasis on young people as drivers of future relations, with programmes for shared education, sports, and arts. • High level of customer satisfaction, with a strong core of weekly bookings. • Strong financial performance across Community Centre and Halls. 	<p>(murals, flags, kerb paintings) remain a source of intimidation and division.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unequal access to shared spaces – Rural communities face transport and infrastructure barriers, limiting engagement. • Declining sense of belonging – Surveys show a fall in residents’ sense of community connection over recent years. • Reliance on external funding – continued limited budgets has hampered programme expansion and development. • Wider social factors such as immigration, economic pressures and media representation have real impact on ground. • Digital and social media challenges – Misinformation online contributes to mistrust and division among young people. • Staffing pressure in some facilities due to rates of pay and low uptake during recruitment exercises • Slow turn around for Works requests • Lack of Car Parking at some community centre sites
<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new 10-year strategy and 3-year action plan will be concluded in May 2026 to help build the direction of work within the team. • Enhanced cross departmental work with community halls and community development teams. • Appointing key staff would provide an opportunity to lever external funding beyond the existing sources. • Peace and reconciliation legacy building: projects - strengthen long-term social cohesion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delayed Letters of Offer affecting opportunity to plan. • No real term increase in budget for funding in line with the cost-of-living crisis which could negatively impact groups from keeping going – reduced support for residents on wider scale. Without the running costs the groups cannot access other funding opportunities. • Reduced funding means that it is more competitive between the groups, which can lead to lack of joined up working as groups feel

- Ability to leverage PEACEPLUS funding to attract further external investment and partnerships.
- Delivering shared spaces, services, and facilities can directly reduce community division and improve trust.
- Opportunity to increase community confidence in policing through police increased visibility through community engagement
- Extension to offerings by CCH to include Social Inclusion / Health initiative programmes via outreach/satellite centres.
- Energy management, introduction of Solar panels
- Partnerships & funding – NIHE and Housing agencies, Racial Equality Strategy, and Refugee Integration Strategy offer channels for further financial support.
- Ability to trial innovative approaches to tackle ASB (e.g., technology-driven monitoring, youth diversionary programmes).
- Shared spaces expansion – Potential to invest in more neutral, accessible spaces to increase cross-community contact.

- they are in competition with each other.
- Disengaged residents that are hard to reach.
 - Increased unemployment – financial burdens impact people mental health less likely to engage if in crisis.
 - Low volunteer hours are recorded across Borough while the number of people volunteering has increased people do not give as much time since covid.
 - Funding volatility: changes in SEUPB or central government priorities could impact delivery.
 - Economic pressures (cost-of-living crisis, poverty, unemployment) may increase community tensions, making reconciliation harder.
 - Risk of political instability in Northern Ireland affecting public confidence and cross-community collaboration.
 - Staffing pressures, restructuring, or capacity gaps could reduce delivery effectiveness.
 - Intense demand across communities could lead to conflict over access to resources and facilities.
 - Ongoing tensions and incidents – Recent anti-refugee protests, intra-loyalist tensions, and attacks on minority spaces (e.g., Islamic Meeting House arson) undermine cohesion.
 - Paramilitary influence – Flags, emblems, and graffiti perpetuate divisions and intimidate communities.
 - Socio-economic disparities – Deprivation in certain areas (e.g., Scrabo 2, Glen 1, Portaferry 2) risks reinforcing exclusion.
 - Political instability – Shifts in NI governance or funding priorities could disrupt delivery of long-term programmes.
 - Community fatigue – Risk of disengagement if consultation

	<p>and programmes are not seen to deliver meaningful change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hate crime trends – Racist and sectarian incidents, though fluctuating, remain above 2019/20 levels. • Ongoing budget cuts threaten staffing and service continuity. • Increasing demand due to cost-of-living crisis, poverty, and mental health pressures could stretch limited resources. • Potential rise in ASB linked to economic downturn, unemployment, and youth disengagement • Low charges for rental of rooms • Various facilities now require considerable expenditure to improve offering/upgrades
--	--

3. Strategic Objectives and Collaboration

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

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

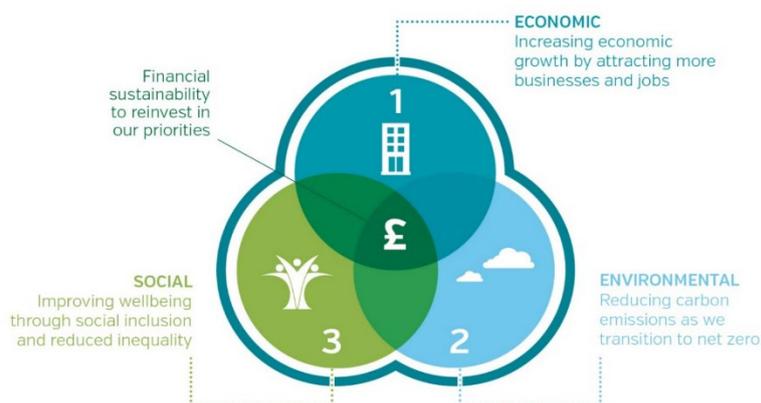
In brief, *A Sustainable Borough* is one where we make sure that we think about economic, social AND environmental impacts when we make decisions.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Strategic Project/Objective	Collaboration Required	Corporate Plan Priority	Corporate Plan Outcome (1-7)
Conclude wide ranging review of Community Development provision and Community Halls provision and consider implementation of action plan recommendations.	Community development Community Halls, Leisure Services, EFP, Waste Services, Environmental Health, Parks, Communications	Social Economic 7	1, 5, 6
Continued provision of a social supermarket within the Borough, to break the cycle of poverty in a time of financial hardship that supports people on a pathway to education or work. To increase and support positive changes to mental health and wellbeing.	Community Planning, procurement, communications	Social	5, 6
Implement the PCSP Action Plan (2026-2027)	Community Halls, Procurement, Good Relations, Leisure Services, Community Safety, Finance, Communications, Environmental Health	Social	1, 5, 6
Implement the Good Relations Action Plan (2026-2027)	Community Development, Community Halls, Leisure Services, EFP, Procurement, Finance, Administration, Communications, Parks	Social	1, 5, 6
Implement PEACEPLUS Plan	Community Development, Community Halls,	Social	1, 5, 6

	Leisure Services, EFP, Procurement, Finance, Capital projects, Communications, Regeneration, Parks, Assets & Property		
Deliver Bee Safe to 800 Primary school children across the borough	Community Development, Community Halls, Leisure Services, EFP, Procurement, Finance, Administration, Communications, Parks	Social	1,5,6

4. Service Improvement

Which of the specified aspects will this improve?	Rationale	Responsible Officer(s)	Who do we need to help us? (Internal and/ or External partners) Please specify
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategic Effectiveness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Quality <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Availability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fairness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Efficiency <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Innovation	To consider the optimum use of community halls in tandem with provision of community development services.	ND	Leisure – Community Halls, Transformation, Consultants, Community Stakeholders and Collaborative approach by relevant Council departments
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategic Effectiveness <input type="checkbox"/> Service Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Service Availability <input type="checkbox"/> Fairness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Efficiency <input type="checkbox"/> Innovation	Digitalisation of record keeping	ND	Digital Services, Transformation, External stakeholder to enable access to appropriate software.

5. Service Risk Register

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

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

6. Key Activities (KPIs) for 2026/27

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

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

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

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

Existing KPI Number	Performance Measures Should include improvement actions outlined in Section 4 and relevant measures both existing and new.	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service-led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcomes and Priorities to be mapped to KPIs on Ideagen		KPI to be included in Performance Improvement Plan	2026/27 Reporting						
							2024/25 Actual	2025/26 Target	2025/26 YTD End of H1	2026/27 Target	Reporting end of H1 Target	Reporting end of H2 Target	Cumulative/ Fixed
	% Spend against budget	Mandatory	6 Monthly	7	Economic	N/A		100%		100%	100%	100%	Fixed
	% Staff attendance	Mandatory	Yearly	7	Economic	N/A		95%		95%	-	95%	Fixed
	% of completed Employee Appraisals	Mandatory	Yearly	7	Economic	N/A		95%		95%	95%	95%	Fixed
	Offer a space to every P7 pupil in the Borough to attend a session of the Bee Safe 9-day programme highlighting safety risks and how to stay safe both online and in person	Service Led	year end	5	Social	Yes	1600 pupils 46 schools	800	N/A	1000		1000	Fixed
	Implement delivery of PCSP Action plan 2026-2027	Service Led	Year End	5	Social	Yes	100%	100%	100%	100%	50%	100%	Fixed
	Implement delivery of GR Action Plan 2026-2027	Service Led	Year End	5	Social	Yes	100%	100%	100%	100%	50%	100%	Fixed
	Increased number of participants having a positive informal learning experience using Community Development direct provision services	Service Led	Year End	5	Social	Yes	4700	4700	4800	4900	1500	100%	Cumulative
	Household supported in the breaking the cycle of poverty via the social supermarket – positive social outcomes	Service Led	Year end	5	Social	Yes	132	140	150	150	75	100%	Fixed
	Total hours booked in Community Centre and Halls	Service Led	6 month / Year end	5	Social	Yes	33,944	28,000	16,886	36,000	17,500	36,000	Cumulative

Existing KPI Number	Performance Measures Should include improvement actions outlined in Section 4 and relevant measures both existing and new.	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service-led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcomes and Priorities to be mapped to KPIs on Ideagen		KPI to be included in Performance Improvement Plan	2026/27 Reporting						
							2024/25 Actual	2025/26 Target	2025/26 YTD End of H1	2026/27 Target	Reporting end of H1 Target	Reporting end of H2 Target	Cumulative/ Fixed
	Total footfall in Community Centre and Halls	Service Led	6 month / Year end	5	Social Economic	Yes	161,671	150,000	96,328	195,000	85,000	195,000	Cumulative
	Community Review - To consider the optimum use of community halls in tandem with provision of community development services.	Service led	6 month / Year end	5	Social Economic	Yes	0	90%	90%	100%	95%	100%	Cumulative
	Digitalisation of record keeping		6 month / Year end	5	Social Economic	Yes	0	0	0	50%	0	50%	Cumulative

7. What Services/ Activities will be stopped

What service/ activities will we be stopping/ changing in 2026/2027	Reason for stopping / changing activity	Savings	Impact on Performance	Impact on the Public	Impact on staffing
A number of the PEACEPLUS Revenue projects will be implemented and activity will cease	Projects implemented	£0	None	None	None

8. Reporting, Monitoring and Review

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

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

Unclassified

ITEM 6

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
	If multiple:
Meeting	Active and Healthy Communities Committee
Date of Meeting	11 March 2026
Responsible Director	Director of Active and Healthy Communities
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Environmental Health and Regulatory Services
Report title	Environmental Health and Regulatory Services Draft Service Plan 2026-27
Attachments	Appendix 1 Environmental Health and Regulatory Services Draft Service Plan
File Reference (if applicable)	CW22
Legislation	Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014
Resource Implications	None Narrative: Resources in place to deliver draft Service Plan.
Screening Requirements	<i>The Council will commit to consider the implication of all reports under the categories of Section 75, Rural Needs, Data Protection, Climate and Sustainability:</i> Screening of report not required
Link to Corporate Plan Priority and Outcome	Multiple Multiple If multiple: Priorities 1,2 and 3

If multiple:

	<p>Outcomes 1. An engaged Borough with citizens and businesses who have opportunities to influence the delivery of services, plans and investment.</p> <p>3. A thriving and sustainable economy</p> <p>5. Safe, welcoming and inclusive communities that are flourishing</p> <p>6. Opportunities for people to be active and healthy</p>
--	--

Background

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 the Performance Planning and Management process as:

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

The Council’s 16 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.

Key Issues

Any key issues that the Service may face in 2026/27 have been detailed within the attached Service Plan.

Next Steps

Attached as Appendix 1 is the 2026/27 Service Plan for Environmental Health and Regulatory Services in accordance with the Council’s Performance Management Policy and Handbook.

Plans are intended to:

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

Summary

The attached Plan:

- Has been developed to align with the objectives of the Big Plan (2017 – 2032) and the Corporate Plan 2024 – 2028 and has been developed in conjunction with staff, officers and management, and in consultation with key stakeholders where relevant.
- Sets out the objectives for the Service for 2026-27 and identifies the key performance indicators used to illustrate the level of achievement of each objective, and the targets that the Service will try to attain along with key actions required to do so.
- Is based on the agreed budget. It should be noted that, should there be significant changes in-year (e.g. due to Council decisions, budget revisions or changes to the PIP), the Plan may need to be revised.
- Will be reported to Committee on a six-monthly basis as undernoted.

Reference	Period	Reporting Month
Half Yearly 1	April – September	December
Half Yearly 2	October – March	June

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council **Approves attached Service Plan for 2026/27.**

Appendix 1

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & REGULATORY SERVICES

Service Plan: 01 April 2026 – 31 March 2027



[Type here]

APPROVALS

Prepared By	Peer Reviewed By	Approved By Director
Gareth Kinnear	Nicola Dorrian	Adele Faulkner
Head of Environmental Health and Regulatory Services	Head of Community and Culture	Director of Active and Healthy Communities
13/01/2026	14/01/2026	22/01/2026

[Type here]

Contents

- 1. **Introduction to Service** 4
- 2. **Context, Challenges and Key Assumptions** 8
- 3. **Strategic Objectives and Collaboration**..... 10
- 4. **Service Improvement**..... 11
- 5. **Service Risk Register** 11
- 6. **Key Activities (KPIs) for 2026/27**..... 13
- 7. **What Services/ Activities will be stopped** 19
- 8. **Reporting, Monitoring and Review** 19

[Type here]

1. Introduction to Service

Name of Service	EH and Regulatory Services
Directorate	Active and Healthy Communities
Introduction and Reflection	<p>Introduction</p> <p>Aligning with the Corporate vision of <i>A Sustainable Borough</i>, the role of Environmental Health and Regulatory Services (EHRS) is to ensure a better quality of life for all.</p> <p><i>Service Vision: Working together for service excellence with a team who enjoy their job and take pride in their work; ensuring all who live in, work in and visit Ards and North Down feel safe and live well in a sustainable environment.</i></p> <p><i>Service Mission: To protect, promote and improve health, safety and wellbeing for residents, visitors and businesses within the Borough through the range of services we deliver.</i></p> <p>EHRS covers the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat, the products we use, the places where we work, play and relax, the homes we live in and the animals we care for. We protect public health, safety and our environment and contribute to the three Corporate priorities and all seven outcomes of the Corporate Plan through our service units which include Food Control, Consumer Protection, Health & Safety, Noise, Petroleum & Caravan Site Licensing, Health and Wellbeing, Licensing and Regulatory Services, Neighbourhood Environment and Public Health and Housing, all supported by administration/business support.</p> <p>The service of 80 staff responds to approximately 6500 service requests annually and regulates 4500 businesses in the Borough. The staff work in partnership with a range of internal and external partners including other Councils and receive funding from Public Health Agency (PHA), Food Standards Agency (FSA), Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs of Northern Ireland (DAERA), Department of Justice NI (DoJ), Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) and Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) to deliver on Service Level Agreements (SLA's) and MOU's.</p> <p>Reflection</p> <p>This has been a transitional and formative year, as EHRS was formed in October 2025, with the former Environmental Health Protection and Development Service combining with Neighbourhood Environment Team and Licensing and Regulatory Services service units to form a new department, following Phase 1 of Organisational Redesign. This meant that 2025/26 was a year that provided both challenges and opportunities in forming and creating an expanded service. The team have a new Head of Service and Director appointed in 2025.</p> <p>The service met the majority of Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) for the year, despite undergoing management and structural changes.</p>

[Type here]

54

Phase 2 of Organisational Redesign will have an impact on the Service during 2026/27.

Successes

The Food Control team have successfully delivered on the implementation of the new Food Standards Delivery Model (Outcomes 3,4&7)

NET have successfully delivered on the implementation of the Dangerous Dogs (Compensation and Exemption Schemes) Order (NI) 2024 with 100% compliance. (Outcomes 1 & 7)

NET have responded to approx. 1890 service requests in the first 7 months of 2025-26 (Outcomes 4,5 & 7)

NET investigated 93 Dog attacks and served 15 sets of control conditions (Outcomes 5 & 7)

The Health and Safety Team have completed initiatives including visits to;

- Barbers - aimed at increasing awareness of the importance of infection control in preventing spread of infectious conditions including ringworm.
- Residential Care Homes – aimed at improving workplace health and focussing particularly on control of Legionella.

The team have also surveyed premises providing cosmetic treatments to gather information requested by the Department of Health to inform discussions about better regulation of this sector and legislating in line with other parts of the UK. (Outcomes 3 & 6)

The Noise Team have responded to approx. 500 service requests in the first 8 months of 2025-26 (605 requests were received in total 2024-25). 6 Noise Abatement Notices have been served under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment (NI) Act 2011. (Outcomes 5&6)

207 responses have been provided to consultations from the Planning Service in relation to proposed development. (Outcomes 1-7)

The Public Health and Housing Team responded to 1850 service requests during 2024/25. Response time and customer satisfaction KPIs were met for the team. (Outcomes 1,4,5&6)

In private rental housing, 62 properties were inspected for fitness, with Certificates of Fitness/Notices of Refusal being issued. Landlord registration checks were carried out in relation to 113 landlords in the borough. The rollout of requirements under the Private Tenancies Act continued during the year, with new laws relating to electrical certification coming into force. (Outcomes 5&6)

Two local beaches were officially named as Designated Bathing Waters, meaning water quality information is made available to the public during the bathing season. ANDBC has more bathing waters than any other NI

[Type here]

55

council. There were no warnings issued to advise against bathing during the 2025 season, meaning water quality classifications improved at a number of local beaches. (Outcomes 2,4&6)

The Council has been signed up as the first early adopter for the “Whole Systems Approach to Obesity”. Working with the Public Health Agency and Queen’s University Belfast, a systems mapping exercise was carried out and the next steps are to co-design a practical Action Plan. A recruitment exercise is complete, with a Healthy Weight and Nutrition Co-ordinator expected to be in post by the new year. (Outcomes 1 & 6)

ANDBC Community Resuscitation Group continues to make substantive progress toward establishing ANDBC as a community of lifesavers. Additional AED units have been procured, and work is ongoing to install at all council buildings for access to the public on a 24/7 basis. (Outcomes 1 & 6)

Legal Cases

The Food Safety team had 3 successful prosecutions. (Outcomes 5 & 7)
NET had 51 successful prosecutions including 1st prosecution for Article 4&5 for Fly-tipping and 1st successful prosecution in NI for XL Breach of Exemption. NET also successfully facilitated the CDO (Contingent Destruction Order) for a Pitbull type dog. (Outcomes 5 & 7)
NET issued 322 Fixed Penalty Notices. (Outcome 7)

Emerging issues

The Windsor Framework continues to present challenges to businesses trading with Great Britain and the EU, particularly where a divergence has been seen non-food items being sold in NI from GB. (Outcome 3).

OPSS will not be providing funding from the Capacity and Capability funding budget. This will create a cost pressure for the Service Unit and may not allow the team to carry out all aspects of the Consumer Protection Workplan. (Outcome 7)

The Dilapidation Bill was presented for public consultation during 2025, with EHRS leading on the Council response. Although any potential date of enactment is not known at this time, it will undoubtedly increase service requests and create an expectation of the Council utilising these new powers to deal with urban and rural blight, and to boost regeneration. (Outcomes 3,4&5)

Elected members requested that EHRS right to DAERA and officially request that Portavogie and Ballyhalbert (Burr Point) be considered for designated bathing water status. We are awaiting reviewed nomination criteria from DAERA. (Outcomes 4&6)

The Council have approved the use of Contingent Destruction Orders in relation to non-exempted dangerous dog breeds. This may be tested in 2026/27 as there is a fear that insurance companies may start to withdraw policies covering public liability for XL Bully dogs. This may result in dogs being surrendered or the need for enforcement. This could have significant costs in relation to legal and vet fees, in addition to kennelling. (Outcome 5)

[Type here]

56

The next phase of the Private Tenancies Act will require rental properties to have a minimum Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating. It is likely that this will be a minimum of C, which will be a challenge for landlords that own older properties to achieve. Although any improvement in property standards is welcomed, it is worth acknowledging that this may have repercussions for the private rented housing stock in the borough, where we are already experiencing demand well in excess of supply. (Outcomes 4,5&6)

The increased use of vapes, particularly by adolescents remains a subject of concern within the borough. The team will remain involved and vigilant to upcoming changes in legislation and approach to this challenging area. The implications of any changes will likely require agility from the team. (Outcome 6)

The service is becoming increasingly aware of a growing number of complex hoarding cases within the borough. These cases present significant challenges, particularly because there is currently no single agency with the responsibility or resources to coordinate a full response. Additionally, there is no dedicated funding stream to cover the substantial costs associated with interventions, which in some instances can reach several thousand pounds. (Outcome 1 & 6)

The FSA will undertake a focussed Regulatory Audit of the Food Control Service in January 2026. This audit will specifically examine the official controls and activities associated with approved establishments. Following completion of the audit, the Service may receive recommendations and/or required actions, which will be reviewed and responded to in line with statutory obligations and internal governance processes to ensure continued compliance and service improvement

In December 2025, the Health and Safety Team was notified of a fatal workplace accident, triggering a formal investigation. This work is expected to divert officer time and resources away from planned targeted activities, and the complexity and scale of the investigation is also likely to result in legal expenditure exceeding the approved budget for the year.

Assumptions

- The resources allocated to the EHPD unit will be broadly in line with the 2025-26 budget.
- External funding from FSA, DAERA and PHA will be available at a similar level to 2025-26, other than those mentioned as ceasing.
- The Service area will have a full staff compliment and the ability to recruit staff should vacancies arise.
- The staff team will remain mainly working in the Church Street and West Street offices with ad hoc agile working arrangements as agreed by service unit managers.
- No major pandemics, outbreaks or emergency incidents have been accounted for in the development of this plan.

[Type here]

2. Context, Challenges and Key Assumptions

Political	Stormont Assembly has resumed with amendments to the operational arrangement of the Windsor Framework. The implications of this are unknown in terms of funding and priorities but there is potential for impact across the service from changes in legislation, divergence and funding priorities. Members are preparing for elections in 2027 with an anticipated additional demand on service delivery.
Economical	Local Authority expenditure is under increasing pressure with reduced central grant and expected low increases in the level of domestic rates. Areas of deprivation and low disposable income remains an issue for many, meaning families have less to spend. There may be an increased number in food/fuel poverty, tax changes, lower income and increase in Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) fees for landlords and higher rent for tenants. Impact of Private Tenancies Act on landlords and tenants. Increased cost of living impacts on business owners and landlords' overheads have increased and this makes securing compliance more difficult e.g. maintenance, reports etc. Ongoing legal case in relation to animal welfare funding will mean service is operated at risk.
Social	The work of our Service provides enhanced social cohesion through Age Friendly and other health and wellbeing initiatives through the Community Plan including working towards being dementia friendly. We also contribute to health and wellbeing across the borough which has significant social and wellbeing factors. There is an increase in the number of people living in the rented sector, an increased number in food/fuel poverty and an increase in public expectation generally with a greater demand and reliance on funded services/support and voluntary support. NET currently provide 2 education programmes which include schools, community groups and youth organisations, encouraging participants to care for their environment, themselves and each other, at no cost to the participants.
Technological	<p>Advances in technology have allowed for changes to software and processes for data capture, transfer and retention and contributed to more agile working. This can be developed further. Currently the Service uses a range of Tascomi (iDox) products. There is a need to review current provision; this will require the creation of a project team. If preferred option is the purchase of new software, a request for Transformation funding will be made. It is likely any change will not happen until 2028/29.</p> <p>During 2025/26 telephone landlines were removed from service, requiring a change to the DVLA process for carrying out last keeper searches/checks.</p> <p>Transfer from S Drive to SharePoint will be completed in 2026.</p>
Legal	The Service operates under several statutory regulations which are subject to change and amendment. FSA are introducing a new Compliance regime, a new Tobacco and Vapes Bill, and a new Private Tenancies Act is being implemented alongside the Implementation of

[Type here]

Environmental	<p>the Dangerous Dogs (Compensation and Exemption Schemes) Order (NI) 2024, all of which will have significant impacts on resourcing. Ongoing changes to Policies, Procedures and Practice also need to be considered. The number and complexity of legal cases this year has increased resulting in the increase in spending on legal fees. The legal budget has been increased in 2025/26 to account for this.</p>
	<p>The impact of changing environmental and climatic patterns will continue to be significant and the service will need to take cognisance and could adapt as a result, including areas such as bathing waters and air quality. Internally cramped office space, lack of meeting/ interview rooms, falling ceiling tiles and leaks etc can impact on staff morale and productivity. The Council accommodation strategy and agile working policy will impact on this. Proposed office move to Queen’s Parade development will likely be more than 3 years in the future.</p>

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>High quality service which contributes to the Corporate Plan and has close links with Big Plan objectives. Recognition of local service needs and the value of local delivery.</p>	<p>Inadequate recognition of the strengths and abilities of EH&RS</p>
<p>Recognition of local service needs and the value of local delivery. Phase 2 restructure to align with service needs and corporate priorities.</p>	<p>Under-selling ourselves (not strong enough voice) not usually seen as politically sensitive or influential in council.</p>
<p>Well educated, trained, professional and empathetic workforce. Officers have problem-solving skills over a broad spectrum of functions and a proven record regarding internal and external partnership working</p>	<p>Lack of succession planning & management opportunities for staff against skills shortages in certain areas. Shortage of suitably experienced EHO’s to cover temporary absences. Difficulties in recruiting enforcement focussed roles.</p>
<p>Regional and sub-regional collaboration for the service, leading to consistency of approach.</p>	<p>Perception that EH and NET is a regulatory service only</p>
<p>Readiness to adopt and deliver new functions and to adapt to change.</p>	<p>Cramped and poor-quality office space, meeting rooms and interview rooms. Can impact on staff morale and productivity</p>
<p>Good communications across the service internally and externally. Statutory nature of many functions</p>	<p>Limited resources to aid adopting and delivering new functions.</p>
Opportunities	Threats
<p>Links to the Corporate Plan and Big Plan.</p>	<p>Implications of the Cost-of-living crisis on the NI Assembly are unknown in terms of funding and priorities and there is potential for impact across the service from changes in legislation and funding priorities.</p>

[Type here]

IT- potential for greater flexibility and more efficient service.	New statutory functions arising without resource such as PTA and Dilapidation Bill.
Experience of working at the forefront of the quality and consistency agenda.	Wide remit can dilute resource and expertise.
EHRIS well-placed to provide linkages in the future delivery of health and wellbeing to meet the needs of the Big Plan.	Increased public impatience about regulatory processes making progress with investigations difficult.
Ability to link service with external partners e.g., FSA, PHA, HSENI, to address identified health needs and to deliver service.	Increased FOI, EIR and legal requests impacts resources.
Ability to adapt to new/changed legislation and processes	Increasingly levels of mental health issues in customers requiring training e.g., safeguarding. Limited resources for increasing workloads.
Closer working with internal council services and stakeholders to better promote the work of the department	Large number of Big Plan lead roles with very little resource. including Whole systems approach to obesity, age friendly etc

3. Strategic Objectives and Collaboration

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

Strategic Objective	Collaboration Required
Objective 1	
Organisational redesign Phase 2	Transformation Team, Human Resources, Finance.
Objective 2	
Review of Council Byelaws	Human Resources, Democratic Services, Communication Team, Parks, Estates, Compliance
Objective 3	
Scoping Exercise to prepare for purchase of new Information Management System	Business Technology, Finance, Procurement, Building Control

[Type here]

4. Service Improvement

Service development/improvement 2026/27?	Which of the specified aspects will this improve?	Rationale	Responsible Officer(s)	Who do we need to help us? (Internal and/ or External partners) Please specify
Healthier Weight and Nutrition Officer – develop formal action plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategic Effectiveness <input type="checkbox"/> Service Quality <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Availability <input type="checkbox"/> Fairness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input type="checkbox"/> Efficiency <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Innovation	Assist on the delivery of the first stages of the Whole System Approach to Obesity.	Julie Davidson Vivienne Boyd	Community Planning FSA PHA QUB
All NEOs and EOs trained alongside the MET for handling Dangerous Dogs	<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Effectiveness <input type="checkbox"/> Service Quality <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Availability <input type="checkbox"/> Fairness <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Efficiency <input type="checkbox"/> Innovation	Assist in compliance with legislation, promote health and safety for Officers and members of the public. Continue to assist the PSNI ARUs	Colin Reid Dawn Phillips	NIDAG DAERA MET
Commence data cleansing and research to prepare for future upgrade of Information Management Software	<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Effectiveness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Service Availability <input type="checkbox"/> Fairness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Efficiency <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Innovation	Cleanse data held on current systems (4 Tascomi products within scope) to aid smooth and less costly future transfer to combined IMS	HoS All SUMs	Business Technology Procurement (next stage)

5. Service Risk Register

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

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

[Type here]

[Type here]

6. Key Activities (KPIs) for 2026/27

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

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

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

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

[Type here]

Existing KPI Number	Performance Measures	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service-led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcomes and Priorities to be mapped to KPIs on Ideagen		KPI to be included in Performance Improvement Plan	2026/27 Reporting						
							2024/25 Actual	2025/26 Target	2025/26 YTD End of H1	2026/27 Target	Reporting end of H1 Target	Reporting end of H2 Target	Cumulative/ Fixed
	% Spend against budget	Mandatory	6 Monthly	7	Economic	N/A	N/A	100%	88.59%	100%	100%	100%	Fixed
	% Staff attendance	Mandatory	Yearly	7	Economic	N/A	N/A	95%	94.13%	95%	-	95%	Fixed
	% of completed Employee Appraisals	Mandatory	Yearly	7	Economic	N/A	N/A	100%	93%	100%	-	100%	Fixed
	% of High-risk Food premises inspected	Statutory	6 monthly	7	Economic	No	100%	90%	96%	90%	90%	90%	Fixed
				Additional Outcomes	Additional Priorities								
	Complete CP Market Surveillance exercises	Statutory	6 monthly	7	Economic	No	3	3	2	3	3	3	Cumulative
				Additional Outcomes	Additional Priorities								

[Type here]

Existing KPI Number	Performance Measures	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service-led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcomes and Priorities to be mapped to KPIs on Ideagen		KPI to be included in Performance Improvement Plan	2026/27 Reporting						
							2024/25 Actual	2025/26 Target	2025/26 YTD End of H1	2026/27 Target	Reporting end of H1 Target	Reporting end of H2 Target	Cumulative/ Fixed
	Complete H&S targeted inspection initiatives	Statutory	6 monthly	6	Social	No		3	2	3	1	3	Cummulative
	% of licensed or permitted premises inspected annually and licences or permit issued where appropriate. (Caravan Sites, Petroleum, Entertainment, Pollution Prevention and Control, Breeding Establishments.	Statutory	6 monthly	6	Social	No	NA	NA	NA	90%	-	90%	Cumulati ve

[Type here]

Existing KPI Number	Performance Measures	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service-led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcomes and Priorities to be mapped to KPIs on Ideagen		KPI to be included in Performance Improvement Plan	2026/27 Reporting						
							2024/25 Actual	2025/26 Target	2025/26 YTD End of H1	2026/27 Target	Reporting end of H1 Target	Reporting end of H2 Target	Cumulative/ Fixed
	% Planning comments made within 15 working days	Statutory	6 monthly	6	Environmental	No	89%	90%	88%	90%	90%	90%	Fixed
Additional Outcomes				Additional Priorities									
	% targets achieved for PHA SLAs	Statutory	6 monthly	5	Social	No	100%	97%	93%	97%	97%	97%	Fixed
Additional Outcomes				Additional Priorities									

[Type here]

Existing KPI Number	Performance Measures	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service-led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcomes and Priorities to be mapped to KPIs on Ideagen		KPI to be included in Performance Improvement Plan	2026/27 Reporting						
							2024/25 Actual	2025/26 Target	2025/26 YTD End of H1	2026/27 Target	Reporting end of H1 Target	Reporting end of H2 Target	Cumulative/ Fixed
	% of service requests responded to within 2 working days	Service led	6 monthly	1	Social	No	95.2%	94%	95.2%	94%	94%	94%	Fixed
				Additional Outcomes <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	Additional Priorities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social								
	% Customers satisfied with service upon completion of service request	Service led	6 monthly	1	Social	No	96.8%	90%	97%	90%	90%	90%	Fixed
				Additional Outcomes <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	Additional Priorities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social								
	% of PTO applications completed within 180 days	Statutory	6 monthly	6	Social	No	90%	91.4%	90%	90%	90%	90%	Fixed
				Additional Outcomes <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5	Additional Priorities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social								

[Type here]

Existing KPI Number	Performance Measures	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service-led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcomes and Priorities to be mapped to KPIs on Ideagen		KPI to be included in Performance Improvement Plan	2026/27 Reporting						
							2024/25 Actual	2025/26 Target	2025/26 YTD End of H1	2026/27 Target	Reporting end of H1 Target	Reporting end of H2 Target	Cumulative/ Fixed
				<input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7									
	Number of Fixed Penalties issued	KPI by Type	6 Monthly	1 Additional Outcomes <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	Social Additional Priorities <input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	375	425	125	300	150	300	Cumulative
	NE Education Number of presentations and Classes	Service Led	6 Monthly	5 Additional Outcomes <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	Social Additional Priorities <input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	0	36	16	70	35	70	Cumulative

[Type here]

7. What Services/ Activities will be stopped

What service/ activities will we be stopping/ changing in 2026/2027	Reason for stopping / changing activity	Savings	Impact on Performance	Impact on the Public	Impact on staffing
% of High Risk H&S Premises inspected	Activity will not be reported going forward, as inspection focus to be on initiatives – already reported as a separate KPI.		None - inspections will continue	None – inspections will continue	None – inspections will continue

8. Reporting, Monitoring and Review

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

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

Unclassified

ITEM 7**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
	If multiple:
Meeting	Active and Healthy Communities Committee
Date of Meeting	11 March 2026
Responsible Director	Director of Active and Healthy Communities
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Leisure
Report title	Leisure Draft Service Plan 2026-27
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Draft Leisure Service Plan 2026 - 27
File Reference (if applicable)	
Legislation	Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014
Resource Implications	None Narrative: Resources in place to deliver draft Service Plan.
Screening Requirements	<i>The Council will commit to consider the implication of all reports under the categories of Section 75, Rural Needs, Data Protection, Climate and Sustainability:</i> Screening of report not required
Link to Corporate Plan Priority and Outcome	Priority 3: Social 6. Opportunities for people to be active and healthy If multiple:

Background

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 the Performance Planning and Management process as:

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

The Council's 16 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.

Key Issues

Any key issues that the Service may face in 2026/27 have been detailed within the attached Service Plan.

Next Steps

Attached is the 2026/27 Service Plan for Leisure in accordance with the Council's Performance Management Policy and Handbook.

Plans are intended to:

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

Summary

The attached Plan:

- Has been developed to align with the objectives of the Big Plan (2017 – 2032) and the Corporate Plan 2024 – 2028 and has been developed in conjunction with staff, officers and management, and in consultation with key stakeholders where relevant.
- Sets out the objectives for the Service for 2026-27 and identifies the key performance indicators used to illustrate the level of achievement of each objective, and the targets that the Service will try to attain along with key actions required to do so.
- Is based on the agreed budget. It should be noted that, should there be significant changes in-year (e.g. due to Council decisions, budget revisions or changes to the PIP), the Plan may need to be revised.

- Will be reported to Committee on a six-monthly basis as undernoted.

Reference	Period	Reporting Month
Half Yearly 1	April – September	December
Half Yearly 2	October – March	June

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council **Approves attached Service Plan for 2026/27.**

APPENDIX 1

LEISURE SERVICES

Service Plan: 01 April 2026 – 31 March 2027



**Ards and
North Down**
Borough Council

APPROVALS

Prepared By	Peer Reviewed By	Approved By Director
Sean Fegan	Anton Cozzo	Adele Faulkner
Operations Manager (Leisure)	Interim Head of Regeneration	Director Active and Healthy Communities
11/11/2025	12/11/2025	24/02/2026

Contents

1.	Introduction to Service	4
2.	Context, Challenges and Key Assumptions	6
3.	Strategic Objectives and Collaboration	12
4.	Service Improvement	14
5.	Service Risk Register	16
6.	Key Activities (KPIs) for 2026/27	17
7.	What Services/ Activities will be stopped	21
8.	Reporting, Monitoring and Review	22

1. Introduction to Service

Name of Service	Leisure Services
Directorate	Active and Healthy Communities
Introduction and Reflection	<p>The Leisure Service sits within the newly created Active and Healthy Communities Directorate. This Directorate was created as part of the ongoing Organisational Redesign within the Council that has seen changes at Director and Head of Service level across the organisation with reference to Leisure.</p> <p>A new Director has been appointed for the newly created Active and Healthy Communities Directorate and a new Head of Service is started on 1st January 2026.</p> <p>At a special Council meeting on the 18th of September 2025 a decision was taken to retain the current hybrid operating model for leisure for the 10-year period following the end of the current contract on 31 March 2028. While this decision clearly brought a sense of relief to many in the in-house team with a no change scenario to their operating systems for Council and their partners in NCLT/Serco it will be a very challenging 2.5 years while a new contract is created and an exercise to appoint a new delivery partner is undertaken.</p> <p>Council will want to move quickly to implement the decision of the Council and appoint a range of appropriate external consultants as well as a range of internal officers to ensure a timely resolution of the decision that results in a smooth transition to any new partner or existing partner with a new contract is delivered.</p> <p>A new 10-year strategy for Leisure was launched in February 2026, Getting Active, Staying Active. This strategy sets out a very bold statement of ambition about the type of service Council should be delivering over the next 10 years. It seeks to move the service from a predominantly facilitating service to a service that helps wider societal challenges and focuses on becoming an active wellbeing service.</p> <p>Key activities identified for the year ahead are the creation of a Strategy Implementation Group (SIG). This will be a group of senior personnel from key partner agencies who will help oversee the strategic direction of the plan, flowing from this group will be the creation of a number of key thematic working groups based on the 4 themes identified in the plan, Active Partnerships, Active Opportunities, Active Communications and Active Support.</p> <p>The plan has also identified the need for a new Sports Facility Strategy, a Sports specific strategy.</p> <p>Several operational initiatives will flow from these actions with key demographic and geographic target areas to be identified.</p> <p>2024/25 saw Leisure to continue to perform well with income ahead of target and usage figures also up. Key highlights were Quest accreditation for ABMWLC and CLC moving to excellent (top award accreditation). Swimming lessons passed the 1,400 learn to swim lessons per week. Fitness, Spa and Aqua also broke the 5,000 members barrier. CLC saw the install of the new gym with the membership base climbing above 1,100. Work commenced on</p>

the Leisure Strategy. Hyrox was also introduced across our operations and is a great success.

2025/26 YTD shows the Leisure Strategy has been finalised and approved by Council with roll out now commencing in Q3 and Q4. CLC has had 22 new Spin Bikes installed with a new upgraded studio. The new balcony at ABMWLC is also now operating giving new and existing members access to additional gym equipment. Footfall for 2025/26 is above target and on schedule for over 1.4 million across leisure sites.

2. Context, Challenges and Key Assumptions

Context and Key Assumptions – Political

While both Westminster and Stormont have made pledges to address the key areas of poverty and obesity, both key barriers to participation in leisure or sporting activity the Legislative backlog and need for new/updated policies to make regional progress on these Big Plan and the Leisure Strategy issues (e.g. poverty, obesity) is preventing real progress.

Sport, Leisure and community recreation remain fragmented at both Westminster and Stormont levels and with so many different organisations claiming to be the true voice of Sport, Leisure and Recreation it is unlikely that we will see the delivery of cohesive policies that deliver funding and other resources to address the many issues that are faced in the delivery of a wellness agenda identified in the 10 year strategy and may well divert partner focus into areas more in line with their own agendas.

The process required to access government funding and resources is a clear barrier for many smaller organisations and as witnessed recently with Ards FC failure to secure funding despite completing the required application process, ultimately to frustration and may even spell the end of senior football in the town. Governance requirements are resource intensive and can reduce capacity for delivery.

Council's Corporate Plan makes a strong commitment to sustainability, requiring leadership across all service areas

Context and Key Assumptions - Economic

Local Authority expenditure which means leisure will have to maximise income and minimise expenditure to achieve the highest possible levels of efficiency and effectiveness. Council will need to pursue external funding in order to fund service improvements. This is a challenge that was highlighted in the recent decision by the Council to retain the hybrid operating system.

Disposable income remains an issue for many families with stagnancy in pay meaning families have less to spend on leisure. Unemployment remains an issue in the Council geographic area and with fewer jobs being created there is a distinct possibility this will continue to increase into the future. Leisure will have to ensure that those spending their disposable income on leisure recognise the leisure opportunities provided by the Council as excellent value for money compared to other leisure providers in the area. This in turn presents both opportunities and challenges for our free to use outdoor amenity facilities as users move toward the less formal and more passive forms of outdoor activity.

Areas of deprivation and isolated rural communities have been identified in the Borough, and it is important that access to leisure is maintained in these areas and Leisure will be required to identify cost effective appropriate methods of delivery to meet these needs. The Belfast City Region Deal with the expected development of Bangor Waterfront is coming ever closer with initial works commencing in 2025. This proposed project will have an impact on Leisure facilities in the vicinity at Kingsland, as well as the development of Ballyholme Yacht Club, it is expected that other leisure opportunities will be delivered as this project progresses.

Context and Key Assumptions – Social

The provision of local authority leisure in the area does not exist in isolation and we need to take cognisance of national and local trends in leisure and reflect these through our own programmes. The use of the demographic modelling tools to help identify demographic trends in the area will allow Leisure to develop programmes that reflect the needs of the community. The use of social value tools identifies the impact of delivering leisure facilities and activities in areas which is quantifiable. Sport England in a survey conducted in 2022/23 ([Social value and return on investment of sport and physical activity | Sport England](#)) which detailed every pound spent on sport and physical activity generated a social value of £3.91. This equates to Leisure Ards and North Down generating £2,910,000 of social value. Combining economic and social value for every pound spent on sport and physical activity generates a social value of £4.20 which in turn demonstrates Leisure Ards is creating £3,125,000 of social value. Reference will be made to appropriate central government health and sporting initiatives to take advantage of the interest stimulated by these initiatives.

In providing these services, the leisure service will be able to contribute to the Active and Healthy Communities Directorate's objectives by applying the principles of the Five Ways to Wellbeing. These are a set of evidence-based actions, which promote health and wellbeing, they are; Connect, Give, Be Active, Take Notice and Keep Learning.

Context and Key Assumptions – Technology

The growing use of Social Networking sites by the public at large both represents an opportunity and a threat to the provision of facilities and activities undertaken by the leisure service.

Opportunities arise from the ability to contact large numbers of particular sections of society quickly and cheaply with promotional material whilst the threat arises from the uncontrolled publication of information from many sources about the organisation.

Electronic leisure also poses both a threat and an opportunity for the leisure service where many people using social media apps can partake in physical activities such as dance and fitness classes in the comfort of their own homes reducing the need to travel to facilities such as those provided by the leisure service while opportunity presents itself through the development of more sophisticated group activities that would benefit from the facilities available throughout the Borough.

Online booking is an integral part of the book and pay options available at our leisure facilities Leisure has rolled out online booking for the "Waves", learn to swim, programme as well as the ability to book and pay for the wide variety of classes available at all our centres. Fitness technology is improving all the time and the opening of the Ards Blair Mayne Wellbeing and Leisure Complex saw the introduction of the very latest in fitness technology available at that time, the centre is now over 6 years old and this technology is now old news and our customers will expect the introduction of new technologies as they are introduced.

Context and Key

Recent service plans have referred to the expected legal settlement of a VAT issue relating to leisure, this has now been completed and as the finance and leisure teams take time to understand the possible impact

Assumptions - Legal

Context and Key Assumptions - Environmental

of this settlement it is only seen as having a positive outcome for the future of in-house leisure services who will now be able to compete on a level playing field with leisure providers seeking to operate council facilities in the future.

The growing use of legal advice on almost every leisure project has become frustrating for leisure in that it adds time to the scope of the project and additional expense that leisure often feel could be better directed to providing additional opportunities for activities and facilities.

The new Corporate Plan 2024 2028, A Sustainable Borough, has put reducing carbon emissions as we transition to net zero at the heart of everything the Council does, for leisure this means reducing energy consumption, improving waste management by maximising recycling and reducing the amount that goes to landfill and encouraging our users to adopt similar principles. We will encourage more electric cars by creating more charging spaces, encourage more people to walk or cycle to our centres or use public transport where possible.

We will look to achieve Biodiversity Net Gain Targets through working closely with the Biodiversity Officer of the Council, possible projects may include sedum roofs or increased wildflower areas around our facilities Accessibility and Equality have been key in the design of ABM and Aurora and we will continue to seek additional ways of improving access and equality throughout the Leisure estate Climate Change Adaptation plan

Leisure faces key challenges as highlighted in the SWOT analysis.

Strengths	Weaknesses
In-House operation for Leisure Ards and North Down (LARDS)	Hybrid leisure delivery model – 2 delivery models across Council operations
NCLT – service delivery with SERCO	Inability to set pricing within Leisure as opposed to Council’s one size fits all approach with a set % increase across all operations
Leisure Strategy sets the priorities and objectives for Leisure	Energy Consumption and Waste Management
Origin Gymnastics operations	Building condition for ABMWLC – issues with delays with contractor completing works impacts on operations and income. Consider entering into a phase of dispute with contractor over latent defects.
Contracted catering contract to external provider	
VAT benefit for Council Emergency Planning Group	
<u>Sports Development</u>	<u>Sports Development</u>
Strong partnerships with external organisations such as, Sport Northern.	Limited Council resources (staff and budget) operating at maximum capacity.
Ireland, Irish Football Association, Athletics Northern Ireland.	Low level priority over commercial sports hall bookings.
Good reputation in the delivery of sporting events i.e. Ards Half Marathon and Walk.	Lack of SNI/ DCAL funding opportunities to enhance work force.
Support of Elected members on the Ards Sports Development Committee.	Under resourced team at SD.
High levels of financial and governance support from Council.	
Marketing and use of social media to promote sporting events/activities and programmes.	
Financial assistance and support that is available for Athletes at all levels of the performance pathway.	
Capital Grants available to support and enhance the sporting facilities within the Borough.	

Opportunities	Threats
<p>Developing the relationship with NCLT and LARDS and delivering a harmonised service delivery programme</p>	<p>Competition in the marketplace from other leisure operators</p>
<p>New outsourced contract for delivery for</p>	<p>Hybrid leisure delivery model – 2 delivery models across Council operations</p>
<p>North Down leisure operations</p>	<p>Car park - not being able to accommodate peak time usage at ABMWLC</p>
<p>Origin Gymnastics operations – building a collaborative approach with our operations</p>	<p>Safeguarding with Admissions Policy not in place</p>
<p>Catering contract - building a collaborative approach with our operations</p>	<p>Security Solutions following MEN Arena attacks</p>
<p>VAT benefit for Council</p>	<p>Building condition for ABMWLC</p>
<p>Energy Consumption</p>	<p>Outdoor Recreation moving to Parks operations – uncertainty of the process and what is moving – Timescales</p>
<p>Working collaboratively across Council</p>	
<p>Working in partnership with other sectors and agencies to deliver enhanced health related programmes e.g. GP referrals.</p>	
<p><u>Sports Development</u></p>	<p><u>Sports Development</u></p>
<p>Council reorganisation and redesign process. Centralisation/Digitalisation of SD grants through transformation will reduce the administrative burden freeing the SD team up to focus on delivering sports in the Borough.</p>	<p>Potential for reduced investment into sport and active recreation</p>
<p>To develop stronger sporting partnerships with SNI and Governing Bodies.</p>	<p>Closure of facilities due to lack of investment.</p>
<p>Northern Ireland Local Government Reform over the next year presents opportunities to identify areas for collaboration/ streamline services.</p>	<p>Lifestyle issues increasing sedentary culture of young people.</p>
<p>To improve partnership working between agencies within the Borough of Ards.</p>	<p>Increased culture of litigation</p>
<p>To use sport as a medium to break down social/ethnic/disability barriers.</p>	<p>Increased running costs of voluntary community sports clubs. Competition in the marketplace from other leisure operators</p>
<p>The development of enhanced and new sporting facilities within the Ards and North Down Borough.</p>	<p>Hybrid leisure delivery model – 2 delivery models across Council operations</p>
	<p>Car park - not being able to accommodate peak time usage at ABMWLC</p>
	<p>Safeguarding with Admissions Policy not in place</p>
	<p>Security Solutions following MEN Arena attacks</p>

Building condition for ABMWLC

Outdoor Recreation moving to Parks operations – uncertainty of the process and what is moving – Timescales

Sports Development

Potential for reduced investment into sport and active recreation

Closure of facilities due to lack of investment.

Lifestyle issues increasing sedentary culture of young people.

Increased culture of litigation

Increased running costs of voluntary community sports clubs.

Reduction in disposable income

Local Government Reform process may begin to affect staff morale. Uncertainty / fears over job security.

3. Strategic Objectives and Collaboration

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

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

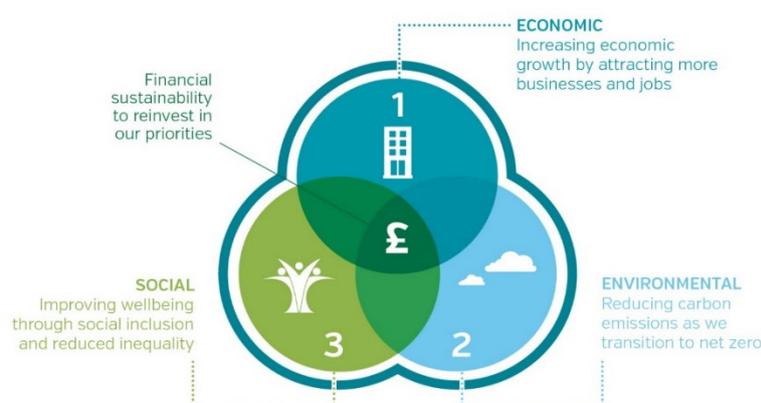
In brief, *A Sustainable Borough* is one where we make sure that we think about economic, social AND environmental impacts when we make decisions.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Strategic Project/Objective	Collaboration Required	Corporate Plan Priority	Corporate Plan Outcome (1-7)
Reducing carbon emissions as Council transitions to net zero.	Assets and property with external contractors.	Environmental	2
Improve wellbeing through social inclusion and reduced inequality.	Sport NI. PHA. Health Trust. Schools. Sporting groups and clubs. Strategy agencies.	Social	5 and 6
Continue to Deliver 10-year Leisure Strategy. Years 2 and 3. Delivery of leisure/sport in 2 deprived areas. Establish a resource to identify and distribute grant opportunities. Develop a marketing communications plan for the leisure strategy. New Sports Facility Strategy. Conduct a leisure communications gap analysis.	SIG Working Group. TWG Working Group. Ards DEA. Sporting Clubs. Sport's Governing Bodies. Schools.	Social	5, 6 and 7

4. Service Improvement

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

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

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

Service development/ improvement 2026/27?	Which of the specified aspects will this improve?	Rationale	Responsible Officer(s)	Who do we need to help us? (Internal and/ or External partners) Please specify
Reducing carbon emissions as we transition to net zero	<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Effectiveness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Service Availability <input type="checkbox"/> Fairness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Efficiency <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Innovation	The Corporate Plan 2024 2028, A Sustainable Borough, has put reducing carbon emissions as we transition to net zero at the heart of everything the Council does, for leisure this means reducing energy consumption, improving waste management by maximising recycling and reducing the amount that goes to landfill and encouraging our users to adopt similar principles, we will encourage more electric cars by creating more charging spaces, encourage more people to walk or cycle to our centres or use public transport where possible. We will look to achieve Biodiversity Net Gain Targets through working closely with the Biodiversity Officer of the Council, possible projects may include sedum roofs or increased wildflower areas around our facilities Accessibility and Equality have been key in the design of ABM and Aurora and we	Sean Fegan Geoff Allen Richard Cochran Amanda Irvine Martin Conroy	Assets and Properties Nigel McCormick Climate & Sustainability Manager

Service development/improvement 2026/27?	Which of the specified aspects will this improve?	Rationale	Responsible Officer(s)	Who do we need to help us? (Internal and/ or External partners) Please specify
<p>Improve wellbeing through social inclusion and reduced inequality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategic Effectiveness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Quality <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Availability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fairness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Efficiency <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Innovation 	<p>will continue to seek additional ways of improving access and equality throughout the leisure estate</p> <p>Healthier Lives People who feel included and treated fairly experience lower stress, better mental health, and longer life expectancy. Inequality is linked to chronic illness, poor nutrition, and limited access to healthcare.</p> <p>Stronger Social Bonds Inclusion fosters trust, empathy, and cooperation across diverse groups. Communities with strong social ties are better equipped to support each other and recover from crises.</p> <p>Economic Opportunity Reducing inequality unlocks potential in marginalized groups, boosting education, employment, and innovation. Inclusive economies are more stable and productive over time.</p> <p>Empowerment and Participation When people feel valued, they're more likely to engage in civic life. Volunteering, voting, and shaping public services. This leads to more responsive and effective policies with leisure ensuring inclusion for all.</p>	<p>HOS SUMS</p>	<p>Sports Forum PHA Health Trust Active Ageing. Health and Wellbeing group. Leisure Strategy Strategic Implementation Group (SIG)</p>

Service development/improvement 2026/27?	Which of the specified aspects will this improve?	Rationale	Responsible Officer(s)	Who do we need to help us? (Internal and/ or External partners) Please specify
Continue to Deliver 10 year Leisure Strategy. This allows for a phased implementation with measurable outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> x Strategic Effectiveness x Service Quality x Service Availability x Fairness x Sustainability x Efficiency x Innovation 	<p>The strategy sets out a long-term plan to make leisure accessible, inclusive, and sustainable across the borough. It defines “leisure” broadly as any form of active recreation.</p> <p>Delivery of programmes in 2 deprived areas. Links between schools and sports clubs, Increased Parkruns, a database of leisure providers, 2 new leisure provider partnerships.</p>	<p>Thermotic Working Group (TWG) Strategic Implementation Group (SIG) HOS SUM</p>	<p>This will form part of the strategy implementation group.</p>

5. Service Risk Register

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

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

6. Key Activities (KPIs) for 2026/27

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

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

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

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

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

KPI No.	Performance Measures Should include improvement actions outlined in Section 4 and relevant measures both existing and new.	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service-led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcomes and Priorities to be mapped to KPIs on Ideagen		KPI to be included in Performance Improvement Plan	2026/27 Reporting						
							2024/25 Actual	2025/26 Target	2025/26 YTD End of H1	2026/27 Target	Reporting end of H1 Target	Reporting end of H2 Target	Cumulative/ Fixed
1	% Spend against budget	Mandatory	6 Monthly	7	Economic	N/A		100%	61.4%	100%	100%	100%	Fixed
2	% Staff attendance	Mandatory	Yearly	7	Economic	N/A		95%	94.88%	95%	-	95%	Fixed
3	% of completed Employee Appraisals	Mandatory	6 Monthly	7	Economic	N/A		95%	80%	95%	95%	95%	Fixed
4	Increase the number of Electric car points at Leisure sites by 60%.	Service Led	Yearly	2	Environmental	Yes	50%	60%	60%	60%	-	60%	Fixed
				Additional Outcomes	Additional Priorities								
				<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social								
5	Maintain Quest Awards for all 4 Leisure Sites.	Service Led	Yearly	6	Social	Yes	100%	100%	100%	100%	-	100%	Fixed
6	Installation of Solar panels for 2 Leisure facilities	Service Led	Yearly	2	Environmental	Yes	N/A New KPI	N/A New KPI	N/A New KPI	100%	50%	100%	Cumulative

KPI No.	Performance Measures Should include improvement actions outlined in Section 4 and relevant measures both existing and new.	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service-led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcomes and Priorities to be mapped to KPIs on Ideagen		KPI to be included in Performance Improvement Plan	2026/27 Reporting						
							2024/25 Actual	2025/26 Target	2025/26 YTD End of H1	2026/27 Target	Reporting end of H1 Target	Reporting end of H2 Target	Cumulative/ Fixed
7	Increase % sent to Recycling from land fill sites.	Service Led	Yearly	2	Environmental	Yes	70%	75%	75%	75%	50%	75%	Cumulative
				Additional Outcomes <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	Additional Priorities <input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social								
8	Increased Retention by 1%, from 95% to 96%	Service Led	Yearly	6	Social	Yes	95%	95%	95%	96%	-	96%	Cumulative
9	Reduced Attrition by 1% from 6% to 5%	Service Led	Yearly	6	Social		95%	95%	95% Measured differently (6%)	5%	-	5%	Cumulative
10	Identify 2 deprived areas and deliver a programme of active Leisure opportunities in each area – 30 new people in each area to avail of the programme. 60 new participants in sport and leisure.	Service Led	Yearly	6	Social	Yes	N/A – New KPI	N/A – New KPI	N/A – New KPI	60	30	60	Cumulative
				Additional Outcomes <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	Additional Priorities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social								
11	Continue to implement the Leisure Strategy working towards completion of year 1 and year 2 Action Plan.	Service Led	Yearly	6	Social	Yes	25%	50%	75%	100%	50%	100%	Cumulative

KPI No.	Performance Measures Should include improvement actions outlined in Section 4 and relevant measures both existing and new.	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service-led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcomes and Priorities to be mapped to KPIs on Ideagen		KPI to be included in Performance Improvement Plan	2026/27 Reporting						
							2024/25 Actual	2025/26 Target	2025/26 YTD End of H1	2026/27 Target	Reporting end of H1 Target	Reporting end of H2 Target	Cumulative/ Fixed
12	Expand the service by reforming the Sports Development Forum to align with the key performance indicators (KPIs) outlined in the Leisure Strategy. This alignment will strengthen strategic focus, improve accountability, and enhance eligibility for external funding and grants to support future growth	Service Led	Yearly	6	Social	Yes	0%	100%	100%	100%	-	100%	Fixed
13	10% increase of Total Footfall across Leisure Ards in comparison on actual footfall from 2024/25	Service Led	6 Monthly	6	Social	Yes	1,050,000	1,000,000	500,000	1,300,000	650,000	1,155,000	Cumulative

7. What Services/ Activities will be stopped

Please add detail of KPI's that have previously been monitored that will no longer be reported on for 2026/27.
An example is provided below.

What service/ activities will we be stopping/ changing in 2026/2027	Reason for stopping / changing activity	Savings	Impact on Performance	Impact on the Public	Impact on staffing
Net Expenditure Per Head of Pop (164,200)	No benefit gained from irrelevant information	£0	None	None	None
Income per head of population (164,200) Leisure Ards income only	No benefit gained from irrelevant information	£0	None	None	None
Income per member of Staff (FTE) 60	No benefit gained from irrelevant information	£0	None	None	None

8. Reporting, Monitoring and Review

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

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

Unclassified

ITEM 8

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
	If multiple:
Meeting	Active and Healthy Communities Committee
Date of Meeting	11 March 2026
Responsible Director	Director of Active and Healthy Communities
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Environmental Health and Regulatory Services
Report title	Local Air Quality Management Progress 2025
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Ards and North Down Borough Council 2025 Progress Report
File Reference (if applicable)	CW7
Legislation	Other Environment Order (NI) 2002 /Air Quality Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003/ Air Quality Standards Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010
Resource Implications	None Narrative:
Screening Requirements	<i>The Council will commit to consider the implication of all reports under the categories of Section 75, Rural Needs, Data Protection, Climate and Sustainability:</i> Screening of report not required
Link to Corporate Plan Priority and Outcome	Priority 2: Environmental 5. Safe, welcoming and inclusive communities that are flourishing If multiple:

Background

The Council monitors air quality within the Borough and reports the findings to the Department for Environment, Agriculture and Rural Affairs (DAERA) on an annual basis. We operate a real-time monitoring station on the A2 in Holywood which measures Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) and particulate levels (PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀).

Real time results are available on the Northern Ireland Air Quality website <https://www.airqualityni.co.uk>. This location was chosen as the site for analysis as the highest traffic flow within the Borough is recorded here.

The Council also measures Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) levels using passive diffusion tubes which are placed at numerous sites across the Borough.

Key Issues

Pollutant levels have remained below National Air Quality Objectives in the Borough and the trend over the past 5 years shows no significant change in levels of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) or Particulates.

Despite this stable position, the Council remains committed to further reducing emissions, particularly through targeted behaviour-change initiatives. A key strand of this work is the *Engine Off – Prevent the Cough* campaign, delivered jointly with Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council, which focuses on reducing vehicle idling outside primary schools. Supporting measures include the installation of *No Idling* signage in Council-operated car parks, with plans to extend this to household recycling centres. Alongside these actions, the Council continues to promote sustainable travel as a long-term approach to improving air quality. Recent investment in coastal Greenways and new cycling and pedestrian routes has strengthened connections to the Belfast cycle network and the Belfast Rapid Transport System from Dundonald. In addition, Translink's proposal for a 450-space Park & Ride facility in Newtownards is expected to enhance public transport accessibility and help reduce reliance on private car use.

Next Steps

As referred to above, the Council is obliged to report air quality standards within the Borough to DAERA on an annual basis. We were notified by DAERA in February that the Council's Local Air Quality Progress Report for 2025 has been accepted and the information is now posted online. A copy of the Progress Report is attached to this report as Appendix 1.

Summary

Pollutant levels in the Borough have remained below National Air Quality Objectives in 2025 and work will continue to monitor levels throughout 2026. DAERA have approved Council's Local Air Quality Progress Report.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council **Notes** The 'Ards and North Down Borough Council 2025 Progress Report' for air quality in the Borough.

APPENDIX 1



**Ards and
North Down**
Borough Council

Ards and North Down Borough Council

2025 Air Quality Progress Report

In fulfillment of Environment (Northern Ireland) Order
2002

Local Air Quality Management

June 2025



Ards and North Down Borough Council

98

Information	Ards and North Down Borough Council
Local Authority Officer	Cheryl Harkness
Department	Environmental Health, Protection and Development
Address	2 Church Street, Newtownards, County Down BT23 4AP
Telephone	0300 013 3333
E-mail	cheryl.harkness@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk
Report Reference number	ANDBC PR2025
Date	June 2025

Executive Summary

The Air Quality Strategy has established the framework for air quality management in the UK. Local Authorities have a duty under the Environment Act 1995 and subsequent regulations to review and assess air quality in their areas on a periodic basis to identify all areas where the air quality objectives are being or are likely to be exceeded. A phased approach has been adopted for the review and assessment process so that the level of assessment undertaken is commensurate with the risk of an exceedance of an air quality objective.

An updating and screening assessment (USA) is required to be prepared every three years by all local authorities in the UK. The last updating and screening assessment of air quality was undertaken in 2024.

This report is the 2025 progress report for Ards and North Down Borough Council (ANDBC) and has been completed using the recommended template. The assessment is fully compliant with the applicable policy and technical guidance. This report identified no exceedances of the Air Quality Strategy objectives for 2024 for any of the pollutants assessed with relevant exposure, planning applications have been examined by ANDBC Environmental Health, Protection and Development Department to determine if an air quality impact assessment is required.

NO₂ levels due to vehicle emissions remain the main source of concern within ANDBC, it is a popular residential area due to the easy commute to Belfast city centre. The automatic monitoring site in Holywood is positioned on the A2 Bangor to Belfast main route to the city centre, where the highest traffic flow is recorded within the Borough. The NO₂ results showed a reduction in emissions in 2020 and 2021, likely to have been a result of the lower traffic flows due to the COVID pandemic, levels have increased slightly in 2022, but in 2024 still remain lower than the pre-pandemic levels, possibly due to changes in working patterns and the growing popularity of low emission vehicles, the trend over the past 5 years shows no significant change in the NO₂ results which have remained below the objective at all monitoring locations. Two new NO₂ monitoring sites were established in 2024, the Portaferry Road in Newtownards and Donaghadee Town Centre where traffic can become congested with relevant exposure.

Monitoring will continue in 2025 on the A2 main arterial route into Belfast City and hot spots around the Borough where traffic congestion is common at rush hour. The

Ards and North Down Borough Council

100

large housing development in the Movilla area of Newtownards is now established and new phases have commenced, a new link road has commenced to improve traffic flows when building work is completed, this will join with a new housing development on the Bangor Road which commenced in 2024, during the planning process these and other smaller housing developments were examined by the Environmental Department and were found to have no significant impact on Air Quality. Ards & North Down Borough Council are actively working towards improving Air Quality within the Borough, there are plans to extend existing coastal Green Ways and construct new cycle and pedestrian routes that connect with the Belfast cycle route and the City Centre, also giving easy access to the new Belfast Rapid Transport System from Dundonald, Translink are also planning to develop a new 450 space Park & Ride in Newtownards on the lands of the former council leisure centre. ANDBC launched a new initiative in 2019 in primary schools “Engine off Prevent the Cough”, educating pupils and parents to the harmful emissions from vehicles with the emphasis on idling engines outside schools, this remains available to schools and has been extended to public carparks to educate drivers.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	i
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Description of Local Authority Area	1
1.2 Purpose of Progress Report	3
1.3 Air Quality Objectives	3
1.4 Summary of Previous Review and Assessments.....	5
2 New Monitoring Data	6
2.1 Summary of Monitoring Undertaken.....	6
2.2 Comparison of Monitoring Results with Air Quality Objectives.....	20
3 New Local Developments	34
3.2 Other Transport Sources	35
3.3 Industrial Sources.....	35
4 Local / Regional Air Quality Strategy	37
5 Planning Applications	38
6 Conclusions and Proposed Actions	39
6.1 Conclusions from New Monitoring Data	39
6.2 Conclusions relating to New Local Developments	39
6.3 Proposed Actions	39
7 References	40

List of Tables

Table 1.1 Air Quality Objectives included in Regulations for the purpose of LAQM in Northern Ireland

Table 1.2 Previous reports submitted by Ards Borough Council

Table 1.3 Previous reports submitted by North Down Borough Council

Table 2.1 Details of Automatic Monitoring Sites

Table 2.2 Details of Non-Automatic Monitoring Sites

Table 2.3 Results of Automatic Monitoring of Nitrogen Dioxide: Comparison with Annual Mean Objective

Table 2.4 Results of Automatic Monitoring for Nitrogen Dioxide: Comparison with 1-hour mean Objective

Table 2.5 Results of Nitrogen Dioxide Diffusion Tubes in 2025

Table 2.6 Results of Nitrogen Dioxide Diffusion Tubes (2021 to 2025)

Table 2.7 Results of Automatic Monitoring of PM₁₀: Comparison with Annual Mean Objective

Table 2.8 Results of Automatic Monitoring for PM₁₀: Comparison with 24-hour mean Objective

List of Figures

Figure 1.1 Map of Ards and North Down Borough Council within Northern Ireland

Figure 1.2 Ards and North Down Borough Council area

Figure 2.1 Position of the automatic air monitoring site within ANDBC

Figure 2.2 Position of Automatic Monitoring Site on the A2 Hollywood

Figure 2.3 Picture of Automatic Monitoring Station A2 Hollywood

Figure 2.4 Map(s) of Non-Automatic Monitoring Sites

Figure 2.5 Position of Diffusion tube sites 5-7 Newtownards

Figure 2.6 Position of Diffusion tube 8 in Comber village

Figure 2.7 Position of Diffusion tube 8 on High Street in Comber village

Figure 2.8 Position of Diffusion tubes 1-4,9,10,13,14 on and near the A2

Figure 2.9 Position of Diffusion tube sites 1 and 2 on the A2

Figure 2.10 Position of Diffusion tube sites 4,9,10, 13 and 14 on the A2 at the Hollywood junction (Shore Road)

Figure 2.11 Hollywood junction pictured from the A2

Figure 2.12 Position of Diffusion tube site 11 Portaferry Road Newtownards (new in 2024)

Figure 2.13 Position of Diffusion tube site 12, 17 Gray's Hill Bangor

Figure 2.14 Position of Diffusion tube site 15 Donaghadee (new 2024)

Figure 2.15 Trends in Annual Mean NO₂ Concentrations Measured at Automatic Monitoring Sites

Figure 2.16 Trends in Annual Mean Nitrogen Dioxide Concentrations measured at Diffusion tube sites.

Figure 2.17 Trends in Annual Mean PM₁₀ Concentrations

Appendices

- Appendix A QA/QC Data of automatic sites
- QA/QC of Diffusion Tube Monitoring

1 Introduction

1.1 Description of Local Authority Area

Ards and North Down Borough Council is one of 11 councils in Northern Ireland, with a population of 162,714. The Borough is of mixed urban and rural character situated east of Belfast City and the two largest towns Bangor and Newtownards are popular residential areas due to the ease of commute to Belfast City. It is an area of outstanding natural beauty and special scientific interest bounded by over 100 miles of coastline and the prevailing wind direction is south-westerly.

Air Quality in ANDBC is generally good as there is good ventilation from sea breezes. There are few industrial processes in the area that are significantly detrimental to air quality and heavy fuel oil is not widely used for heat generation, solid fuel is still very popular as a secondary fuel. However, there are a number of very busy trunk roads in the area and four main arterial routes into Belfast, the busiest being the A2 commuter route from Bangor to Belfast with approximate average daily traffic flows of over 44,000 vehicle movements per day at Holywood, this remains the main area of concern with relation to Air Quality, for Nitrogen Dioxide and PM₁₀. Several monitoring sites are located at relevant exposure along this main arterial route to Belfast. Other sites are located at congested points throughout Newtownards, Bangor, Comber and Donaghadee town centers. All present monitoring within the Borough indicates that the objectives in the air quality strategy are not currently being exceeded at relevant exposure.

Figure 1.1 Map of Ards and North Down Borough Council within Northern Ireland



Figure 1.2 Ards and North Down Borough Council area



1.2 Purpose of Progress Report

This report fulfils the requirements of the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) process as set out in the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002, the Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland 2007 and the relevant Policy and Technical Guidance documents. The LAQM process places an obligation on all local authorities to regularly review and assess air quality in their areas, and to determine whether the air quality objectives are likely to be achieved. Where exceedances are considered likely, the local authority must then declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and prepare an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) setting out the measures it intends to put in place in pursuit of the objectives.

For Local Authorities in Northern Ireland, Progress Reports are required in the intervening years between the three-yearly Updating and Screening Assessment reports. Their purpose is to maintain continuity in the LAQM process.

They are not intended to be as detailed as Updating and Screening Assessment Reports, or to require as much effort. However, if the Progress Report identifies the risk of exceedance of an Air Quality Objective, the Local Authority (LA) should undertake a Detailed Assessment immediately and not wait until the next round of Review and Assessment.

1.3 Air Quality Objectives

The air quality objectives applicable to LAQM in **Northern Ireland** are set out in the Air Quality Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003, Statutory Rules of Northern Ireland 2003, no. 342, and are shown in Table 1.1. This table shows the objectives in units of micrograms per cubic metre $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (milligrams per cubic metre, mg/m^3 for carbon monoxide) with the number of exceedances in each year that are permitted (where applicable).

Ards and North Down Borough Council

107

Table 1.1 – Air Quality Objectives included in Regulations for the purpose of LAQM in Northern Ireland

Pollutant	Air Quality Objective		Date to be achieved by
	Concentration	Measured as	
Benzene	16.25 µg/m ³	Running annual mean	31.12.2003
	3.25 µg/m ³	Running annual mean	31.12.2010
1,3-butadiene	2.25 µg/m ³	Running annual mean	31.12.2003
Carbon monoxide	10 mg/m ³	Running 8-hour mean	31.12.2003
Lead	0.50 µg/m ³	Annual mean	31.12.2004
	0.25 µg/m ³	Annual mean	31.12.2008
Nitrogen dioxide	200 µg/m ³ not to be exceeded more than 18 times a year	1-hour mean	31.12.2005
	40 µg/m ³	Annual mean	31.12.2005
Particulate matter (PM ₁₀) (gravimetric)	50 µg/m ³ , not to be exceeded more than 35 times a year	24-hour mean	31.12.2004
	40 µg/m ³	Annual mean	31.12.2004
Sulphur dioxide	350 µg/m ³ , not to be exceeded more than 24 times a year	1-hour mean	31.12.2004
	125 µg/m ³ , not to be exceeded more than 3 times a year	24-hour mean	31.12.2004
	266 µg/m ³ , not to be exceeded more than 35 times a year	15-minute mean	31.12.2005

1.4 Summary of Previous Review and Assessments

Local authorities in Northern Ireland amalgamated on 1st April 2015 creating 11 new councils, the following reports have been submitted by ANDBC since the amalgamation.

2015 Update and Screening Assessment	All sites were below the air quality objective
2016 Progress report	All sites were below the air quality objective
2017 Progress report	All sites were below the air quality objective
2018 Update and Screening Assessment	All sites were below the air quality objective
2019 Progress report	All sites were below the air quality objective
2020 Progress report	All sites were below the air quality objective
2021 Update and Screening Assessment	All sites were below the air quality objective
2022 Progress report	All sites were below the air quality objective
2023 Progress report	All sites were below the air quality objective
2024 Update and Screening Assessment	All sites were below the air quality objective

2 New Monitoring Data

2.1 Summary of Monitoring Undertaken

2.1.1 Automatic Monitoring Sites

ANDBC has one automatic monitoring site on the A2 in Holywood, monitoring NO₂ and PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}. Manual calibrations are carried out by the Local Air Quality officer. Air Quality Data Management (AQDM) are employed to ratify and validate the data. A specialist engineer is employed to service and maintain the site as required. Results and correction factors are detailed in Appendix A.

In 2024 a co-location study for the NO₂ diffusion tubes was also carried out at this site. Results from this study were submitted to the March 2025 national data base.

Results and correction factors are detailed in Appendix A.

Figure 2.1 Position of the automatic air monitoring site within ANDBC

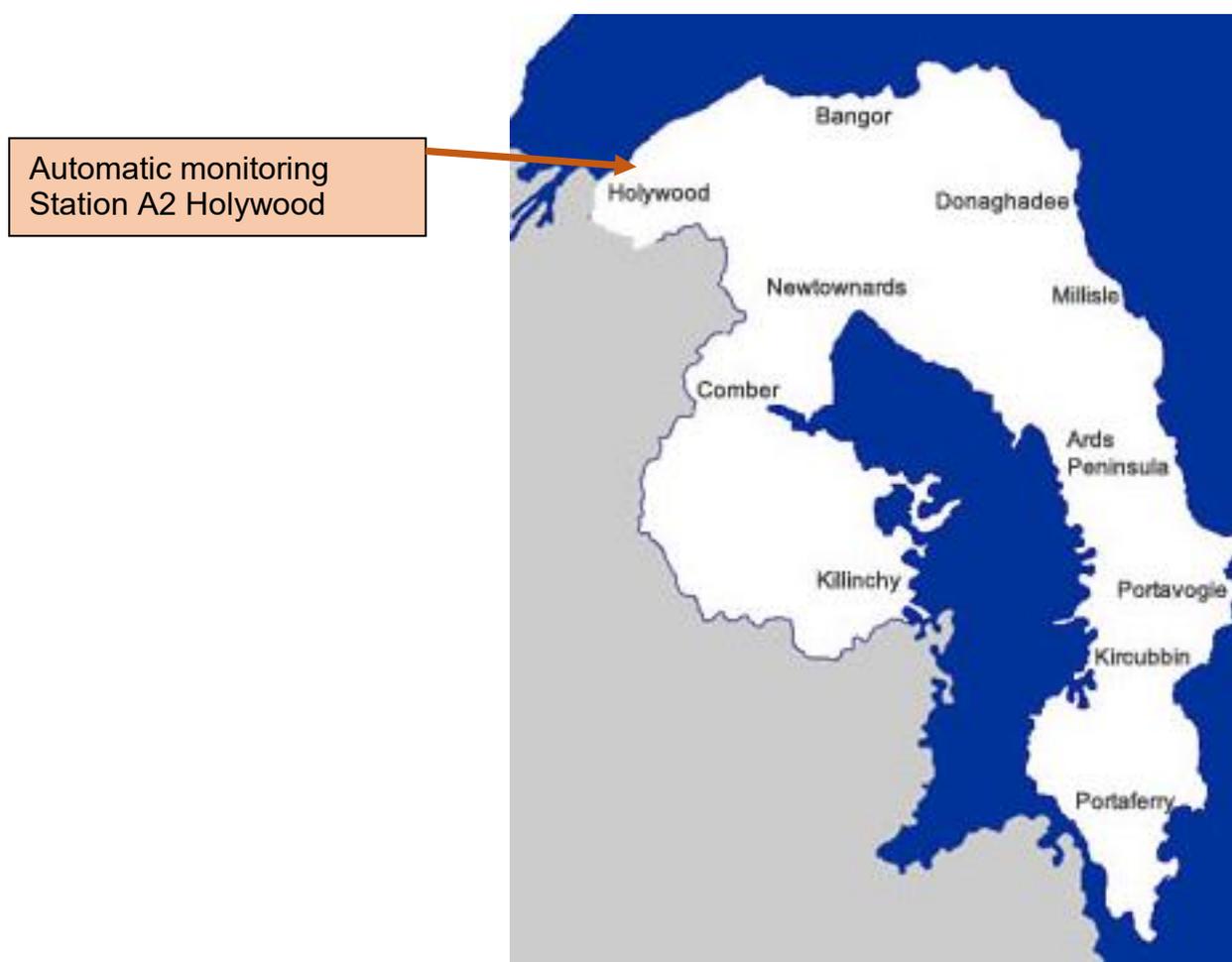


Figure 2.2 Position of Automatic Monitoring Site on the A2 Holywood

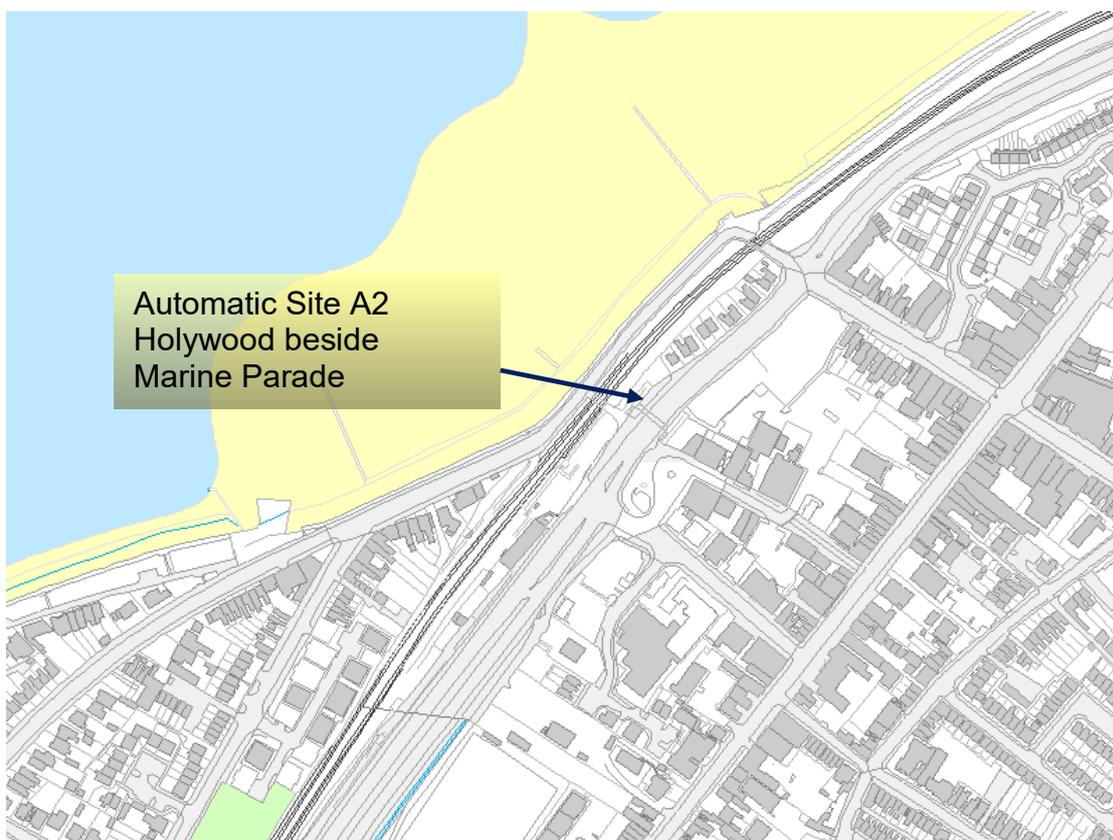


Figure 2.3 Aerial photo of Automatic Monitoring Station A2 Holywood



Table 2.1 – Details of Automatic Monitoring Sites

Site Name	Site Type	Irish Grid Reference	Irish Grid Reference	Inlet Height (m)	Pollutants Monitored	In AQMA?	Monitoring Technique	Relevant Exposure ? (Y/N with distance (m) from monitoring site to relevant exposure)	Distance to Kerb of Nearest Road (m) (N/A if not applicable)	Does this Location Represent Worst-Case Exposure?
Marine Parade Holywood A2	Roadside	X339481	Y379328	2	PM ₁₀ , PM _{2.5} NO ₂	N	FIDAS 200 Chemiluminescence	YES 30m	4.6M	YES

2.1.2 Non-Automatic Monitoring Sites

In 2024 ANDBC had 15 NO₂ diffusion tube sites. Seven are positioned along the A2 main arterial route into Belfast from Bangor at roadside and on one on the facade of the closest dwelling to the roadside, four of these sites are located at the Hollywood junction where traffic flows are at their highest and there are a number of roadside residential properties. The remainder of the tubes are at relevant exposure at various hotspots where there is traffic congestion at rush hour in Newtownards, Bangor, Comber, Donaghadee and Hollywood, and where further development has been planned. A decision was made to in 2023 to cease monitoring at the Outer Ring Bangor, as the results for NO₂ at these locations remained well below the objective, these tubes in 2024 were moved to new positions, the Portaferry Road in Newtownards, and Donaghadee Town centre within the borough that have relevant exposure, and where traffic can be extremely heavy at times.

A co-location study is carried out at the automatic site in Hollywood, the results of the co-located study were submitted into the national data base and included in the March 2025 data sheet. It has not been possible to determine a trend from the diffusion tube studies for the past five years (See Fig. 2.16), in 2020 there was a significant reduction at all the NO₂ sites, however this was during the COVID 19 pandemic, during lockdown the traffic flows on all the main routes in the Borough leading to Belfast City centre were greatly reduced, results have remained lower than the pre COVID levels, possibly due to changes in working patterns and the increased popularity of low emission vehicles.

The NO₂ diffusion tubes were supplied and analysed by Gradko Environmental. The bias adjustment factor from the co-location study is **0.69.**, this was calculated using the R&A support precision and accuracy spread sheet. A decision was made to apply the national figure of **0.84** as this is the average of a number of studies and deemed to be a more realistic figure.

Details of the QA/QC for the diffusion tubes and the reason for the use of the bias adjustment factor can be found in Appendix A

Below are maps of the diffusion tube sites.

Figure 2.4 Map(s) of Non-Automatic Monitoring Sites

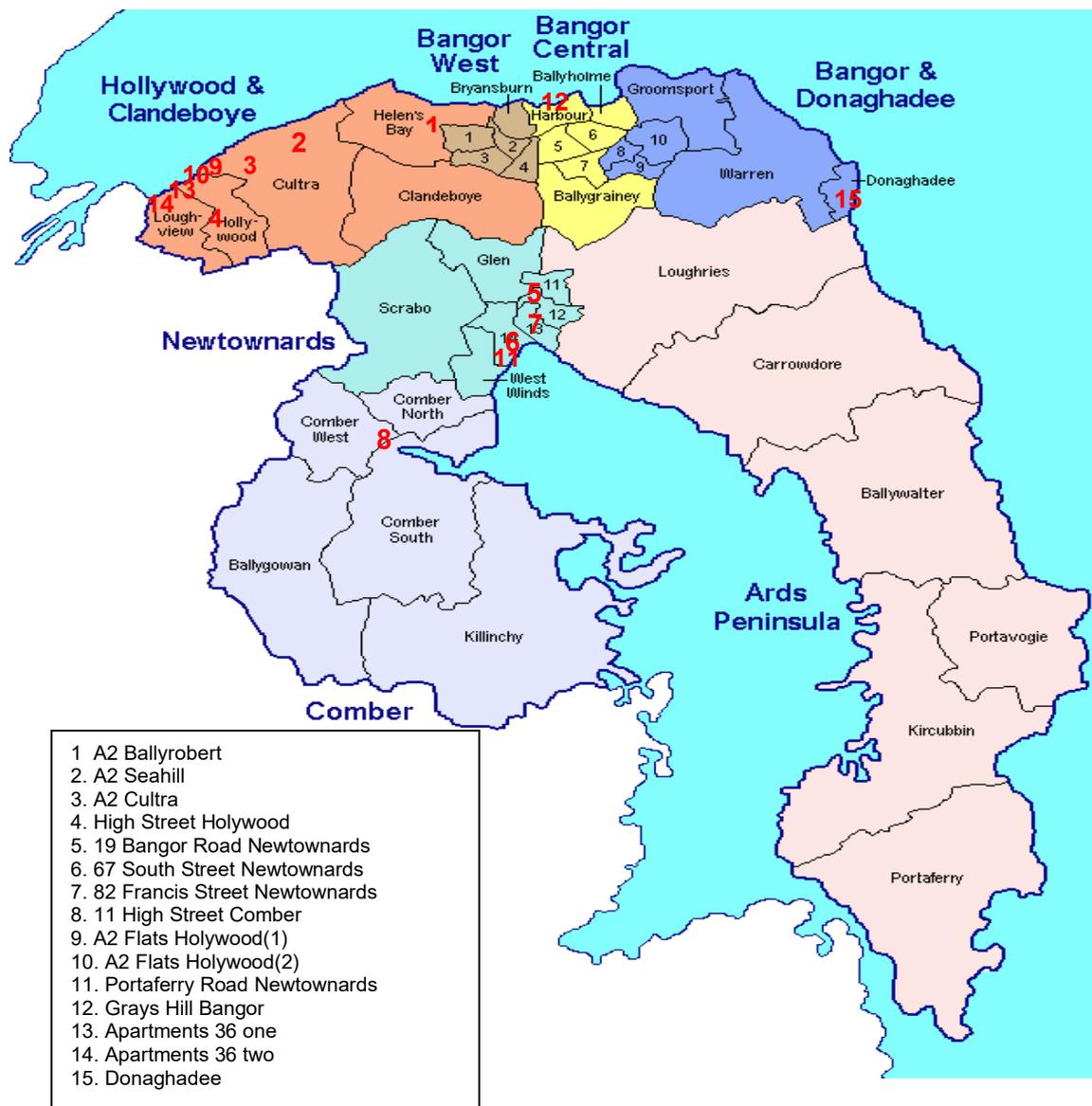


Figure 2.5 Position of Diffusion tube sites 5-7 in Newtownards

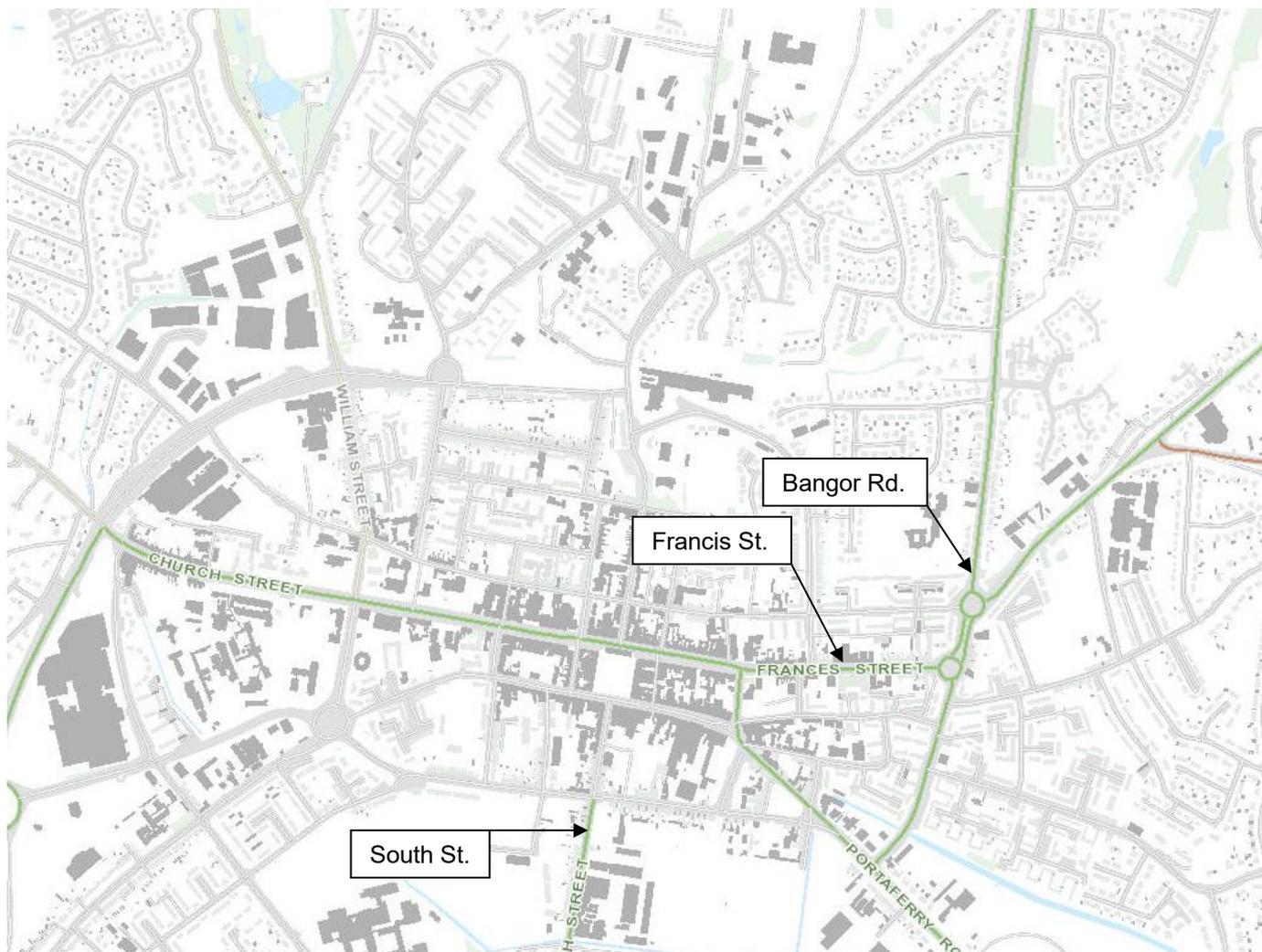
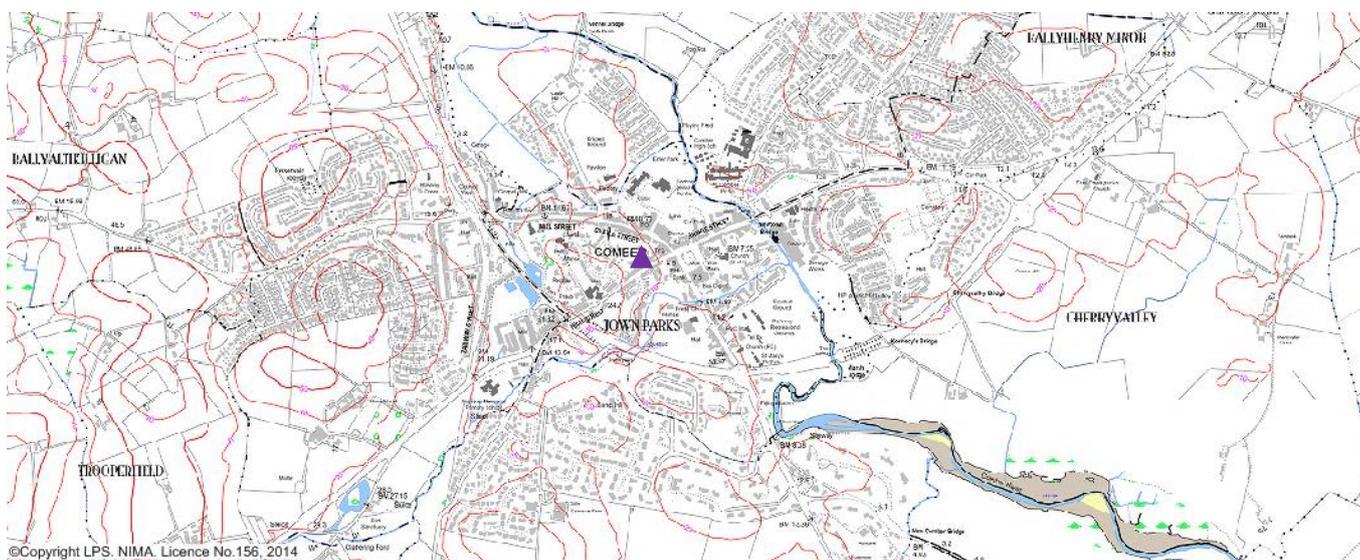
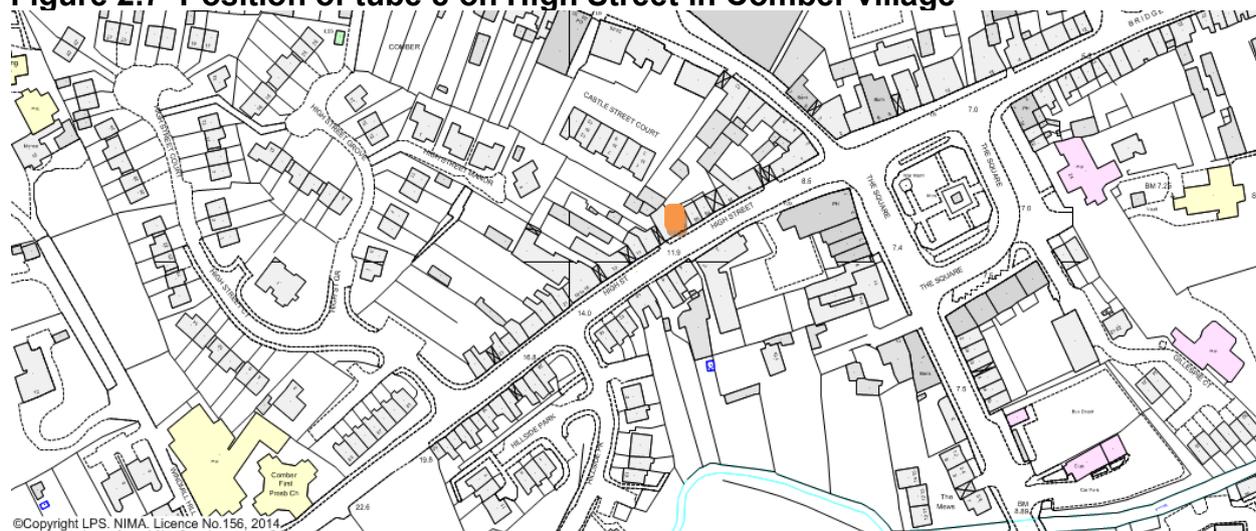


Figure 2.6 Position of tube 8 in Comber village



▲ Position of diffusion tube in Comber Village Centre

Figure 2.7 Position of tube 8 on High Street in Comber village



 Position of diffusion tube 8 - High Street Comber

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Figure 2.8 Position of tubes 1-4,9,10,13,14 on and near A2

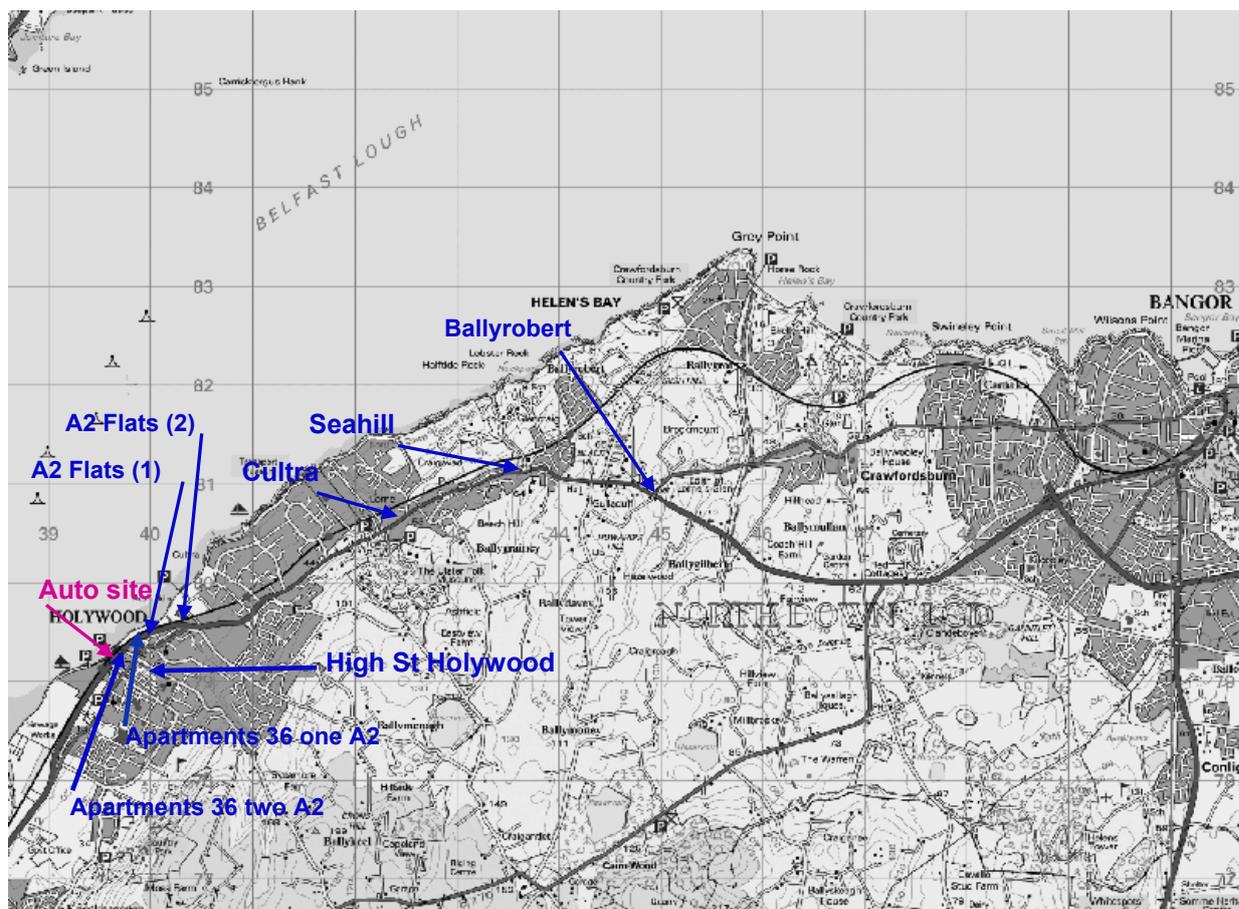
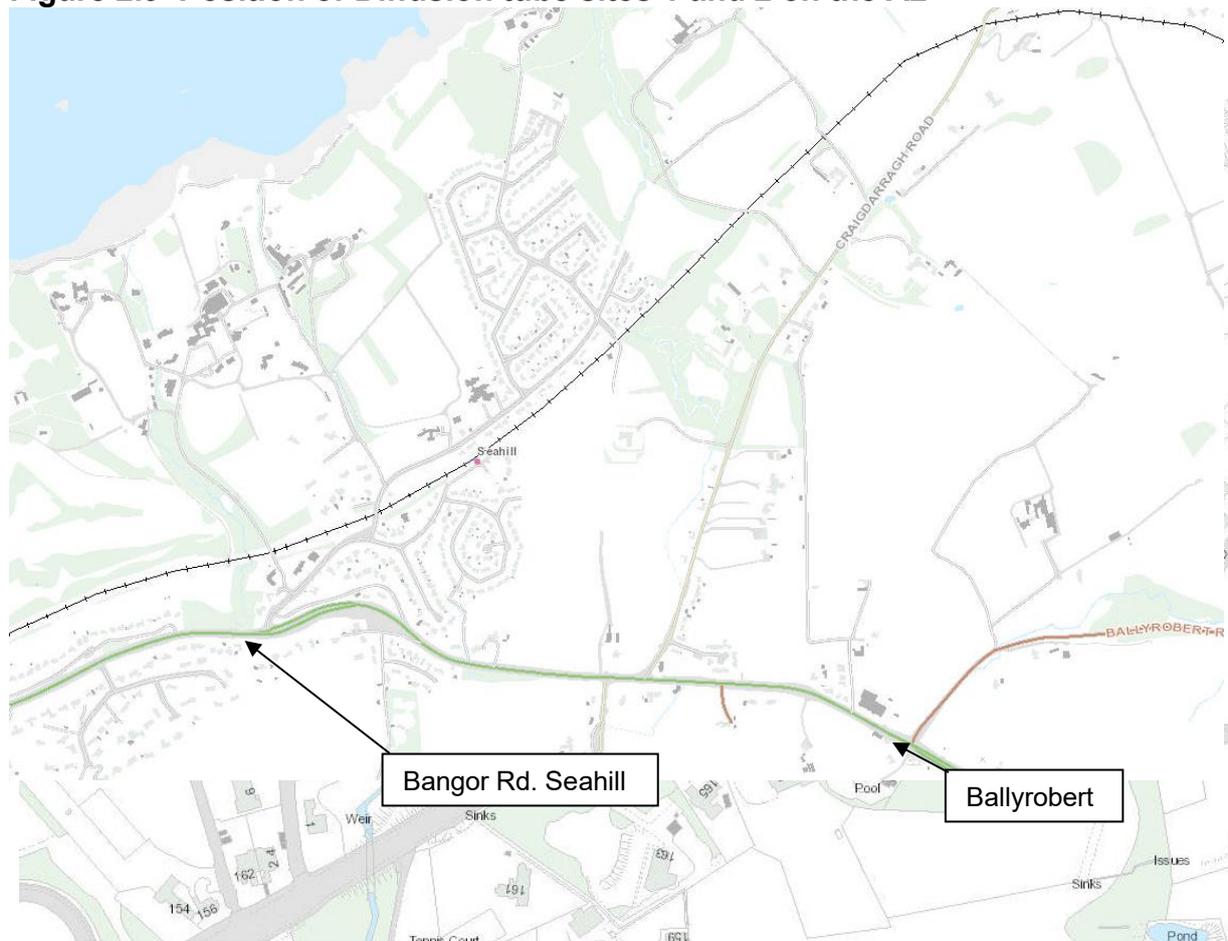


Figure 2.9 Position of Diffusion tube sites 1 and 2 on the A2



Figures 2.10 Position of Diffusion tube sites 4,9,10,13 and 14 on the A2 Hollywood (Shore Road junction).

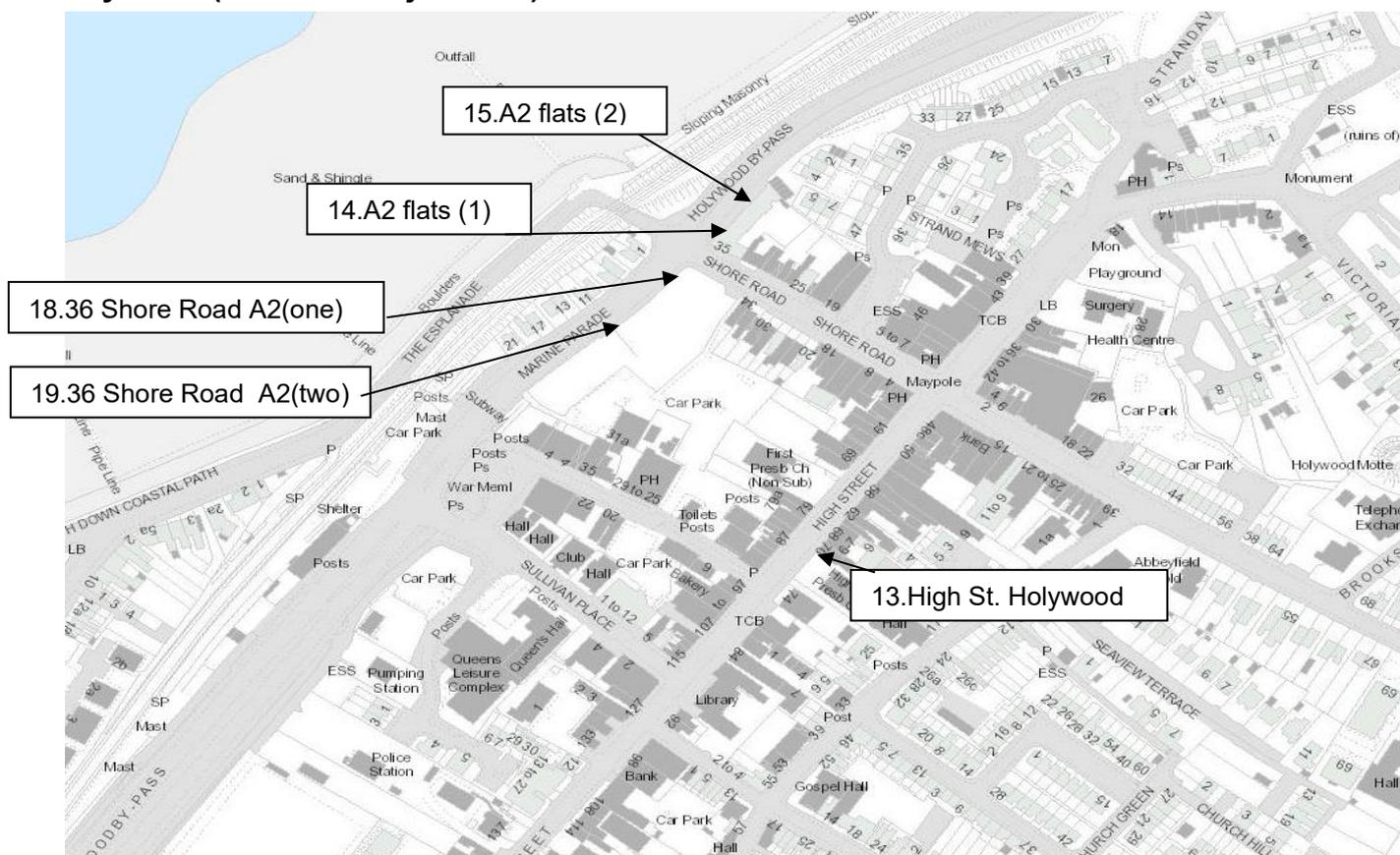


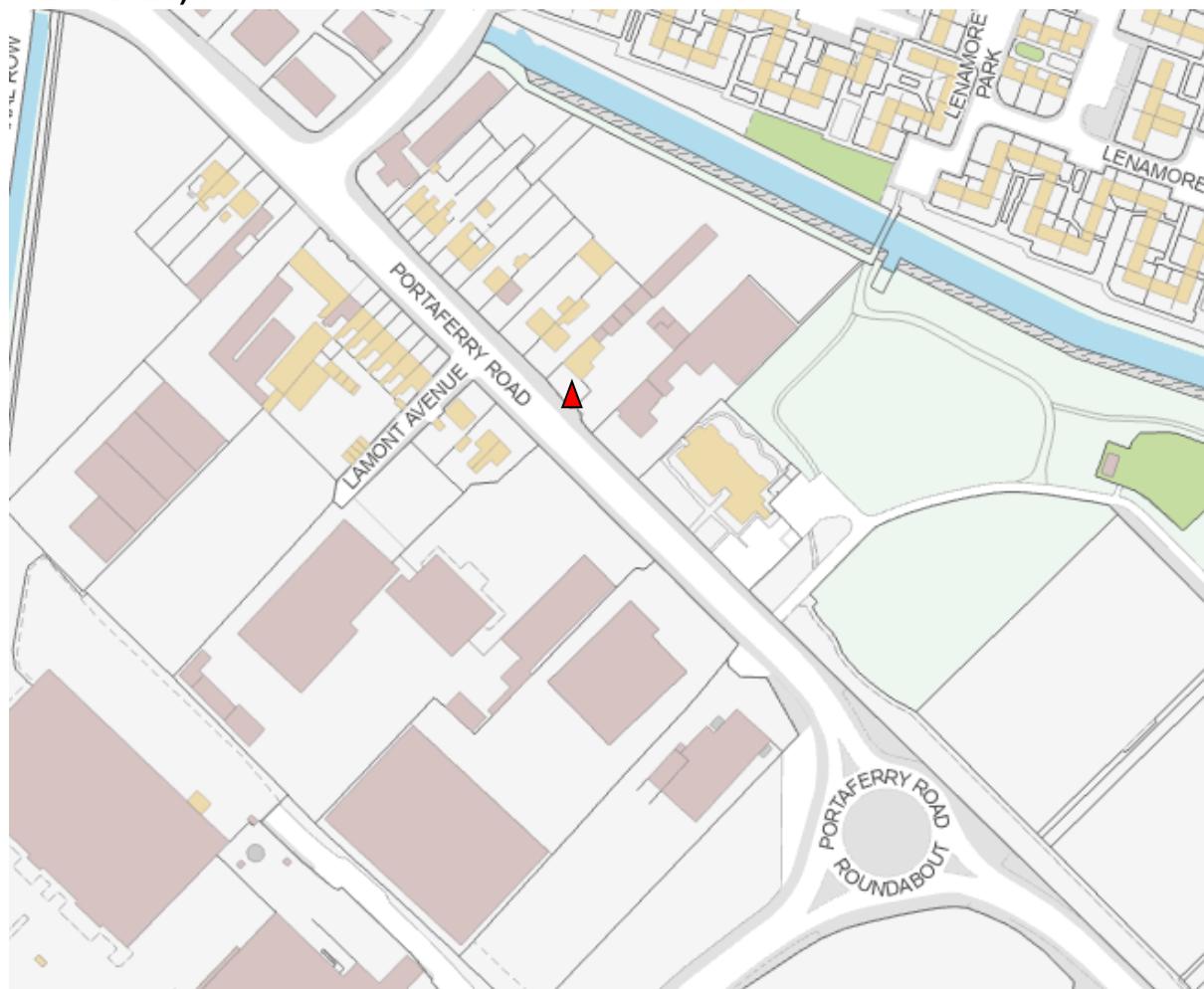
Figure 2.11 Hollywood junction pictured from A2



▲ Tubes 9, 10 A2 flats Hollywood

▲ Tubes 13, 14 at apartments 36 Shore Road A2

Figure 2.12 Position of Diffusion tube site 11, Portaferry Road Newtownards (new in 2024)



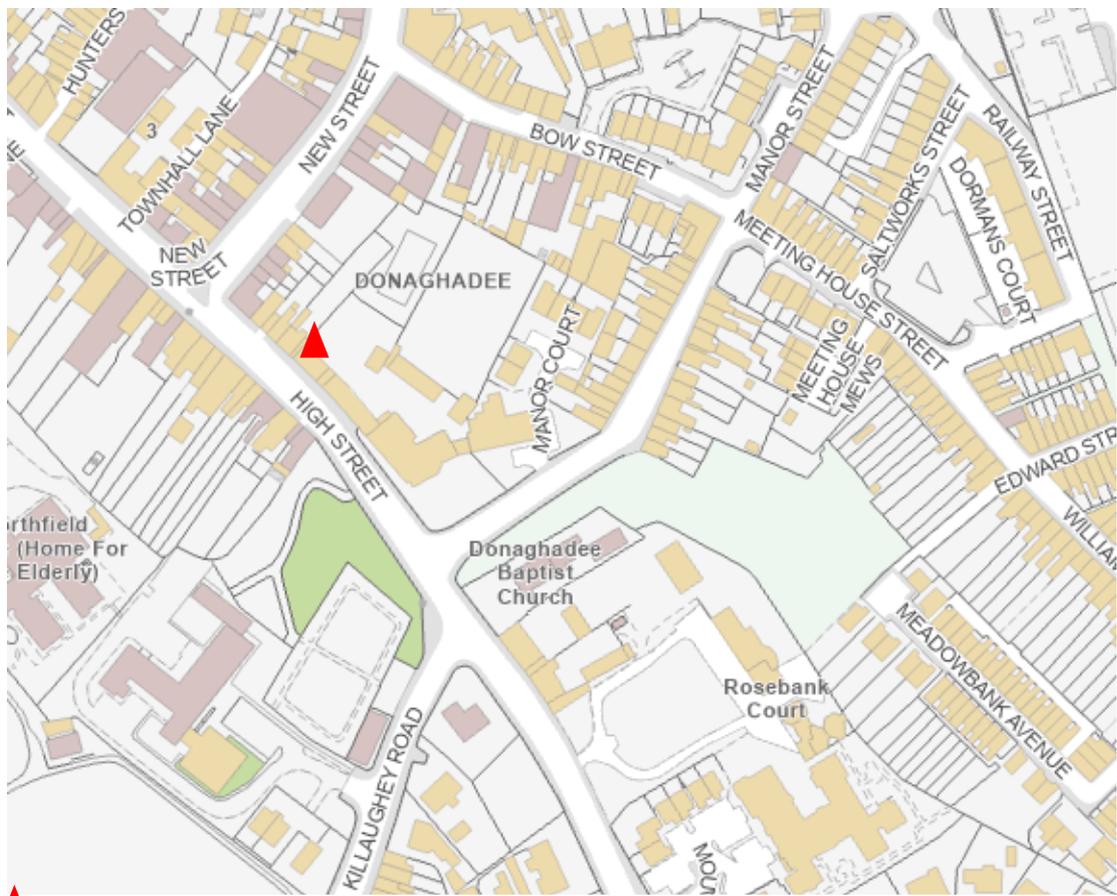
▲ Position of tube

Figure 2.13 Position of Diffusion tube site 12 at 17 Grays Hill Bangor



▲ Position of tube

Figure 2.14 Position of Diffusion tube site 15 Donaghadee (new 2024)



▲ Position new tube

Ards and North Down Borough Council

121

Table 2.2 – Details of Non- Automatic Monitoring Sites

Site ID	Site Name	Site Type	X OS Grid Reference (Irish Grid)	Y OS Grid Reference (Irish Grid)	Site Height (m)	Pollutants Monitored	In AQMA?	Is Monitoring Co-located with a Continuous Analyser (Y/N)	Relevant Exposure? (Y/N with distance (m) from monitoring site to relevant exposure)	Distance to Kerb of Nearest Road (m) (N/A if not applicable)	Does this Location Represent Worst-Case Exposure?
1	A2 Ballyrobert	Roadside	345002	380823	2	NO ₂	No	No	Y (<1m)	3m	Y
2	A2 Seahill	Roadside	343545	381102	2	NO ₂	No	No	Y (<1m)	10m	Y
3	A2 Station Rd Cultra roadside	Roadside	342461	380656	2	NO ₂	No	No	Y (5m)	1.3m	Y
4	High Street Holywood	Roadside	339785	379119	2.5	NO ₂	No	No	Y (20m)	1.5	Y
5	19 Bangor Rd Newtownards	Roadside	349687	374267	2.5	NO ₂	No	No	Y (1.5m)	1.5m	Y
6	67 South St. Newtownards (b)	Roadside	348238	373590	2.5	NO ₂	No	No	Y (0.5m)	1.5m	Y
7	82 Frances St. Newtownards	Roadside	349324	369201	2	NO ₂	No	No	Y (0.5)	1.5m	Y
8	11 High St Comber	Roadside	345827	369201	2.5	NO ₂	No	No	Y (0.5)	1.5m	Y
9	A2 Flats Holywood(1)	Roadside	339756	379330	2	NO ₂	No	No	Y (0.5m)	2.9m	Y
10	A2 Flats Holywood(1)	Roadside	339774	379351	2	NO ₂	No	No	Y (0.5m)	2.9m	Y

Ards and North Down Borough Council

122

Site ID	Site Name	Site Type	X OS Grid Reference (Irish Grid)	Y OS Grid Reference (Irish Grid)	Site Height (m)	Pollutants Monitored	In AQMA?	Is Monitoring Co-located with a Continuous Analyser (Y/N)	Relevant Exposure? (Y/N with distance (m) from monitoring site to relevant exposure)	Distance to Kerb of Nearest Road (m) (N/A if not applicable)	Does this Location Represent Worst-Case Exposure?
11	Portaferry Road	Roadside	349481	373726	2	NO ₂	No	No	Y (2m)	8m	Y
12	Grays Hill Bangor	Roadside	350195	381781	2	NO ₂	No	No	Y (11m)	2m	Y
13	Apartment 36 A2 one	Roadside	339729	379277	2	NO ₂	No	No	Y (5.1)	2.9m	Y
14	Apartment 36 A2 two	Roadside	339691	379264	2	NO ₂	No	No	Y (5.1)	2.9m	Y
15	Donaghadee	Roadside	359133	379813	2	NO ₂	No	No	Y (0)	10m	Y

The sites in green commenced in 2024

2.2 Comparison of Monitoring Results with Air Quality Objectives

No exceedances of the AQS objectives have been identified from the monitoring data collected since the last Update and Screening Assessment. All monitored pollutant concentrations have been below their respective air quality objective limits at relevant exposure. In the following section results are presented for NO₂ at the automatic and diffusion tube sites and compared with the objective.

2.2.1 Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂)

In the following section results are presented for NO₂ at the automatic and diffusion tube sites and compared with the objective.

All sites meet the objective at relevant exposure.

Automatic Monitoring Data

Table 2.3 presents the annual mean concentrations of NO₂ determined at the automatic site in 2024 from the hourly measurements.

Table 2.3 – Results of Automatic Monitoring for NO₂: Comparison with Annual Mean Objective

Site ID	X OS Grid Ref	Y OS Grid Ref	Site Type	Valid Data Capture for Monitoring Period % ^a	Valid Data Capture 2024 % ^b	Annual Mean Concentration (µg/m ³)				
						2020* ^c	2021* ^c	2022* ^c	2023* ^c	2024 ^c
A2 Holywood	X339481	Y379328	Roadside	99	99	20	22	22	20.5	19.4

In bold, exceedance of the NO₂ annual mean AQS objective of 40µg/m³

^a i.e. data capture for the monitoring period, in cases where monitoring was only carried out for part of the year

^b i.e. data capture for the full calendar year (e.g. if monitoring was carried out for six months the maximum data capture for the full calendar year would be 50%)

^c Means should be “annualised” as in Boxes 7.9 and 7.10 of LAQM.TG22, if valid data capture is less than 75%

* Annual mean concentrations for previous years are optional

Figure 2.15 – Trends in Annual Mean NO₂ Concentrations Measured at Automatic Monitoring Sites

Results have been consistent since installation of the automatic station; any variation was most probably due to climatic conditions pre the COVID pandemic when levels reduced and have remained constant since the COVID restrictions eased and traffic flows increased again although a reduction is still evident. There have been no exceedances of the hourly mean.

Table 2.4 – Results of Automatic Monitoring for NO₂: Comparison with 1-hour Mean Objective

Site ID	Site Type	Within AQMA?	Valid Data Capture for Monitoring Period % ^a	Valid Data Capture 2024 % ^b	Number of Hourly Means > 200µg/m ³				
					2020* ^c	2021* ^c	2022* ^c	2023* ^c	2024 ^c
A2 Hollywood	Roadside	NO	N/A	99	0	0	0	0	0

In bold, exceedance of the NO₂ hourly mean AQS objective (200µg/m³ – not to be exceeded more than 18 times per year)

^a i.e. data capture for the monitoring period, in cases where monitoring was only carried out for part of the year

^b i.e. data capture for the full calendar year (e.g. if monitoring was carried out for six months the maximum data capture for the full calendar year would be 50%)

^c If the data capture for full calendar year is less than 85%, include the 99.8th percentile of hourly means in brackets

* Number of exceedances for previous years is optional

Diffusion Tube Monitoring Data

Results of the NO₂ diffusion tube sites, situated within the borough are shown below in Table 2.5.

They are sited in accordance with the technical guidance LAQM.TG 22

A diffusion tube co-location study in 2024 was carried out at the Holywood automatic site, the results of this study were submitted into the national data base, the 2024 local bias was **0.69**, as in previous years a decision has been made to apply the national bias adjustment factor of **0.84**, as this is based on a number of studies and therefore deemed to be a more realistic figure.

The A2 Holywood junction continues to be a source of concern as this is where the highest traffic flows can normally be found on this main arterial route to the City Centre, at this roadside location there are two large residential apartment blocks situated roadside, there are four diffusion tubes positioned here, all the A2 roadside sites have been distance calculated to the nearest relevant exposure. The NO₂ results from automatic real time monitor positioned across from the diffusion tube sites at this Holywood junction are lower, 19.4ug/m³ annual mean, however its location benefits from sea breezes as the diffusion tubes at the apartment blocks are sheltered, a picture of these sites can be found in figures 2.10 and 2.11, due to a date error the March results were not available. Results reduced in 2020 due to the reduced traffic flows during the COVID pandemic they have not returned to pre-pandemic levels most probably due to the change in working patterns and a larger number of low emission vehicles.

Details of the QA/QC for the diffusion tubes and the reason for the use of the bias adjustment factor **0.84** can be found in Appendix A

Trends for the 15 diffusion tube sites within the Council area are shown in figure 2.16

Table 2.5 – Annual Results Summary

DT ID	X OS Grid Ref (Irish Grid)	Y OS Grid Ref (Irish Grid)	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual Mean: Raw Data	Annual Mean: Annualised and Bias Adjusted <(0.84)>	Annual Mean: Distance Corrected to Nearest Exposure	Comment
A2 Ballyrobert	345002	380823	28.6	24.8		27.7	33.0	27.8	26.1	21.7	27.2	23.2	28.6	23.4	26.3	22.1	N/A	
A2 Seahill	343545	381102	14.4	10.9		10.9	12.5	11.1	11.2	9.5	11.6	10.9	13.7	12.3	11.7	9.8		
A2 Station Rd Cultra roadside	342461	380656	42.0	31.8		34.1	37.7	29.3	30.9	37.2	28.6	39.0	39.5	35.8	35.1	29.5		
High Street Holywood	339785	379119	26.0	22.0		20.0	22.5	14.6	15.4	16.2	21.1	20.7	24.7	22.1	20.4	17.1		
19 Bangor Rd Newtownards	349687	374267	31.1	25.7		25.5	26.5	22.4	21.4	20.1	24.5	25.1	29.2	30.0	25.5	21.5		
67 South St. Newtownards (b)	348238	373590	31.6	29.0		24.8	23.9	23.6	20.6	18.7	25.7	24.1	28.4	30.2	25.5	21.4		
82 Frances St. Newtownards	349324	369201	23.3	20.9		18.4	18.4	15.8	13.0	13.3	20.2	18.0	22.2	23.1	18.8	15.8		
11 High St Comber	345827	369201	32.7	28.7		28.3		26.6	19.8	21.3	30.8	26.1	31.9	27.0	27.2	22.8		
A2 Flats Holywood(1)	339756	379330	32.5	31.6		29.4	36.4		27.1	29.9	19.6	34.6	32.1	30.1	30.5	25.6		
A2 Flats Holywood(2)	339774	379351	37.1	36.1		25.9		21.2	21.4	31.3	24.5	32.5	35.4	34.9	30.2	25.4		
Portaferry Road Newtownards	349481	373726	25.1	21.6		18.7	21.4	18.3	15.1	18.9	20.0	21.3	23.7	24.9	20.9	17.5		

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Grays Hill Bangor	350195	381781	22.6	20.7		15.5	16.7	13.7	13.5	11.6	17.8	17.8	18.2	19.6	17.1	14.3		
Apartment 36 A2 one	339729	379277	39.1			35.4	43.5	25.0	25.5	32.5	33.5	36.4	35.5	34.8	34.1	28.6		
Apartment 36 A2 two	339691	379264	37.5	38.1		35.8	36.8	18.6	32.3	24.3	39.5	27.7	32.1	29.7	31.7	26.6		
Donaghadee	359133	379813	17.5	17.7		20.3	27.0	17.5	17.3	15.4	21.8	17.4	19.4		19.0	15.9		

These sites were new in 2024

In bold, exceedance of the NO₂ annual mean AQS objective of 40µg/m³

Underlined, annual mean > 60µg/m³, indicating a potential exceedance of the NO₂ hourly mean AQS objective

^a Means should be “annualised” as in Boxes 7.9 and 7.10 of LAQM.TG22, if full calendar year data capture is less than 75%

^b If an exceedance is measured at a monitoring site not representative of public exposure, NO₂ concentration at the nearest relevant exposure should be estimated based on the “[NO₂ fall-off with distance](http://laqm.defra.gov.uk/tools-monitoring-data/no2-falloff.html)” calculator (<http://laqm.defra.gov.uk/tools-monitoring-data/no2-falloff.html>), and results should be discussed in a specific section. The procedure is also explained in paragraphs 7.77 to 7.79 of LAQM.TG22.

Ards and North Down Borough Council

129

Table 2.6 – Results of NO₂ Diffusion Tubes (2020 to 2024)

Site ID	Site Type	Within AQMA?	Annual Mean Concentration (µg/m ³) - Adjusted for Bias ^a				
			2020 (Bias Adjustment Factor = 0.81)	2021 (Bias Adjustment Factor = 0.84)	2022 (Bias Adjustment Factor = 0.83)	2023 (Bias Adjustment Factor = 0.81)	2024 (Bias Adjustment Factor = 0.84)
A2 Ballyrobert	Kerbside	N	19	23	22	22	22.1
A2 Seahill	Roadside	N	9	15	10	9	9.8
A2 Station Rd Cultra	Kerbside	N	26	29	34	30	29.5
High Street Holywood	Kerbside	N	17	21	19	19	17.1
19 Bangor Rd Newtownards	Kerbside	N	22	23	23	22	21.5
67 South St. Newtownards (b)	Kerbside	N	19	22	22	21	21.4
82 Frances St. Newtownards	Kerbside	N	18	21	20	17	15.8
11 High St Comber	Kerbside	N	24	22	25	24	22.8
A2 Flats (1) Holywood	Kerbside	N	24	28	26	28	25.6
A2 Flats (2) Holywood	Kerbside	N	24	25	28	26	25.4
Portaferry Road Newtownards	Kerbside	N					17.5

Site ID	Site Type	Within AQMA?	Annual Mean Concentration ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) - Adjusted for Bias ^a				
			2020 (Bias Adjustment Factor = 0.81)	2021 (Bias Adjustment Factor = 0.84)	2022 (Bias Adjustment Factor = 0.83)	2023 (Bias Adjustment Factor = 0.81)	2024 (Bias Adjustment Factor = 0.84)
Grays Hill Bangor	Kerbside	N	15	17	17	15	14.3
Apartment 36 shore Road A2 one	Kerbside	N	29	30	32	28	28.6
Apartment 36 Shore Road A2 two	Kerbside	N	25	30	32	32	26.6
Donaghadee	Kerbside	N					15.9

These sites were new in 2024

In bold, exceedance of the NO₂ annual mean AQS objective of 40 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$

Underlined, annual mean > 60 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, indicating a potential exceedance of the NO₂ hourly mean AQS objective

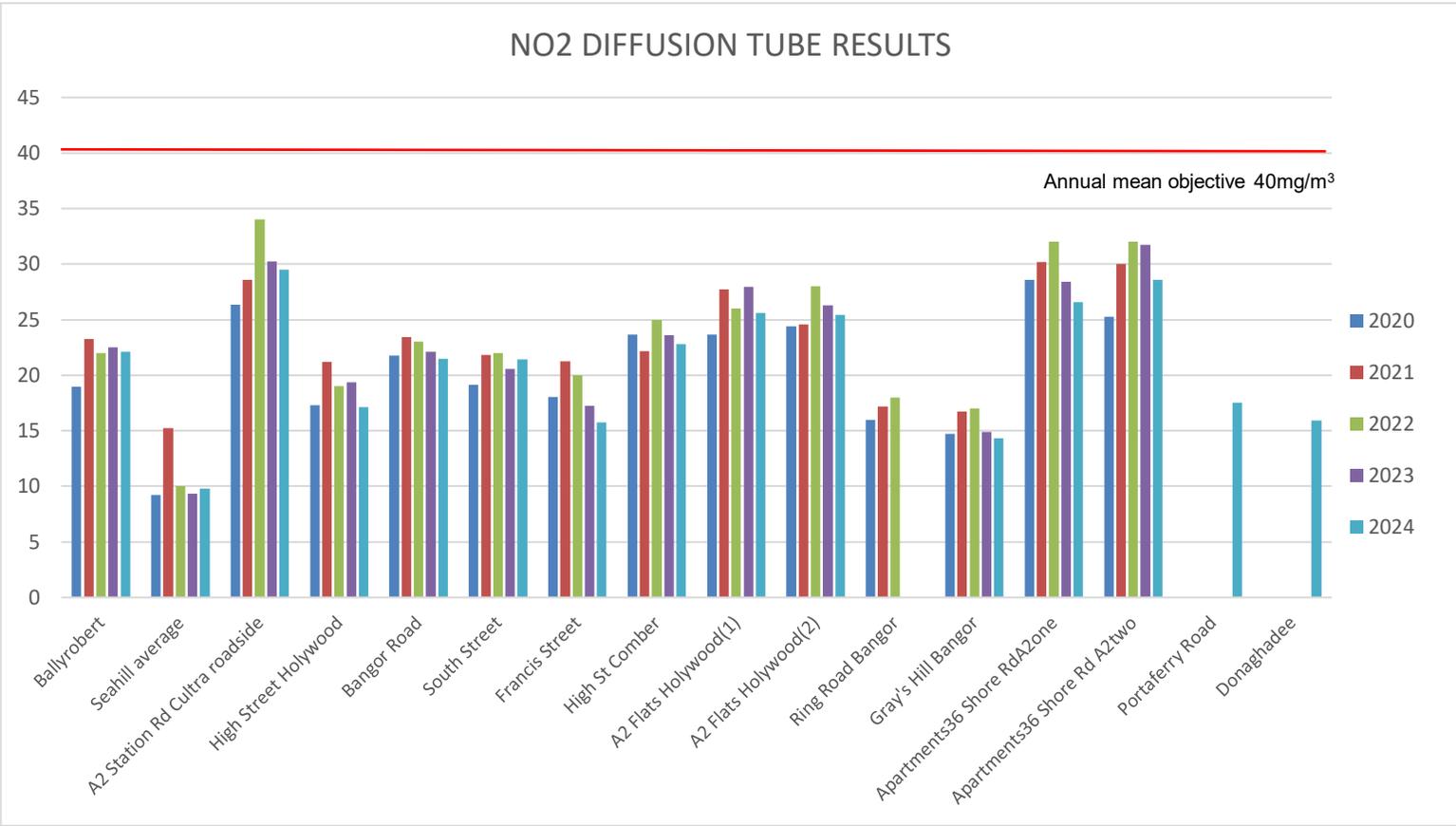
^a Means should be “annualised” as in Boxes 7.9 and 7.10 of LAQM.TG22, if full calendar year data capture is less than 75%

^b If an exceedance is measured at a monitoring site not representative of public exposure, NO₂ concentration at the nearest relevant exposure should be estimated based on the “[NO₂ fall-off with distance](http://laqm.defra.gov.uk/tools-monitoring-data/no2-falloff.html)” calculator (<http://laqm.defra.gov.uk/tools-monitoring-data/no2-falloff.html>), and results should be discussed in a specific section. The procedure is also explained in paragraphs 7.77 to 7.79 of LAQM.TG22.

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Figure 2.16 – Trends in Annual Mean Nitrogen Dioxide Concentrations Measured at Diffusion Tube Monitoring Sites

NO₂ diffusion tube results have remained consistent any annual variation is more likely to be as a result of climatic conditions rather than changes in emissions, in 2020 due to the reduced traffic flows during the COVID pandemic results were lower than previous years, a continued change in working patterns has resulted in NO₂ levels remaining lower than pre-pandemic.



2.2.2 Particulate Matter (PM₁₀)

Automatic monitoring of PM₁₀ were recorded at the Holywood site using a FIDAS 200 instrument also measuring PM_{2.5}, the results are ratified and adjusted accordingly by AQDM, the data management company.

Summaries of this data, with regard to annual and hourly mean objectives, are presented below.

Results continued in 2024 to be below the air quality objective. AQDM were contracted to carry out the QA/QC for the site and ratify the data. ESU1 were employed to service and maintain the site. Summaries of this data, regarding annual and hourly mean objectives, are presented below.

The data was downloaded onto the NI Air Quality web site, providing real-time data, and advice on expected levels of air pollution. www.airqualityni.co.uk

Reports from the ratified data and the QA/QC applied can be found in appendix A.

Table 2.7 – Results of Automatic Monitoring for PM₁₀: Comparison with Annual Mean Objective

Site ID	Site Type	Within AQMA?	Valid Data Capture for monitoring Period % ^a	Valid Data Capture 2024 % ^b	Confirm Gravimetric Equivalent (Y or NA)	Annual Mean Concentration µg/m ³				
						2020* ^c	2021* ^c	2022* ^c	2023* ^c	2024 ^c
A2 Holywood	Roadside	N	N/A	99.1	Y	14	12	13	12	12

In bold, exceedance of the PM₁₀ annual mean AQS objective of 40µg/m³

^a i.e. data capture for the monitoring period, in cases where monitoring was only carried out for part of the year

^b i.e. data capture for the full calendar year (e.g. if monitoring was carried out for six months the maximum data capture for the full calendar year would be 50%)

^c Means should be “annualised” as in Boxes 7.9 and 7.10 of LAQM.TG22, if valid data capture is less than 75%

* Annual mean concentrations for previous years are optional

Table 2.8 – Results of Automatic Monitoring for PM₁₀: Comparison with 24-hour Mean Objective

Site ID	Site Type	Within AQMA?	Valid Data Capture for monitoring Period % ^a	Valid Data Capture 2024 % ^b	Confirm Gravimetric Equivalent	Number of Daily Means > 50µg/m ³				
						2020* ^c	2021* ^c	2022* ^c	2023* ^c	2024 ^c
A2 Holywood	Roadside	N	N/A	99.1%	Y	0	0	0	0	0

In bold, exceedance of the PM₁₀ daily mean AQS objective (50µg/m³ – not to be exceeded more than 35 times per year)

^a i.e. data capture for the monitoring period, in cases where monitoring was only carried out for part of the year

^b i.e. data capture for the full calendar year (e.g. if monitoring was carried out for six months the maximum data capture for the full calendar year would be 50%)

^c if data capture for full calendar year is less than 85%, include the 90.4th percentile of 24-hour means in brackets

* Number of exceedances for previous years is optional

Figure 2.17 – Trends in Annual Mean PM₁₀ Concentrations

PM₁₀ has remained consistently low in Holywood

2.2.3 Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂)

Ards and North down Borough Council did not carry out any monitoring of SO₂ in 2024, no new sites were identified through the planning process and Air Quality Assessments submitted.

2.2.4 Benzene

No monitoring of Benzene was carried out in 2024, ANDBC review all planning applications and all air quality assessments received, no major changes have been identified requiring a further assessment of Benzene. ANDBC borders Belfast city Council with the largest population and traffic flows within Northern Ireland, Benzene has been monitored in Belfast since 2002 and remains well below the objective of 3.25 ug/m³

Site ID	Site type	Within AQMA? Which AQMA?	Valid Data Capture 2023 %	Running annual mean concentrations (µg/m ³)				
				2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Belfast Centre (Lombard Street)	Urban Background	N	100	0.44	0.37	0.39	0.38	0.42

2.2.5 Other Pollutants Monitored

Particulate Matter (PM_{2.5})

At the beginning of 2021 a new FIDAS 200 monitoring PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} was installed at the Holywood automatic site, the annual mean results for PM_{2.5} in 2024 were 6.7 ug/m³ with 99% data capture, below the UK limit value of 20 ug/m³

2.2.6 Summary of Compliance with AQS Objectives

Ards and North Down Borough Council has examined the results from monitoring in the Borough. Concentrations are all below the objectives, therefore there is no need to proceed to a Detailed Assessment.

3 New Local Developments

Ards and North Down Borough Council confirms that there are no new or newly identified local developments which may have an impact on air quality within the Local Authority area resulting in exceedances of the Air Quality Objectives.

Ards and North Down Borough council confirms that all the following have been considered:

- **Road traffic sources**
- **Other transport sources**
- **Industrial sources**
- **Commercial and domestic sources**
- **New developments with fugitive or uncontrolled sources.**

3.1 Road Traffic Sources

ANDBC can confirm they have considered

- Narrow congested streets with residential properties close to the kerb.
- Busy streets where people may spend one hour or more close to traffic.
- Roads with a high flow of buses and/or HGVs.
- Junctions.
- New roads constructed or proposed since the last Updating and Screening Assessment.
- Roads with significantly changed traffic flows.
- Bus or coach stations

The Environmental Health Department has commented on planning applications where an air quality impact assessment may be necessary, no new road traffic sources were identified.

3.2 Other Transport Sources

ANDBC can confirm they have considered

- Airports.
 - Locations where diesel or steam trains are regularly stationary for periods of 15 minutes or more, with potential for relevant exposure within 15m.
 - Locations with a large number of movements of diesel locomotives, and potential long-term relevant exposure within 30m.
- Ports for shipping.

The Environmental Health Department comments on all planning applications where the air quality impact is assessed, no new other transport sources were identified.

3.3 Industrial Sources

ANDBC can confirm they have considered the following

- **Industrial installations:** new or proposed installations for which an air quality assessment has been carried out.
 - **Industrial installations:** existing installations where emissions have increased substantially or new relevant exposure has been introduced.
 - **Industrial installations:** new or significantly changed installations with no previous air quality assessment.
 - Major fuel storage depots storing petrol.
 - Petrol stations.
- Poultry farms.

The Environmental Health Department comments on planning applications where an Air Quality Impact Assessment (AQIA) may be necessary, no applications required further action in relation to Air Quality.

3.4 Commercial and Domestic Sources

ANDBC can confirm they have considered the following

- Biomass combustion plant – individual installations.

- Areas where the combined impact of several biomass combustion sources may be relevant.
- Areas where domestic solid fuel burning may be relevant.

Combined Heat and Power (CHP) plant.

The Environmental Health Department comments on planning applications where an Air Quality Impact Assessment (AQIA) may be necessary, no applications required further action in relation to Air Quality.

3.5 New Developments with Fugitive or Uncontrolled Sources

ANDBC can confirm they have considered the following

- Landfill sites.
- Quarries.
- Unmade haulage roads on industrial sites.
- Waste transfer stations, etc.

The Environmental Health Department comments on planning applications where an Air Quality Impact Assessment (AQIA) may be necessary, no applications required further action in relation to Air Quality.

4 Local / Regional Air Quality Strategy

ANDBC does not have a local Air Quality Strategy, however within the Local Development Plan presently being established improving Air Quality is an objective.

5 Planning Applications

A number of planning applications were examined by the Environmental Department requiring, no issues were identified in relation to Air Quality.

6 Conclusions and Proposed Actions

6.1 Conclusions from New Monitoring Data

No monitoring sites at relevant exposure within the Council Area have shown exceedances of the air quality objectives. The NO₂ diffusion tube sites on the A2, the main arterial route to Belfast City, remain the highest monitored levels within the Borough however these are below the annual mean objective of 40ug/m³, with the maximum annual mean recorded 29.5ug/m³. Since the reduction in NO₂ during the COVID restrictions in 2020, probably due to new working patterns established and the growing popularity of cleaner vehicles, monitored results have not increased significantly showing a general trend in Air Quality improvement. The automatic real time NO₂ monitor positioned across from the Holywood junction on the A2, results are much lower than other diffusion tube sites on this road, however its location benefits from sea breezes as the diffusion tubes are positioned at more sheltered locations with relevant exposure.

No new sites were identified in 2024 through the planning process, however two new sites were identified due to local knowledge of traffic congestion at these locations the Portaferry Road in Newtownards and Donaghadee Town centre.

6.2 Conclusions relating to New Local Developments

There are no new local developments that will require more detailed consideration in the next Updating and Screening Assessment.

6.3 Proposed Actions

This 2025 Progress Report for Ards and North Down Borough Council has identified there is no need to proceed to a detailed assessment for any of the pollutants. Ards and North Down Borough is focused upon improving air quality as a whole, therefore all existing monitoring sites shall continue in 2025 to help determine if a trend in reduction in NO₂ can be established.

Ards and North Down Borough Council initiated a no idling outside schools campaign launched in 2019, this remains available to schools and was extended to council carparks to help educate the public on the effects of vehicle emissions a picture may be found in the Appendices.

7 References

TG (2022) Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 as amended by the Environment Act 2021.

Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 Part III

Appendices

Appendix A: Quality Assurance / Quality Control (QA/QC) Data

QA/QC Data of automatic sites

Ards and North Down Borough Council commissioned AQDM Technology to provide the QA/QC of the automatic measurements of NO₂ and PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} for the A2 Holywood site. Local authority staff act as the local site operator and visit the site on a weekly basis carrying out any manual calibration or filter changes required.

ESU1 were employed to service and maintain the analyser.



Automatic station reports produced by data management company

Air Quality Report

Produced by AQDM on behalf of North Down
NORTH DOWN HOLYWOOD A2 2024

Fully ratified by AQDM to the LAQM TG22 standards using the AURN methodology

Site Environment and Description

Marine Highway

ROADSIDE [Map](#) [Photo](#) [Dashboard](#)

Statistical Summary Report

This 2024 report contains all the statistics required for the LAQM reporting.

The full results and statistics are available from the Air Quality in Northern Ireland website
<https://www.airqualityni.co.uk>.

Gravimetric PM_{2.5}

The Gravimetric PM_{2.5} is the FIDAS PM_{2.5} / 1.06

Daily Air Quality Index (DAQI)

The table below shows the duration within the bands of the Daily Air Quality Index (DAQI).
The DAQI was introduced by Defra in January 2012 and revised April 2013.

DAQI Pollutant	Moderate	High	Very High
Nitrogen Dioxide	0 hours	0	0
PM ₁₀ Particulate Matter	0 days	0	0
PM _{2.5} Particulate Matter	0 days	0	0

Air Quality Exceedances of the AQS Objectives

NO₂ - annual data capture was 99.0 %

The annual mean was 19.4 µg m⁻³ which did not exceed the 40 µg m⁻³ Objective.

The maximum hourly mean was 92.2 µg m⁻³ so there were no exceedances of the NO₂ hourly limit of 200 µg m⁻³. There is an annual allowance of 18 hours so the Objective was not exceeded.

Gravimetric PM₁₀ - annual data capture was 99.1 %

The annual mean was 12.0 µg m⁻³ which did not exceed the 40 µg m⁻³ Objective.

Air Quality Report

NORTH DOWN HOLYWOOD A2 2024

Air Quality Statistics

Pollutant	NO ₂	NO	NO _x	Grav PM ₁₀ ⁺	Grav PM _{2.5} [~]	PM ₁ [§]
Number Very High #	0	-	-	0	0	-
Number High #	0	-	-	0	0	-
Number Moderate #	0	-	-	0	0	-
Number Low #	8700	-	-	362	361	-
Maximum 15-min mean	108.4 µg m ⁻³	242.4 µg m ⁻³	460.7 µg m ⁻³	- µg m ⁻³	- µg m ⁻³	170.5 µg m ⁻³
Maximum hourly mean	92.2 µg m ⁻³	212.0 µg m ⁻³	391.1 µg m ⁻³	106.9 µg m ⁻³	97.5 µg m ⁻³	100.1 µg m ⁻³
Maximum running 8-hr mean	70.4 µg m ⁻³	143.4 µg m ⁻³	282.1 µg m ⁻³	81.9 µg m ⁻³	74.5 µg m ⁻³	76.6 µg m ⁻³
Maximum running 24-hr mean	55.3 µg m ⁻³	95.7 µg m ⁻³	197.3 µg m ⁻³	40.9 µg m ⁻³	36.2 µg m ⁻³	36.8 µg m ⁻³
Maximum daily mean	50.2 µg m ⁻³	80.8 µg m ⁻³	166.6 µg m ⁻³	37.4 µg m ⁻³	32.9 µg m ⁻³	33.4 µg m ⁻³
Average	19.4 µg m ⁻³	14.1 µg m ⁻³	41.0 µg m ⁻³	12.0 µg m ⁻³	6.7 µg m ⁻³	5.0 µg m ⁻³
Data capture	99.0 %	99.0 %	99.0 %	99.1 %	99.0 %	98.7 %

Daily Air Quality Index (DAQI) as defined by COMEAP January 2012 and revised April 2013

+ Gravimetric PM₁₀ as measured by a FIDAS instrument using 1 gravimetric factor

~ Gravimetric PM_{2.5} as measured by a FIDAS instrument using 0.94 gravimetric factor

§ PM₁ as measured by a FIDAS instrument

Mass units for the gases are at 20°C and 1013mb

NO_x mass units are NO_x as NO₂ µg m⁻³

Air Quality Exceedances

Pollutant	Air Quality Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003	Max Conc	Number	Days	Allowed	Exceeded
Nitrogen Dioxide	Annual mean > 40 µg m ⁻³	19.4 µg m ⁻³	0	-	-	No
Nitrogen Dioxide	Hourly mean > 200 µg m ⁻³	92.2 µg m ⁻³	0	0	18 hours	No
PM ₁₀ Particulate Matter (Gravimetric)	Annual mean > 40 µg m ⁻³	12.0 µg m ⁻³	0	-	-	No
PM ₁₀ Particulate Matter (Gravimetric)	Daily mean > 50 µg m ⁻³	37.4 µg m ⁻³	0	0	35 days	No
PM _{2.5} Particulate Matter (Gravimetric)	Annual mean > 20 µg m ⁻³	6.7 µg m ⁻³	0	-	-	No

Air Quality Report

NORTH DOWN HOLYWOOD A2 2024

Monthly Data Captures %

Pollutant	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nitrogen Dioxide	100.0	100.0	99.6	100.0	100.0	100.0	99.9	99.9	89.2	99.9	100.0	100.0
Grav PM ₁₀	100.0	100.0	99.9	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	89.3	100.0	100.0	100.0
Grav PM _{2.5}	100.0	100.0	99.9	100.0	100.0	99.6	99.9	99.1	89.3	100.0	100.0	100.0
PM ₁	100.0	100.0	99.9	100.0	100.0	99.6	99.9	96.0	89.3	100.0	100.0	100.0

Monthly Means

Pollutant	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nitrogen Dioxide $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$	25.3	25.6	19.2	17.0	17.4	13.0	14.6	15.1	16.6	23.4	25.8	20.2
Grav PM ₁₀ $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$	13.0	12.8	13.7	10.3	15.2	10.5	8.1	11.7	11.9	11.7	14.5	10.1
Grav PM _{2.5} $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$	7.2	7.1	8.2	5.1	9.2	5.6	4.4	6.7	6.3	6.1	9.1	5.6
PM ₁ $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$	5.3	5.2	6.3	3.2	7.5	4.0	3.1	4.9	4.6	4.1	7.6	4.1

North Down Holywood A2 Air Quality Report produced by:

Geoff Broughton

Air Quality Data Management (AQDM)

Tel: 01235 559761

Geoff.Broughton@aqdm.co.uk

<http://www.aqdm.co.uk>

<http://uk.linkedin.com/pub/geoff-broughton/22/187/87/>

<http://www.UKAirQuality.net>



Air Quality Data Management (AQDM)
23rd January 2025

Ards and North Down Borough Council

QA/QC of Diffusion Tube Monitoring

In 2024 the NO₂ tubes were prepared and supplied by Gradko International Limited, using the preparation method 20%TEA/Water.

Diffusion Tube Bias Adjustment Factors

Factor from Local Co-location Studies

A co-location study was carried out at the Hollywood site and the data submitted to the national data base <https://laqm.defra.gov.uk/air-quality/air-quality-assessment/national-bias/>

The local bias adjustment figure was **0.69**.

A copy of the June 2025 National bias adjustment spread sheet can be found below:

National Diffusion Tube Bias Adjustment Factor Spreadsheet						Spreadsheet Version Number: 04/25				
Follow the steps below in the correct order to show the results of relevant co-location studies						This spreadsheet will be updated at the end of June 2025 LAQM Helpdesk Website				
Data only apply to tubes exposed monthly and are not suitable for correcting individual short-term monitoring periods										
Whenever presenting adjusted data, you should state the adjustment factor used and the version of the spreadsheet										
This spreadsheet will be updated every few months; the factors may therefore be subject to change. This should not discourage their immediate use.										
The LAQM Helpdesk is operated on behalf of Defra and the Devolved Administrations by Bureau Veritas, in conjunction with contract partners AECOM and the National Physical Laboratory.						Spreadsheet maintained by the National Physical Laboratory. Original compiled by Air Quality Consultants Ltd.				
Step 1:		Step 2:		Step 3:		Step 4:				
Select the Laboratory that Analyses Your Tubes from the Drop-Down List		Select a Preparation Method from the Drop-Down List		Select a Year from the Drop-Down List		Where there is only one study for a chosen combination, you should use the adjustment factor shown with caution. Where there is more than one study, use the overall factor ² shown in blue at the foot of the final column.				
If a laboratory is not shown, we have no data for this laboratory.		If a preparation method is not shown, we have no data for this method at this laboratory.		If a year is not shown, we have no data.		If you have your own co-location study then see footnote ³ . If uncertain what to do then contact the Local Air Quality Management Helpdesk at LAQMHelpdesk@bureauveritas.com or 0800 0327953				
Analysed By ¹	Method <small>To do your own co-location, choose 010 from the pop-up list</small>	Year <small>To update your co-location, choose (A1)</small>	Site Type	Local Authority	Length of Study (months)	Diffusion Tube Mean Conc. (Dm) (µg/m ³)	Automatic Monitor Mean Conc. (Cm) (µg/m ³)	Bias (B)	Tube Precision ⁴	Bias Adjustment Factor (A) (Cm/Dm)
Gradko	20% TEA in water	2024	UV	Belfast City Council	10	24	20	19.3%	G	0.83
Gradko	20% TEA in water	2024	R	Belfast City Council	12	43	34	28.8%	G	0.78
Gradko	20% TEA in water	2024	R	Belfast City Council	12	24	21	13.9%	G	0.88
Gradko	20% TEA in water	2024	R	Belfast City Council	12	34	27	25.5%	G	0.80
Gradko	20% TEA in water	2024	R	Blackburn With Darwen Bc	12	22	17	32.9%	G	0.75
Gradko	20% TEA in water	2024	R	Bath & North East Somerset	12	25	20	22.6%	G	0.82
Gradko	20% TEA in water	2024	R	Cambridge City Council	12	19	15	28.5%	G	0.78
Gradko	20% TEA in water	2024	UB	Plymouth City Council	12	16	14	13.8%	G	0.88
Gradko	20% TEA in water	2024	R	Plymouth City Council	12	31	23	33.4%	S	0.75
Gradko	20% TEA in water	2024	R	Monmouthshire County Council	12	29	24	19.4%	G	0.84
Gradko	20% TEA in water	2024	KS	Manlybone Road Intercomparison	11	41	36	16.1%	G	0.86
Gradko	20% TEA in water	2024	R	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council	12	24	19	27.8%	G	0.78
Gradko	20% TEA in water	2024	R	Ards And North Down Borough Council	11	28	20	44.5%	G	0.69
Gradko	20% TEA in water	2024	R	Eastleigh Borough Council	12	29	24	20.3%	G	0.83
Gradko	20% TEA in water	2024	UB	Eastleigh Borough Council	12	19	17	12.4%	G	0.89
Gradko	20% TEA in water	2024	R	Eastleigh Borough Council	12	19	17	12.0%	G	0.89
Gradko	20% TEA in water	2024	R	Gateshead Council	12	20	18	13.9%	G	0.88
Gradko	20% TEA in water	2024	R	Gateshead Council	11	20	17	19.7%	G	0.84
Gradko	20% TEA in water	2024	R	Gateshead Council	12	24	20	21.7%	G	0.82
Gradko	20% TEA in water	2024	R	Gateshead Council	12	27	23	19.0%	G	0.84
Gradko	20% TEA in water	2024	R	Gateshead Council	12	28	30	-6.0%	G	1.06
Gradko	20% TEA in water	2024	R	Brighton & Hove City Council	11	34	27	26.3%	G	0.79
Gradko	20% TEA in water	2024	R	Liverpool City Council	12	34	25	35.7%	G	0.74
Gradko	20% TEA in water	2024	KS	Liverpool City Council	10	52	47	10.2%	G	0.91
Gradko	20% TEA in water	2024	R	Nottingham City Council	10	29	26	12.2%	G	0.89
Gradko	20% TEA in water	2024	R	Wychavon District Council	10	29	26	14.7%	G	0.87
Gradko	20% TEA in water	2024	R	Worcestershire	12	12	12	-3.4%	G	1.04
Gradko	20% TEA in water	2024		Overall Factor² (27 studies)					Use	0.84

Decision to use the bias adjustment factor 0.84

The results of the local co-location study at the Hollywood site were submitted to the national data base, the Hollywood local bias adjustment factor was calculated at **0.69**, this co-location study is on one of the main arterial routes into Belfast City centre. Ards

Ards and North Down Borough Council

149

and North Down Borough Council has confidence in the data from the automatic site, with 99% data capture.

The June 2025 national bias adjustment figure for Gradko in 2024 is **0.84**.

A decision was made to apply the national figure of **0.84** as 27 studies were included in this and therefore deemed to be a more realistic figure.

Picture of the new No Idling initiative posters



Unclassified

ITEM 9

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
	If multiple:
Meeting	Active and Healthy Communities Committee
Date of Meeting	10 March 2026
Responsible Director	Director of Active and Healthy Communities
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community Services (Acting)
Report title	Response to Notice of Motion 687 - Recruitment of Additional Community Safety Officers
Attachments	
File Reference (if applicable)	PCSP 210
Legislation	Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014
Resource Implications	Budget and Staffing Narrative: Additonal Community Safety Officers Requirement of additional budget
Screening Requirements	<i>The Council will commit to consider the implication of all reports under the categories of Section 75, Rural Needs, Data Protection, Climate and Sustainability:</i> Screening of decision not required
Link to Corporate Plan Priority and Outcome	Priority 3: Social 5. Safe, welcoming and inclusive communities that are flourishing If multiple:

At the Council meeting held on 29th October 20205 it was agreed “that this Council recognises the valuable work undertaken by the Community Safety team in tackling anti-social behaviour throughout the Borough. That this Council also acknowledges the significant and increasing pressures on those officers to meet the growing and complex demands of their workload. Furthermore, that Council notes the recent review of the criminal legislative framework to help tackle Anti-Social Behaviour and the greater powers which may devolve to Council, and tasks officers to prepare a report which outlines the needs of the Borough in relation to community safety and the resources currently available, details a range of measures appropriate to address those needs, including recruitment of additional officers, and identifies requisite funding requirements and opportunities”.

Background

Council currently employs two full time Community Safety Officers on a shift pattern as follows:

Monday and Tuesday	9am to 5pm
Wednesday	3pm – 11pm
Thursday	9am – 5pm
Alternate Fridays and Saturdays	3pm – 11pm

Next Steps

Recruitment of additional staff could:

- Increase borough-wide patrol coverage
- Higher quality problem-solving
- Improved visibility and deterrence
- Stronger partnerships and public confidence
- Capacity to meet future legislative requirements
- Long-term stability and innovation for community safety services

Given the wider organisational changes currently underway, it is recommended that Council delays a decision on expanding the Community Safety Team until the outcome of the next phase of the organisational restructuring process is confirmed. This will ensure that any changes to staffing structures, reporting arrangements, operational responsibilities or cross-service functions are fully understood before permanent additions to the team would be considered.

Deferring the decision at this stage would allow Council to:

- Ensure alignment between the proposed CST structure and any new organisational model.
- Avoid duplication or unintended overlap with redesigned service areas.
- Consider whether the managerial responsibilities proposed for the CST Manager will sit within a new tier of leadership or within a revised directorate structure.

- Assess future capacity requirements in the context of wider workforce planning.
- Incorporate forthcoming ASB-related legislative changes into the new organisational arrangement.

Once the organisational restructuring process is completed and new structures are confirmed, a business case for CST expansion can be revisited with greater certainty, ensuring the team's resourcing aligns fully with both operational demand and corporate design principles.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council **Notes** the report until the outcome of the next phase of the organisational restructuring process is confirmed.

Unclassified

ITEM 10**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
	If multiple:
Meeting	Active and Healthy Communities Committee
Date of Meeting	11 March 2026
Responsible Director	Director of Active and Healthy Communities
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Leisure Services and Acting Head of Community Services
Report title	Response to Notice of Motion 668 - Funding for Dance Groups
Attachments	
File Reference (if applicable)	N/A
Legislation	Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014
Resource Implications	None
	Narrative:
Screening Requirements	<i>The Council will commit to consider the implication of all reports under the categories of Section 75, Rural Needs, Data Protection, Climate and Sustainability:</i> Screening of report not required
Link to Corporate Plan Priority and Outcome	Priority 3: Social 5. Safe, welcoming and inclusive communities that are flourishing If multiple: 6

Background

At the May 2025 Council meeting Notice of Motion 668 was agreed as follows:

'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'.

Members will be aware that Council operates a range of funding streams to support community, arts, and sports activity across the Borough. Each programme has defined eligibility criteria, including governance requirements, organisational structures, and accountability standards.

Recognition of the Value of Performance Arts

Council acknowledges the contribution that performance arts make to the Borough.

In particular, performance arts support:

- Community wellbeing, through participation, social connection, and creative expression.
- Education, by providing opportunities for skills development and cultural learning.
- Tourism, by enhancing the cultural offer and attracting visitors to local events and performances.
- The local economy, through employment, event activity, and associated spending.

There is scope for Council to support the growth of performance arts through capacity-building programmes, partnership development, and exploration of future funding models once governance standards are met.

Performance arts activity contributes positively to equality of opportunity by supporting participation across age groups, genders, and abilities, providing accessible cultural engagement, and strengthening community cohesion.

Council currently supports dance groups indirectly through its wider arts funding and cultural programmes. The main mechanisms available are:

- Arts Project Grants (for constituted groups)
- Arts and Heritage Grants & Bursaries
- Youth Arts Training Grants (for individual dancers)
- Participation in Council-supported arts and community events

Governance Requirements

All Council funding programmes for groups require applicants to demonstrate a formal constitution, appropriate governance arrangements, clear financial management processes, and compliance with safeguarding, insurance, and accountability standards. Most voluntary dance groups currently operate informally and do not meet these minimum thresholds.

Dance Recognition by Sport Northern Ireland

The Sporting Activities & National Governing Bodies recognised by the Sport Councils recognises dance as a sport and list 5 disciplines - Ballroom, Latin, Highland Dance, Scottish Country and Folk Dance.

However, within Northern Ireland under the recognition policy there is no recognised National Governing Body for Dance.

DanceSport, which includes competitive Ballroom, Latin, and Breaking, is the only dance organisation progressing toward National Governing Body status. However, it has not yet been granted recognition and therefore is not included on the official National Governing Body recognition list.

As a result:

- Dance within Northern Ireland does not have a recognised National Governing Body listed within the Sporting Activities & National Governing Bodies recognised list
- Dance groups are not classified as sports organisations under national frameworks
- Therefore voluntary dance groups remain ineligible for funding

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council **Notes** the report.

Unclassified

ITEM 11**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
	If multiple:
Meeting	Active and Healthy Communities Committee
Date of Meeting	11 March 2026
Responsible Director	Director of Active and Healthy Communities
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Leisure
Report title	Sports Forum Grants Quarterly Update
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Successful Goldcard Report for Noting 2025-26 Appendix 2 - Successful Individual Travel and Accommodation Report for Noting 2025-26 Appendix 3 – Unsuccessful Report for Noting 2025-26
File Reference (if applicable)	SD155
Legislation	Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014
Resource Implications	None Narrative:
Screening Requirements	<i>The Council will commit to consider the implication of all reports under the categories of Section 75, Rural Needs, Data Protection, Climate and Sustainability:</i> Screening of report not required
Link to Corporate Plan Priority and Outcome	Priority 3: Social 6. Opportunities for people to be active and healthy If multiple:

Background

Members will be aware that in line with the Council's Grants Policy and as agreed at the Active and Healthy Communities Committee delegated authority was approved to the Sports Forum from 12th November 2025.

In September 2025, Officers advised Members that an additional sum of circa £12,000 would be required above the £70,000 budget agreed for 2025/26, to meet the expected level of applications based on current trends of the grants scheme year to date and subsequently. Council approved the allocation of funding to facilitate all eligible requests for the remainder of the year with the surplus being sourced from the success at ABMWLC in surpassing income targets.

£82,000 had been allocated within the 2025/2026 revenue budget for this purpose.

Key Issues

During November and December 2025, the Forum received a total of 30 applications: (1 Coach Education, 7 Goldcards and 22 Individual Travel/Accommodation).

A summary of the **27 successful** applications is detailed in the attached 2025/26 Successful Goldcard and Travel/Accommodation Appendices. *To note, October's details were reported to Committee on the 12th November 2025 before it was agreed to provide a quarterly report.

2025/26 Budget £82,000	Annual Budget	Awarded to Date	Funding Awarded *November & December 2025	Remaining Budget
Anniversary	£2,000	£1,500	£0	£500.00
Coach Education	£3,000	£500.00	£0	£2,500.00
Equipment	£26,750	£25,033.38	£0	£1,716.62
Events	£12,500	£11,922.76	£0	£677.24
Seeding	£2,000	£799.91	£0	£1,200.09
Travel and Accommodation	£32,750	£40,096.83	*£4,100.00	-£7,346.83
Discretionary	£1,000	£340.00	£0	£660.00
Schools/Sports Club Pathway	£2,000	£0	£0	£2,000
7 Goldcards Awarded in November and December 2025 (29 Goldcards in total during 2025/26)				

Next Steps

In December 2025 the remaining budget for 2025/26 was £1,907.12 equivalent to approximately 2% of the total 2025/26 budget. As such, officers were advised to close the Ards and North Down Sports Forum Grants scheme on 6th November 2025 resulting in no further applications being accepted and officers receiving several queries from individuals and clubs who were affected by the closure of the scheme.

However, Members will be aware that at the Committee meeting in December 2025 it was agreed to allocate a further £15,000 to the Sports Forum Grants budget from ABMWLC's budget due to the facility surpassing its income target. This process has been completed and applications for Sports Forum Grants are now being processed.

Summary

This report outlines the *quarter 3 (*November & December 2025 only) grants that have been administrated and approved by the Ards and North Down Sports Forum and is for noting purposes only. This is in line with the Councils Grant Policy and the Council ratifying delegated authority to the Sports Forum from 12th November 2025.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council Notes this report.

APPENDIX 1 - SUCCESSFUL GOLDCARD REPORT FOR NOTING 2025-26

APPLICANT	SPORT	EVENT	DATES	GOLDCARD	REPRESENTING	PROPOSED	NOTES
Edward Kelly (2050)	Walking Football	Glasgow Cup / Mallorca Tournament / Masters World Cup	April 2026 / April 2026 / August 2026	ABM - Gym & Health Suite. LDPK - Cryospa	Northern Ireland	Yes	A letter from the IFA confirms that Eddie will be competing at the Glasgow Cup, Scotland in April 2026. He will also be attending the Mallorca Tournament, Spain in April 2026. Eddie's final event is the Masters World Cup, Wales in August 2026. Goldcard recommended until 31 August 2026.
Joy Ebbinghaus (2054)	Netball	U19 European Championships / U19 Senior Camp	12-14 December 2025 / 17-18 January 2026	BA - Gym	Northern Ireland	Yes	A letter from Netball NI confirms that Joy has been selected for the U19 European Championships in Glasgow from 12-14 December 2025. She will also be attending the U19 Senior Camp in Belfast from 17-18 January 2026. Goldcard recommended until 18 January 2026.
Gracie Hamilton (2071)	Pickleball	Premier Pickleball League	19 July 2025 - 29 March 2026	ABM & LDP (Gym, Pool, Health Suite & Cryospa)	Ireland	Yes	A letter from Pickleball Ireland confirms Gracie will be competing at the Premier Pickleball League from 19 July-29 March 2026 in England. Goldcard recommended until 29 March 2026.

Harry Hamilton (2072)	Pickleball	Premier Pickleball League	19 July 2025 - 29 March 2026	ABM & LDP (Gym, Pool, Health Suite & Cryospa)	Ireland	Yes	A letter from Pickleball Ireland confirms Harry will be competing at the Premier Pickleball League from 19 July-29 March 2026 in England. Goldcard recommended until 29 March 2026.
Erin McConnell (2076)	Triathlon	World Championships	23-27 September 2026	ABM, BA & BS (Gym, Pool, Health Suite & Track)	Ireland	Yes	A letter from Triathlon Ireland confirms Erin will be competing at the World Championships from 23-27 September 2026 in Pontevedra, Spain. Goldcard recommended until 27 September 2026.
Daisy Moore (2077)	Football	UEFA European Championships	May-26	BA & BS (Gym, Pool, Health Suite & Pitches)	Northern Ireland	Yes	A letter from the IFA confirms Daisy will be competing at the UEFA European Championships in May 2026 in Belfast, Northern Ireland. Goldcard recommended until 31 May 2026.
Bobby Driscoll (2078)	Sailing	Senior World Championships & European Championships	22-30 August 2026 / 9-25 October 2026	BA & QLC (Gym & Pool)	Northern Ireland & Ireland	Yes	A letter for the RYANI confirms Bobby has been selected for the Senior World Championships from 22-30 August 2026 in Dun Laoghaire, Ireland and the U21 European Championships from 9-25 October 2026 in Spilt, Croatia and Bodrum, Turkey. Goldcard recommended until 25 October 2026.
TOTALS						7	

APPENDIX 2 - SUCCESSFUL INDIVIDUAL TRAVEL/ACCOMMODATION REPORT FOR APPROVAL 2025-26

APPLICANT	SPORT	EVENT	DATES	LOCATION	REPRESENTING2	REQUESTED	PROPOSED	NOTES
Ray Hunter (2049)	Walking Football	World Nations Cup	28-31 October	Alicante, Spain	Northern Ireland	£250.00	£250.00	Ray has been selected to compete at the Federation of International Walking Football Association World Nations Cup in Alicante, Spain from 28-31 October. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from IFA. Recommend funding of £250.00
Claire McLarnon (2051)	Weightlifting	Mediterranean Masters International Open 2025	23-26 October 2025	Alicante, Spain	Ireland	£250.00	£250.00	Claire has been selected to compete at the Mediterranean Masters International Open 2025 in Alicante, Spain from 23-26 October 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Weightlifting Ireland. Recommend funding of £250.00
Anna McLarnon (2052)	Weightlifting	Celtic Nations Championships 2025	17-19 October 2025	Glasgow, Scotland	Ireland	£225.00	£195.00	Anna has been selected to compete at the Celtic Nations Championships 2025 in Glasgow, Scotland from 17-19 October 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Weightlifting Ireland. Recommend funding of £195.00

Anna McLarnon (2053)	Weightlifting	European Union Weightlifting Cup	5-7 December 2025	Malta	Ireland	£225.00	£155.00	Anna has been selected to compete at the European Union Weightlifting Cup in Malta from 5-7 December 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Weightlifting Ireland. Recommend funding of £155.00. Anna has now reached her limit of £600.00 per financial year.
Harrison McGrogan (2055)	Weightlifting	Celtic Nations Championships 2025	17-19 October 2025	Glasgow, Scotland	Ireland	£200.00	£200.00	Harrison has been selected to compete at the Celtic Nations Championships 2025 in Glasgow, Scotland from 17-19 October 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Weightlifting Ireland. Recommend funding of £200.00
Harrison McGrogan (2056)	Weightlifting	European Junior and U23 Championships	26-30 October 2025	Durres, Albania	Ireland	£250.00	£250.00	Harrison has been selected to compete at the European Junior and U23 Championships in Durres, Albania from 26-30 October 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Weightlifting Ireland. Recommend funding of £250.00

Ruby Hall (2058)	Acrobatic Gymnastics	Caledonia International 2025	21-23 November 2025	Glasgow, Scotland	Northern Ireland	£303.10	£200.00	Ruby has been selected to compete at the Caledonia International 2025 in Glasgow, Scotland from 21-23 November 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00
Danny McCann (2059)	Walking Football	Federation of International Walking Football Association (FIWFA) World Nations Cup	28-31 October 2025	Alicante, Spain	Northern Ireland	£200.00	£200.00	Danny has been selected to compete at the Federation of International Walking Football Association (FIWFA) World Nations Cup in Alicante, Spain from 28-31 October 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from the IFA. Recommend funding of £200.00 as Danny has now reached his £600.00 funding limit per financial year.
Sarah Grant (2060)	Cross Country	British & Irish Masters Cross Country Int.	15th November 2025	Leeds, England	Northern Ireland	£200.00	£200.00	Sarah has been selected for the British & Irish Masters Cross Country International in Leeds, England on 15 November 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Athletics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00

Adam Johnson (2061)	Powerlifting	Home Nations 2025	1st November 2025	Birmingham, England	Northern Ireland	£200.00	£200.00	Adam has been selected for the Home Nations in Birmingham, England on 1 November 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from British Powerlifting. Recommend funding of £200.00
Christopher Sittlington (2062)	Blackball Pool	European Blackball Pool Championships	8-16 November 2025	Ennis, Ireland	Northern Ireland	£150.00	£150.00	Chris has been selected to compete at the European Blackball Championships in Ennis, Ireland from 8-16 November 2025. This has been confirmed by selection letter from NIPA. Recommend funding of £150.00
Alison Morris (2063)	Bowls	Atlantic Senior Ladies Fours	1-8 December 2025	Paphos, Cyprus	Ireland	£250.00	£250.00	Alison has been selected to compete in the Atlantic Senior Ladies Fours team squad from 1-8 December 2025 in Paphos, Cyprus. This has been confirmed by selection letter from the Irish Women's Bowling Association. Recommend funding of £250.00

Alison Morris (2064)	Bowls	Atlantic Senior Mixed Fours	10-12 December 2025	Paphos, Cyprus	Ireland	£250.00	£150.00	Alison has been selected to compete in the Atlantic Senior Mixed Fours team squad from 10-12 December 2025 in Paphos, Cyprus. This has been confirmed by selection letter from the Irish Women's Bowling Association. Recommend funding of £150.00 as Alison has now reached her £600.00 funding limit per financial year.
Sandra Bailie (2066)	Lawn Bowls	Atlantic Senior Ladies Fours	1-8 December 2025	Paphos, Cyprus	Ireland	£250.00	£250.00	Sandra has been selected to represent Ireland in the Atlantic Seniors Ladies Four team squad from 1st - 8th Dec in Paphos, Cyprus. Her participation has been confirmed by selection letter from the Irish Women's Bowling Association. Recommending Funding of £250.00

Sandra Bailie (2067)	Lawn Bowls	Atlantic Senior Mixed Fours	10-12 December 2025	Paphos, Cyprus	Ireland	£250.00	£250.00	Sandra has been selected to represent Ireland in the Atlantic Seniors Mixed Four team squad from 10th - 12th Dec in Paphos, Cyprus. Her participation has been confirmed by selection letter from the Irish Women's Bowling Association. Recommended Funding of £250.00
Gracie Hamilton (2069)	Pickleball	Premier Pickleball League	19 July 2025 - 28 March 2026	6 Events across England	Ireland	£300.00	£200.00	Gracie has been selected to represent Ireland at the Premier Pickleball League from 19 July 2005 - 29 March 2026 in England. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Pickleball Ireland. Recommend funding of £200.00
Harry Hamilton (2070)	Pickleball	Premier Pickleball League	19 July 2025 - 28 March 2026	6 Events across England	Ireland	£600.00	£200.00	Harry has been selected to represent Ireland at the Premier Pickleball League from 19 July 2025 - 29 March 2026 in England. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Pickleball Ireland. Recommend funding of £200.00

Lisa Tomalin (2073)	Cross Country	British & Irish Masters Cross Country Int.	15th November 2025	Leeds, England	Northern Ireland	£200.00	£200.00	Lisa has been selected for the British & Irish Masters Cross Country International in Leeds, England on 15 November 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Athletics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00
Stephen Ferris (2074)	Blackball Pool	European Blackball Pool Championships	8-16 November 2025	Ennis, Ireland	Northern Ireland	£150.00	£150.00	Stephen has been selected to compete at the European Blackball Championships in Ennis, Ireland from 8-16 November 2025. This has been confirmed by selection letter from NIPA. Recommend funding of £150.00
Emma Houston (2075)	Gymnastics	Caledonia International Acro Cup	22-23 November 2025	Ravenscraig, Motherwell (Scotland)	Northern Ireland	£200.00	£200.00	Emma has been selected to compete at the Caledonia International Acro Cup in Ravenscraig, Motherwell (Scotland) from 22-23 November 2025. This has been confirmed by selection letter from NIPA. Recommend funding of £200.00
TOTALS							£4,100.00	

APPENDIX 3 - UNSUCCESSFUL REPORT for Noting 2025-26

APPLICANT	APPLICATION	REQUEST	EVIDENCE REQUIRED	EXPLANATION
Ballyholme Yacht Club (1991)	Coach Education	Ballyholme Yacht club requested funding for x2 members to attend RYA Dinghy Instructor Course / Powerboat Level 2 Course in October, November and December 2025.	Incomplete applications, and applications received without the accompanying mandatory supporting documentation, will be deemed ineligible and not proceed for assessment. Our guidelines state, "the application must be submitted prior to the start of the coaching course"	Funding not recommended as the application form is blank. The application was received on 28 October 2025 for an event that commenced on 27 October 2025.
Paul Smith (2057)	Individual Travel/Accommodation	Paul's sport is Cross Country and requested £150.00 for the British & Irish Masters Cross Country International taking place on 15 November 2025 in Leeds, England.	Our guidelines state, "Provide specific event selection letter for the Event from the relevant SNI/Sport Ireland Recognised National Governing Body on official Governing Body headed paper or official Governing Body email statement."	Funding not recommended as Paul has not submitted a valid selection letter.

Gracie Hamilton (2068)	Individual Travel/Accommodation	Gracie's sport is Pickleball and requested £300.00 for the European Pickleball Championships taking place from 19-21 September in Rome, Italy.	Our guidelines state, "the application must be submitted prior to the event commencing."	Funding not recommended as the application was received on 1 November 2025 for an event that commenced on 19 September 2025.
------------------------	------------------------------------	--	--	---