

Screening Form

- 1. Is this a** Public Service
- 2. Name of Policy/Strategy/Plan/Public Service** Empty to Energised Pilot Grant Scheme
- 3. Reference** 414
- 4. Category of Policy/Strategy/Plan/Public Service** New

5. Please provide a description of the Policy/Strategy/Plan/Public Service

The Empty to Energised Pilot Grant Scheme will be fully funded by the Council. It will provide financial assistance to vacant property owners who want to renovate vacant/derelict properties and introduce new commercial uses. It is hoped that the scheme will assist in creating buildings that are fit for purpose and ready to occupy and help to attract long-term tenants which will impact positively on increasing footfall.

This is the first time a scheme of this nature has been available in Ards and North Down – it will be piloted in Bangor and Newtownards, and if successful may be expanded throughout the Borough.

6. Please provide details of the aims and/or objectives of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service.

The scheme will provide financial assistance to vacant property owners in order to achieve the following grant scheme objectives.

Grant Scheme Objectives:

- Tackle prominent long-term vacant/derelict properties.
- Create buildings that are fit for purpose and ready to occupy.
- Bring vacant floor space back into use.
- Create potential to attract long-term tenants.
- Impact positively on the streetscape with high quality internal/external works.
- Contribute to the vibrancy of the city/town centre with a view to increase footfall in the area.
- Create new and local employment either directly or indirectly.
- Promote sustainability within the project.

- 7. Who initiated or wrote the Policy/Strategy/Plan/Public Service?** Sharyn McMaster
- 8. Who is responsible for the implementation of the Policy/Strategy/Plan/Public Service?** Sharyn McMaster
- 9. Is this policy affected by timetables established by other relevant Public Authorities?** No

Equality

1. Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy?

No

2. Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the policy/decision?

No

3. Who are the internal/external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the policy will impact upon?

Service Users, Local Businesses

4. Is this policy associated with any other Council Policy (or Policies)?

Yes

4a. If yes, please state the related Policy (or Policies)

Corporate Plan 2024-228

Roadmap to Sustainability 2021-2028

Integrated Tourism, Regeneration and Development Strategy

Grants Policy

Scheme of Delegation

Anti-fraud, bribery and corruption

Data Protection

Lands

Conflict of Interest

5. Does this policy affect Internal or External users?

Both

Evidence to help inform the Section 75 screening process may take many forms. Public authorities should ensure that their screening decision is informed by relevant data.

6. What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy?

All

Religious belief evidence

The proposed Grant Scheme will be open to all applicants from all religious backgrounds where their application meets the terms and conditions of the Grant as outline in the scheme guidance notes.

Political opinion evidence

The proposed Grant Scheme will be open to all applicants from all political opinion, where their application meets the terms and conditions of the Grant as outline in the scheme guidance notes.

Racial group evidence

The proposed Grant Scheme will be open to all applicants from all racial backgrounds, where their application meets the terms and conditions of the Grant as outline in the scheme guidance notes.

Age evidence

The proposed Grant Scheme will be open to all applicants who are aged over 18, where their application meets the terms and conditions of the Grant as outline in the scheme guidance notes.

Marital status evidence

The proposed Grant Scheme will be open to all applicants irrespective of marital status, where their application meets the terms and conditions of the Grant as outline in the scheme guidance notes. No differential needs identified in relation to this project.

Sexual orientation evidence

The proposed Grant Scheme will be open to all applicants irrespective of sexual orientation, where their application meets the terms and conditions of the Grant as outline in the scheme guidance notes. No differential needs identified in relation to this project.

Men and women generally evidence

The proposed Grant Scheme will be open to all applicants irrespective of gender, where their application meets the terms and conditions of the Grant as outline in the scheme guidance notes. No differential needs identified in relation to this project.

Disability evidence

The proposed Grant Scheme will be improve commercial properties and produce buildings that are more accessible.

Dependants evidence

No differential needs identified in relation to this project.

Taking into account the information referred to above, what are the different needs, experiences and priorities for each of the following categories, in relation to the particular policy / decision?

7. Please provide details of different needs, experiences and priorities for each of the categories

The proposed Grant Scheme aims to provide improved commercial properties that will benefit the economy by bringing vacant properties back into use in Bangor and Newtownards. Renovating vacant/derelict premises will improve accessibility of premises for the public.

8. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, in relation to Religious belief?

None

9. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, in relation to Political opinion?

None

10. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, in relation to Racial group?

None

11. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, in relation to Age?

None

12. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, in relation to Marital status?

None

13. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, in relation to Sexual orientation?

None

14. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, in relation to Men and women generally?

None

15. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, in relation to Disability?

Minor

15a. Impact on equality of opportunity - Disability

Renovating vacant/derelict premises will improve accessibility of premises for the public.

16. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, in relation to Dependants?

None

17. Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equalities categories? If Yes, provide details. If No, provide reasons.

Religious belief

No opportunities identified as the scheme will be available to all property owners. Improved commercial properties will be of benefit to all in Newtownards and Bangor.

Political opinion

No opportunities identified as the scheme will be available to all property owners. Improved commercial properties will be of benefit to all in Newtownards and Bangor.

Racial group

No opportunities identified as the scheme will be available to all property owners. Improved commercial properties will be of benefit to all in Newtownards and Bangor.

Age

Opportunities identified to those over 18 as applicants must be aged over 18 at the time of application.

Marital Status

No opportunities identified as the scheme will be available to all property owners. Improved commercial properties will be of benefit to all in Newtownards and Bangor.

Sexual orientation

No opportunities identified as the scheme will be available to all property owners. Improved commercial properties will be of benefit to all in Newtownards and Bangor.

Men and women generally

No opportunities identified as the scheme will be available to all property owners. Improved commercial properties will be of benefit to all in Newtownards and Bangor.

Disability

The proposed Grant Scheme will be improve commercial properties and produce buildings that are more accessible.

Dependants

No opportunities identified as the scheme will be available to all property owners. Improved commercial properties will be of benefit to all in Newtownards and Bangor.

18. To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion and/or racial group?

Minor

18a. Please describe the details of the policy impact on good relations

Upgraded commercial properties will contribute to the vibrancy of the city/town centre with a view to increase footfall in the area and create new and local employment either directly or indirectly.

19. Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion and/or racial group?

Yes

19a. Please provide your reasons below

Upgraded commercial properties will contribute to the vibrancy of the city/town centre with a view to increase footfall in the area and create new and local employment either directly or indirectly.

Disability Discrimination Order (NI) 2006

20. Is there evidence to suggest that this policy would promote positive attitudes towards people with a disability?

Yes

20a. Provide details of opportunities identified

The proposed Grant Scheme will be improve commercial properties and produce buildings that are more accessible.

21. Is there evidence to suggest that this policy would encourage the participation of people with a disability in public life?

Yes

21a. Provide details of opportunities identified

The proposed Grant Scheme will be improve commercial properties and produce buildings that are more accessible therefore encouraging more footfall into the city/town encouraging participation in public life.

Additional Considerations

22. Are there any potential impacts of the policy / decision (positive or negative) on people with multiple identities?

No

Monitoring Arrangements

23. Outline what data you could collect in the future to monitor the impact of this policy / decision on equality, good relations and disability duties

Monitoring forms and post project evaluation of completed projects.

25. On the basis of the answers to the screening questions, I recommend that this policy/decision is

Screened Out - No negative impacts

26. Monitoring Recommendations

Any record, financial or otherwise, premises and/or equipment used for the project shall be open to inspection at any time by the Council or its duly authorised officers. In addition, the applicant will be required to respond to any requests by the Council for information concerning the progress,

administration, monitoring and evaluation of the project. The recipient must complete a Project Evaluation Report.

Conclusion

The Empty to Energised Grant Scheme will:
Provide financial assistance to property owners.
Tackle prominent long-term vacant/derelict properties.
Create buildings that are fit for purpose and ready to occupy.
Bring floor space back into use.
Create potential to attract long-term tenants.
Impact positively on the streetscape of our city/town.
Enhance the streetscape with high quality external works and activation of vacant floorspace.
Contribute to the vibrancy of the city/town centre and increase footfall in the area.
Create new and local employment either directly or indirectly.
Promote sustainability within the project.

By meeting the objectives of the scheme the following outcomes will be achieved:
Improved Property Values, refurbished and actively used properties will have higher rateable values, leading to higher business rates
Multiplier Effect, as areas become more vibrant and attractive to shoppers and visitors, surrounding properties become more desirable, potentially increasing occupancy and rateable values across a wider area.
Increased Confidence, the scheme shows ANDBC's commitment to regeneration, reducing the risk for private investors. We have met with some interesting business owners and are building firm relationships with them, the projects they have suggested, if successful would be a huge asset to the towns with the potential to roll out in other towns, if funding is available.
Enhanced Footfall as more businesses open, consumer footfall increases, encouraging retailers, cafes, and service providers to invest.
Job Creation through new businesses activating formerly derelict spaces creating new employment opportunities.

Please upload any supporting documents for review



Empty to Energised - Applicant Guid... .docx



E2E Appendix 2 - Project Description... .docx



E2E Appendix 3 - Assessment Matrix....docx

Email

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Screening Panel Comments

Date of Council Meeting

Thursday, October 9, 2025

Appendix - Religious Belief

Religious belief (Internal)

* Small numbers removed as individuals could be identifiable

	Catholic	Protestant & other Christian	Other religions	Total
Males F/T	33	388	34	425
	8%	84%	8%	100%
Males P/T	*	*	*	8
	25%	63%	13%	100%
Females F/T	58	223	6	287
	20%	78%	2%	100%
Females P/T	12	20	5	35
	32%	54%	14%	100%
Total	105	606	46	757
	14%	80%	6%	100%

Religious belief (External)

The Northern Ireland Census 2021 (NISRA) statistics for the Borough area show the religious group the person belongs to or for people with no current religion their religious group of upbringing. People with no current religion and no religion of upbringing are labelled 'None'.

On Census Day 2021 in Northern Ireland just under one person in five (19.0%) either had 'no religion' (17.4%) or 'religion not stated' (1.6%). Nearly one person in three in Ards and North Down (32.1%) had 'no

religion' or 'religion not stated' On census day 2021 bringing together information on current religion and religion of upbringing, 45.7% of the population were either Catholic or brought up as a Catholic, while 43.5% were recorded as 'Protestant and other Christian (including Christian related)'. Again, bringing together information on current religion and religion of upbringing, 1.5% of the population are classified as 'other religions' and 9.3% of the population identified that they neither belonged to nor were brought up in a religion. This points to the increasingly secular nature of the population ('None').

	All usual Residents	Catholic	Protestant and other Christian Religions	Other Reglions	None
Ards and North Down	163,659	22,912	111,288	1,636	27,822
Northern Ireland	1,903,178	875,461	818,366	19,031	171,286

	Ards and North Down	Northern Ireland
All Usual residents	163,659	1,903,178
Catholic	18,003	799,334
Presbyterian	47,461	323,540
Church of Ireland	22, 912	228,381
Methodist	6,546	38,063
Other Chrtistian Religions	16,365	133,222
Other Religions	1,636	19,031
No Religion/Not stated	52,370	361,603

Appendix - Political Opinion

Political opinion (External)

Electoral Office data from recent Local Government elections (2023) and Northern Ireland Assembly Elections (2022) detail the political representation on Ards and North Down. Data also shows the turnout to vote. This tends to be lower than the rest of Northern Ireland, suggesting less strong political opinions, however the results show a preference in Ards and North Down for Unionist Parties.

Constituency	Registered Voters	Turnout
North Down	70,176	60%
Strangford	70,755	68%
Northern Ireland	1,373,731	63%

District Electoral Area	Eligible Electorate	Votes Polled
Overall Turnout (2023)		
Ards and North Down Borough Council Area	123,736	57,677
Overall Turnout (2023)		
Northern Ireland	1,380,372	745,400

Party	Local Government Seats Held	Local Government Seats Held	NI Assembly Elections seats held	NI Assembly Elections seats held
	ANDBC	Northern Ireland	North Down and Strangford	Northern Ireland
Alliance	12	67	4	17
Aontù	0	0	0	0
DUP	14	122	3	25
Green	2	5	0	0
Independants	3	19	1	2
People before Profit	0	1	0	1

SDLP	1	39	0	8
Sinn Fèin	0	144	0	27
TUV	0	9	0	1
UUP	8	54	2	9
Other	0	1	0	0

Appendix - Racial Group

Racial group (Internal)

* Small numbers removed as individuals could be identifiable

Racial Group	Total	Percentage
White	682	78.66%
Black	*	*
Chinese	*	*
Other	*	*
Did not want to answer	*	*
Left Black	176	20.30%

Racial group (External)

On Census Day 2021, 3.4% of the population, or 65,600 people, belonged to minority ethnic groups. This is around double the 2011 figure (1.8% – 32,400 people) and four times the 2001 figure (0.8% – 14,300 people); Taken together the bulletin reports and tables released today show an increasing diversity from 2011 to 2021 in Northern Ireland's population across statistics on ethnic group, main language, country of birth and passports held. This increasing diversity is evident to a greater or lesser degree across all 11 Local Government Districts.

All Usual Residents	163,660
White	159,892
Irish Traveller	24
Roma	19
Indian	388
Chinese	500
Filipino	308
Pakistani	87
Arab	28
Other Asian	468
Black African	309

Black Other	135
Mixed	1,236
Other ethnicities	266

Main Language	Ards and North Down	Northern Ireland
English	160,385	1,808,019
Other	3,279	95,158

Passports Held	Ards and North Down	Northern Ireland
All Usual Residents	163,659	1,903,178
UK only	109,651	894,493
Ireland Only	13,092	513,858
Uk and Ireland	13,098	95,158
Other Passport(s)	4,909	95,158
No Passport	21,275	304,508

Appendix - Age

Age (Internal)

Age Profile	Female	Female %	Male	Male %
16 to 29	20	6%	26	65%
30 to 39	75	23%	83	19%
40 to 49	105	33%	121	27%
50 to 59	80	25%	176	39%
65+	42	13%	41	9%
Total	322	100%	447	100%

Age (External)

On Census Day 2021 Ards and North down had the largest increase in the number of people aged 65 and over. This rose from 27,692 (17.7%) in 2011 to 36,226 (22.1%) in 2021, demonstrating the scale of population change due to ageing.

Age Profile	Northern Ireland	Ards and North Down
0 to 14	361,602	27,822
15 to 39	589,983	44,187
40 to 64	609,015	55,644
65+	323,539	36,226
Total	1,903,173	163,659

Appendix - Marital Status

Marital Status (Internal)

* Small numbers removed as individuals could be identifiable

Marital Status	Total	Percentage
Single	180	20.76%
Married	405	46.71%
Divorced	35	4.04%
Co Habiting	14	1.61%
Separated	25	2.88%
Civil Partnership	*	*
Left Blank	207	23.88%

Marital Status (External)

Statistics classifies people aged 16 and over according to their legal marital or civil partnership status on Census Day 21 March 2021. The law in relation to marriage and civil partnership changed in the ten years to 2021. A summary of the changes in Northern Ireland is given below:

- civil partnership for opposite-sex couples became legal in late 2019;
- marriage for same-sex couples became legal in 2020; and
- in late 2020 a couple in a civil partnership could convert their status from civil partnership to marriage.

The rise in the 'single' population and the fall in the 'married' population here is in line with results from recent censuses in England and Wales. These figures mirror changes in society and specifically in personal relationships that has been witnessed over the last 50 years. Ards & North Down LGD, which has the oldest demographic profile of all 11 LGDs, has the highest percentage of adults who were widowed, at 8%.



Marital Status	Northern Ireland	Ards and North Down
Single	575,966	41,540
Married or in Civil Partnership	682,065	68,340
Separated, Divorced or Formally in a Civil Partnership	151,570	13,400
Widowed or Surviving partner from a Civil Partnership	97,004	10,720

Appendix - Sexual Orientation

Sexual Orientation

Statistics show that 2.1% (31,600) of NI population aged 16 and over identified as 'lesbian, gay, bisexual or other (LGB+)' and 90.0% (1,363,900) identified as 'straight or heterosexual'. More urban LGDs have a higher percentage of people who identified as LGB+. Almost 8% of our population aged 16 and over (119,300) either ticked 'prefer not to say' or chose not to answer the question. Taken together, these are labelled 'No sexual orientation stated' in these statistics.

8.8% percent of people who identified as LGB+ in Northern Ireland live in the Ards and North Down Borough, Statistics also show that 800 Households in the Borough are living in a same sex couple relationship.

Living in households by relationship	Northern Ireland	Ards and North Down
Living in a Same Sex Couple	9,600	800
Not Living as a Couple	694,600	53,500
	Northern Ireland	Ards and North Down
All usual Residents (over 16)	1,515,700	134,000
Straight or Hetrosexual	1,364,130	121,940
Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual or other Sexual orientation	30,314	2,680
No sexual orientation stated	121,256	9,380

Appendix - Men and Women Generally

Men and women generally (Internal)

Male	Female	Total
511	356	867
58.94%	41.06%	100%

Men and women generally (External)

The Northern Ireland usually resident population increased by 5.1% (92,300) from 2011 to 2021. The Census 2021 population is recorded at 1,903,175 people up from 1,810,863 people in 2011. Ards & North Down had an increase of population from 2011 of 7,000, which is 4.5%.

The census day population comprised of 967,000 females and 936,100 males. Statistics show that for every 100 females in Ards and North Down Borough there were 94.9 males.

Statistics show that 54% of the Borough are employed 2% are Unemployed and 43% are Economically inactive. Of those employed, 37% were in the Public administration, education and health Industry and 2% were in the Agriculture, energy and water industry.

62% of employed people travelled to work in a car or van and 34% travelled 5km-20km to their place of work.

There were 70,445 households recorded in Ards and North Down 4,400, 5.9% were unoccupied at the time of the survey.

The average household size in sits at 2.30 (2.44 in NI). 31% are single occupancy and 6% had more than 6 people living in the property.

72% of the Borough owns their own property, this has decreased by 2% from 2011 where 13% are Social rented and increase of 2% increase in 2011.

LGD	Male	Female

Northern Ireland	932,554	970,618
Ards and North Down	80,192	83,466

Appendix - Disability

Disability (External)

A self-assessment of whether a person has a long-term health problem or disability that limits daily activities and which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months. It includes problems that are due to old age. The 2021 Census (NIRSA) demonstrates an increase of 15% or more in the percentage of people who reported a long-term health problem or disability which limited day-to-day activities. 41,300 or 25.3% of people in Ards and North Down had a limiting long-term health problem or disability. Ards & North Down experienced an increase of 31.4% from 2011. These changes are in part a reflection of the Boroughs ageing population.

The following statistics show a breakdown in residents in Northern Ireland and Ards and North Down borough with a Disability that is expected to last 12 months or more.

The figures show that 7.2 per cent of the Borough have deafness or partial hearing loss, 68% being over the age of 65. 2% have blindness or partial sight loss, 11% of those people are aged 0-39 years. 1.6 % have mobility or dexterity difficulty that requires the use of a wheelchair, in comparison to Northern Ireland statics this means that 9.3% of all those who have mobility or dexterity difficulty that requires the use of a wheelchair reside in the Borough.

0.8% have an intellectual or learning disability including dyslexia and Downs Syndrome. 1.6% have Autism or Asperger syndrome, 49% are between 0-14 years whilst 40% are aged 15- 39 year. 8.1 % have an emotional, psychological or mental health condition, includes depression and schizophrenia, this is highest in the age ranges of 40 – 64 years (47%). 2% have frequent periods of confusion or memory loss, including Dementia, this is most prevalent with ages 65+. 10% of residents have another condition, for example Cancer, Heart Disease or Diabetes, again this is most prevalent in age 65+. Taken together these results show that policy making must consider Ards and north Down aging population and health and disability issues as well as recognition for those that provide unpaid care throughout the Borough.

LGD	All usual residents	Activites Not Limited	Limited a little	Limited a lot
Northern Ireland	1,903,178	1,446,415	247,413	209,349
Ards and North Down	163,659	122,744	22,912	18,002

Long term Health Conditions	None	1	2	3 or More
Northern Ireland	1,237,065	342,572	152,254	171,286
Ards and North Down	101,468	32,731	14,729	14,729
Disability Breakdown Age range (0 - 65+)	Ards and North Down		Northern Ireland	
Deafness or Partial Hearing loss	11,802		109,457	
Blindness or Partial Sightloss	3,214		33,961	

Mobility or dexterity difficulty that required the use of a wheelchair	2,641		28,138	
Intellectual or learning disability include dyslexia and Downs Syndrome	1,469		16,923	
Autism or Asperger Syndrome	2,628		35,367	
Emotional, psychological or mental health condition inc depression and schizophrenia	13,275		165,127	
Frequent periods of confusion or memory loss inc Dementia	3,432		37,789	
Other conditions E.g Cancer, Heart Disease or Diabetes	167,752		16,636	

Appendix - Dependants

Dependants (External)

For the Purposes of S75 a dependant can be classed as Persons with personal responsibility for the care of a child; for the care of a person with a disability; or the care of a dependant older person.

In Census 2021 one person in eight of NI population aged 5 or more (or 222,200 people) noted that they provided unpaid care. One important point to note in Policy making is that 2,600 children aged 5 to 14 in Northern Ireland provide unpaid care.

Ards & North Down LGD had the highest percentage of people who provide unpaid care throughout Northern Ireland , 13.7% estimated at 30,414 residents. 'Unpaid care' covers looking after, giving help or support to anyone because they have long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses, or problems related to old age

A dependent child is a person aged 0 to 15 in a household (whether or not in a family) or aged 16 to 18 in full-time education and living in a family with his or her parent(s) or grandparent(s). 'No dependent children' includes households with no children and households where all children are non-dependent.

In Ards and North Down there were 27,822 Children (defined as those aged 0 to 14). Children make up 19.2% of the Northern Ireland population. This percentage varies across the Local Government Districts and is lowest in Ards and North Down where the proportion is 17.0%.

According to Birth statistics on NISRA Ards and North Down recorded 2,854 births between 2020 and 2022 , giving an indication of the numbers using buggies or prams in use.

	Dependent children in household:	Dependent children in household:	Dependent children in household:	Dependent children in household:
	None	one	Two	Three
Northern Ireland	71%	11%	11%	6%

Ards and North Down	74%	11%	11%	4%
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24. Does this policy require an Equality Impact Assessment?

No

1. Please provide a short title which describes the activity being undertaken by the Public Authority that is subject to Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016. E.g

N/A

2. What definition of 'rural' is the Plan using in respect of Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?

A definition of 'rural' is not applicable

2c. Reasons why a definition of 'rural' is not applicable.

Empty to Energised Pilot Grant Scheme is only available in the urban areas of Bangor City and Newtownards Town.

Understanding the impact of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service

3. Is the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service likely to impact on people in rural areas?

No

3d. Please explain why the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is NOT likely to impact on people in rural areas

Empty to Energised Pilot Grant Scheme is only available in the urban areas of Bangor City and Newtownards Town.

Identifying the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas

4. Has the Public Authority taken steps to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas that are relevant to the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service? Deprivation levels can be found at Home Page | NI Area Statistics | NISRA

No

4d. Please explain why no steps were taken by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas?

Empty to Energised Pilot Grant Scheme is only available in the urban areas of Bangor City and Newtownards Town.

Considering the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas

5. Please provide details of the issues considered in relation to the Social and economic needs of people in rural areas.

Empty to Energised Pilot Grant Scheme is only available in the urban areas of Bangor City and Newtownards Town.

Influencing the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service

6. Has the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service been influenced by the rural needs identified?

No

6b. Please explain why the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or the delivery of the Public Service, has NOT been influenced by the rural needs identified

Empty to Energised Pilot Grant Scheme is only available in the urban areas of Bangor City and Newtownards Town.

Documenting and Recording

7. Please tick below to confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained by the Public Authority and relevant information on the Section 1 activity compiled in accordance with paragraph 6.7 of the guidance.

I confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained and relevant information complied.

Sustainability is a holistic approach that considers ecological, social and economic dimensions, recognising that all must be considered together to find lasting prosperity.

Sustainable development is all about meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

Depending on your answer your answer may be a 'positive' impact or a 'negative' impact. Specific guidance at each question.

There may be 'no impact'.

If you are not sure complete as 'don't know'

1. What impact will the proposal have on the local community including the ability of people to meet their essential needs?

	What is the impact of the activity?
<p>Transport - Is the activity accessible to everyone via public transport or active travel, in a safe and sustainable way?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select positive.</p>	Positive

	What is the impact of the activity?
<p>Public Placemaking, Community & Culture - Is the activity impacting on people's sense of place and community by being included and connected to the area?</p> <p>Is the activity impacting on our cultural offering, helping citizens, visitors and young people become acquainted with art and culture?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select positive.</p>	Positive

Comments

	Comments
Transport	The proposed grant scheme will positively contribute the Bangor and Newtownards and encourage travel into the town/city.
Public Placemaking, Community & Culture	The proposed grant scheme will tackle prominent long-term vacant/derelict properties and create buildings that are fit for purpose and create potential to attract long-term tenants. The scheme will impact positively on the streetscape with high quality internal/external works, contributing to the vibrancy of the city/town centre with a view to increase footfall in the area.

2. What impact will the proposals have on local, sustainable food supply chains?

	What is the impact of the activity?
<p>Food - If this activity involves either the direct or indirect purchase of food or catering services will there be a negative impact on a sustainable food system?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select negative.</p> <p>Additional information:</p> <p>Food systems currently account for 21-37% of total global greenhouse gases and are a primary cause of environmental degradation and significantly contribute to socio-economic and health inequalities. This can be mitigated by specifying sustainable food and catering services, fresh seasonal food of a high nutritional value produced through low environmental impact farming methods and high standards of animal welfare.</p>	Don't know

Comments

	Comments
Food	There may be an impact on the sustainable food chain depending on the types of businesses that hopefully occupy vacant premises in the future.

3. What impact will the proposals have on diversity and equality of opportunity?

	What is the impact of the activity?
Equal opportunity - Does the activity have a positive or negative impact on inclusivity and discrimination?	Positive

Comments

	Comments
Equal opportunity	The grant scheme is open to all and will have positive impacts on the city/town through improved commercial premises.

4. What impact will the proposals have on prosperity, social value and fair trade?

	What is the impact of the activity?
Decent jobs and income - Are local employment opportunities being created removed 'or removed'? Will there be any volunteering opportunities? Note: If the answer is yes, select positive.	Positive
Will the financial benefits help raise local income levels and tackle poverty and derivations of poverty such as food and fuel poverty? Note: If the answer is yes, select positive.	Positive

	What is the impact of the activity?
<p>Social Value - Will the activity lead to the creation of works or services? Are there opportunities to support apprenticeships or training opportunities to combat social exclusion? Are there any opportunities to work with organisations with an environmental or social mission (e.g., from the VCSE sector)?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select positive.</p>	Positive
<p>Human and labour rights - Will there be provisions to ensure workers up the supply chain have their human and labour rights respected?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select positive.</p> <p>Additional information:</p> <p>Products at high risk of the use of child labour and contravention of human and labour rights include electronic equipment, textiles, agricultural commodities and construction materials.</p>	Don't know

Comments

	Comments
Decent jobs and income	An objective of the scheme is to create new and local employment either directly or indirectly.
Financial benefits	Successful projects will contribute to the local economy through businesses occupying previously vacant units. Council will also benefit from an increase in the non-domestic rates.
Social value	More vibrant city and attractive streetscapes will increase activity in the area and civic pride.
Human and labour rights	Applicants will be encouraged to attract a tenant as part of the scheme it is not known at this stage who those potential businesses might be.

5. What impact will the proposals have on greenhouse gas emissions, including energy and transport?

	What is the impact of the activity?
<p>Greenhouse Gas Emmissions - Will this activity have a positive or negative impact on greenhouse gases (most commonly caused by fossil fuel burning or deforestation)?</p> <p>Additional information:</p> <p>Greenhouse gases include CO2, CH4, N2O, HFCs, PFCs or SF6.</p> <p>The most common sources include consumption of brown (non-renewable) electricity, burning of coal, oil, petrol, diesel, natural gas, emissions from landfill sites, and the destruction of natural carbon sinks such as peat bogs, woodlands, forests, grasslands, freshwater lakes, and wetlands.</p>	<p>Don't know</p>
<p>Energy - Will the activity reduce energy demand through energy efficiency and low-carbon technologies?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select positive.</p> <p>Additional information:</p> <p>Will energy come from renewable energy sources e.g., solar, wind etc.?</p> <p>Will buildings be designed and constructed to high energy and environmental standards?</p>	<p>Don't know</p>
<p>Transport - Will the activity be accessible to everyone via active travel (Bike/walking) or public transport? Does the proposal help to reduce non-essential travel and individual car use?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select positive.</p>	<p>Don't know</p>
<p>Embodied carbon - Will the activity use materials from 'heavy industries' such as cement, concrete, iron and steel, or require international transportation of materials using aviation or shipping?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select negative.</p>	<p>Don't know</p>

Comments

	Comments
Greenhouse Gas Emmissions	Projects have been asked to promote sustainability within the project. However, the type of projects are not know at this stage.
Energy	we do not know how the vacant business premises will be heated once renovated and occupied.
Transport	It is an objective of the scheme that projects will contribute to the vibrancy of the city/town centre with a view to increase footfall in the area. However, the type of projects are not know at this stage. However, we do not know the types of projects that will be delivered at this stage.
Embodied carbon	Projects have been asked to promote sustainability within the project. However the type of projects are not know at this stage. However, we do not know the types of projects that will be delivered at this stage. However the type of projects are not know at this stage. However, we do not know the types of projects that will be delivered at this stage. However the type of projects are not know at this stage. However, we do not know the types of projects that will be delivered at this stage. However the type of projects are not know at this stage. However, we do not know the types of projects that will be delivered at this stage. However, the type of projects are not know at this stage.

6. What impact will the proposals have on waste generation or how waste is managed?

	What is the impact of the activity?
<p>Waste generation - Will this activity lead to the production of waste?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select negative.</p> <p>Additional information:</p> <p>Have you considered how to reduce waste through demand management and re-use strategies which support the circular economy?</p>	Negative
<p>Waste Management - Is waste going to be managed in a responsible, sustainable way?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select positive.</p> <p>Additional information:</p> <p>Will waste be monitored? What recycling provisions are there? Will any waste be sent to landfill?</p>	Positive

Comments

	Comments
Waste generation	Projects have been asked to promote sustainability within the project.
Waste management	Projects have been asked to promote sustainability within the project.

Mitigation

	Mitigation
Waste generation	Projects have been asked to promote sustainability within the project.
Waste management	Projects have been asked to promote sustainability within the project.

7. What impact will the proposals have on the direct consumption of natural resources, including materials, minerals and fresh water?

	What is the impact of the activity?
<p>Materials - Will this activity lead to the consumption of raw materials? (Raw materials include steel, oil, corn, grain, gasoline, wood / forest resources, plastic, natural gas, and coal).</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select negative.</p> <p>Additional information:</p> <p>Can materials be swapped or reduced, to minimize pressure on natural resources and reduce environmental impact?</p>	Negative
<p>Will lifecycle costing exercises be used in procurement (e.g., if purchasing vehicles, energy-intensive equipment or major capital projects) in order to minimise the consumption of natural resources and achieve value for money</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select positive</p>	No Impact
<p>Fresh water - Will this activity increase pressure on freshwater resources through direct water consumption?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select negative</p>	Negative

	What is the impact of the activity?
<p>Will the activity impact on the public's ability to access a clean and safe water supply?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select negative</p> <p>Additional information:</p> <p>Unsustainable water consumption includes use of mains water or other freshwater supplied without water efficiency or recycling measures.</p>	No Impact

Comments

	Comments
Materials	Materials used will occur during the construction process
Lifecycle costing exercises	Applicants will be responsible for ensuring value for money is achieved.
Fresh water	It is understood that there will likely be an increase in water consumption from the business.
Accessing clean and safe water	No known impact above what already exists and is in place.

Mitigation

	Mitigation
Materials	Projects have been asked to promote sustainability within the project.
Lifecycle costing exercises	n/a
Fresh water	n/a
Accessing clean and safe water	n/a

8. What impact will the proposals have on local resilience to the adverse effects of climate change and severe weather events, including drought, landslips, flooding and sites designated as being at risk of flooding or sea level rise?

	What is the impact of the activity?
<p>Adverse Weather and Climate Impacts - Will buildings, infrastructure, or natural assets be at risk to the adverse effects of climate change and extreme weather?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes select negative</p> <p>Additional Information:</p> <p>For Northern Ireland, climate change is causing hotter, drier summers and warmer, wetter winters with more extreme weather and rising sea levels.</p> <p>A precautionary approach is advised for all planning and construction decisions, taking into account the latest UK Climate Change Projections and making sure that development is not permitted on flood plains and / or land at risk of flooding under future climate scenarios.</p> <p>Avoid activities that may be vulnerable to overheating or flood risk. New assets (e.g. landscaping, buildings etc.) should be future proofed, ensuring all investments are resilient to current and future climate conditions.</p>	<p>Negative</p>

Comments

	Comments
<p>Adverse Weather and Climate Impacts</p>	<p>Applicants will be responsible for ensuring projects are compliant.</p>

Mitigation

	Mitigation
<p>Adverse Weather and Climate Impacts</p>	<p>Applicants will be responsible for ensuring projects are compliant.</p>

9. What impact will the proposals have on the local environment (e.g., air/water/soil pollution, land conversion, visual impacts, traffic, noise, vibration, odour, dust, particulates, smoke), heritage (including designated heritage, archaeology sites or listed buildings) and wildlife (including protected sites and species)?

	What is the impact of the activity?
<p>Air pollution - Will the activity produce air pollutants?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select negative</p> <p>Additional Information:</p> <p>Air pollutants include: Particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5); Ozone (O3) Nitrogen dioxide (NO2); Carbon Monoxide (CO); Sulphur Dioxide (SO2).</p> <p>The most common causes of air pollution are:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fuel combustion from motor vehicles (e.g. cars and heavy-duty vehicles) • Heat and power generation (e.g. oil and coal power plants and boilers) • Industrial facilities (e.g. manufacturing factories, mines, and oil refineries) • Municipal and agricultural waste sites and waste incineration/burning. 	<p>Negative</p>
<p>Ozone layer depletion - Will this activity produce ozone depleting substances (fluorinated gases)?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select negative</p> <p>Additional Information:</p> <p>Fluorinated greenhouse gases (F gases) include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) • perfluorocarbons (PFCs) • sulphur hexafluoride (SF6) <p>For example through the use of refrigeration and air conditioning units.</p>	<p>Don't know</p>

	What is the impact of the activity?
<p>Water/soil pollution - Will this activity involve any construction work, street works or road deliveries of construction materials or other goods?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select negative</p> <p>Additional Information:</p> <p>Soil and water pollution is caused from damaging rainwater run-off arising from road surface treatments, tyre abrasion, fuels and lubricants.</p> <p>Procurement and contractual mechanisms can be used to ensure that building and civil engineering contractors adhere take steps to ensure pollution is prevented from occurring or from dispersing to other areas. Contractors can minimise the use of all substances that could cause pollution and failing that, implement and communicate procedures to ensure the correct disposal (or release) of substances that could cause pollution.</p>	<p>Negative</p>
<p>Chemical pollution - Will there be any use of toxic chemicals including pesticides, paint or cleaning products?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select negative</p>	<p>Negative</p>
<p>Will there be any excess fertiliser use that could result in nitrogen or phosphorus runoff?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select negative</p>	<p>No Impact</p>
<p>Noise pollution - Is the activity likely to create a noise nuisance?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select negative</p> <p>Additional information:</p> <p>Noise pollution can have detrimental effects on human health, amenity, productivity and the natural environment.</p> <p>Eliminating or reducing excessive noise is a legal responsibility and helps to limit the disturbance of residents and businesses, caused by activities and operations.</p>	<p>Negative</p>

	What is the impact of the activity?
<p>Land conversion - Will this activity result in the reduction in the area of forested land, directly or indirectly?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select negative</p> <p>Additional information:</p> <p>Deforestation usually arises from the clearing of land for development, agriculture, or logging for paper, wood, or minerals.</p>	No Impact
<p>Built Heritage - Will this activity impact on designated heritage sites such as a World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Archaeology Site, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site or Registered Park and Garden?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select negative</p>	No Impact
<p>Natural Heritage and Biodiversity - Will this activity result in any displacement or loss of biodiversity, overfishing or affect protected or designated sites (e.g. ASSIs, SPAs etc).</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select negative</p> <p>Changes in land use exert the most significant effect on biodiversity. These changes include the conversion of natural ecosystems into agriculture or into urban areas; changes in frequency, duration or magnitude of wildfires and similar disturbances; and the introduction of new species into land and freshwater environments.</p>	No Impact

Comments

	Comments
Air pollution	Building and construction works may impact in the short term.
Ozone layer depletion	The type of building works and future uses of premises is not known at this time.
Water/soil pollution	Building and construction works may impact in the short term.
Chemical pollution	Building and construction works may impact in the short term.
Excess fertiliser use	No impact identified

	Comments
Noise pollution	Building and construction works may impact in the short term.
Land conversion	No impact identified
Built Heritage	No impact identified as neither Bangor or Ards are in a conservation area.
Natural Heritage and Biodiversity	No impact identified

Mitigation

	Mitigation
Air pollution	Projects have been asked to promote sustainability within the project.
Ozone layer depletion	Projects have been asked to promote sustainability within the project.
Water/soil pollution	Projects have been asked to promote sustainability within the project.
Chemical pollution	Projects have been asked to promote sustainability within the project.
Excess fertiliser use	No impact identified
Noise pollution	Building and construction works may impact in the short term and will not have a lasting impact.
Land conversion	No impact identified
Built Heritage	No impact identified
Natural Heritage and Biodiversity	No impact identified

10 What impact will the proposals have on ensuring peace, justice, public participation and partnership working for sustainable development?

	What is the impact of the activity?
Peace - Will this activity have a negative or positive impact on community safety, crime or anti-social behaviour?	Positive
Justice - Are there safeguards in place to prevent against bribery and corruption? Note: If the answer is yes, select positive Decision making should be open and transparent with clear governance and accountability arrangements.	Positive

	What is the impact of the activity?
Political voice - Are citizens involved and do they have a role in deciding what happens and how it gets implemented? Note: If the answer is yes, select positive	Positive
Partnerships - Will this activity involve working with others either locally or at a national level to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development? Note: If the answer is yes, select positive	Positive

Comments

	Comments
Peace	It is hoped that reducing vacancy rates, associated anti-social behaviour will decrease. Residents will have a sense of pride in their local area.
Justice	Officers have produced detailed guidance notes and assessment criteria for applications. All applications will be assessed as detailed in the assessment matrix.
Political voice	Consultation has taken place and the scheme has been received positively.
Partnerships	The scheme will involve working with other council department such as building control and planning and economic development. Relationships will be developed between council and the local property owners and potential business that will occupy the new spaces.

On the basis of the answers to the screening questions, I recommend that this policy / decision is

Screened Out - No negative impacts

1. Is Data Protection relevant to the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?

Yes

2. Is the introduction or change of this policy or processing activity likely to result in a high risk to individuals' interests, including physical, material or non-material damage?

Yes

3. Explain broadly what the policy/strategy/plan or public service aims to achieve and what type of processing it involves.

The Empty to Energised Grant Scheme will involve processing applications from proprietors and will collect contact details, land registry details, payment receipts and Banking statements.

4. Describe the nature of the processing

Applications will be submitted electronically to a controlled email inbox. To ensure applicants understand how their personal data will be used by ANDBC if they choose to take part in the scheme, a copy of the ANDBC information and privacy notice is presented as part of the associated application form.

Personal data in the applications will be processed by ANDBC Officers who will process and store the data securely on ANDBC's behalf. Information is stored electronically on secure Council server.

5. Describe the context of the processing

Personal data in the applications will be processed by ANDBC Officers who will process and store the data securely on ANDBC's behalf. Information is stored electronically on secure Council server.

6. Describe the purposes of the processing.

The Empty to Energised Pilot Grant Scheme will only process data that is required in order to assess an application for funding. Information is stored electronically on secure Council server.

7. Consultation

The scheme has been developed after a period of consultation with Property Owners based in Newtownards and Bangor. A questionnaire was issued on the 23rd June 2025 and closed on 8th August 2025. The number of respondents totalled 23. Of the 23 respondents, Regeneration Officers met with 17 property owners for an in person discussion. The findings of the survey and the in person discussions allowed officers to design a scheme that is fit for purpose and will meet the needs of the proprietor and councils ambitions detailed in the corporate plan.

8. Necessity and Proportionality

The latest DfC vacancy survey (31st October 2024) showed that:

Bangor City Centre had a total number of non-domestic premises of 666 of which 140 (21.0%) were vacant.

Newtownards has 536 premises with 113 (21.1%) vacant. This is the highest number since April 2016.

The 2022 Masterplan Reviews was delivered in collaboration with local stakeholders which identified key priorities for each town and the city, providing a framework for future development and growth. The review of the Masterplans for Newtownards and Bangor further evidenced tackling vacancy as a key priority for each area.

Bangor - Tackle vacancy:

The 2023 Review of the Bangor Masterplan highlighted the need to tackle vacancy within the city centre. DfC identified the Non-domestic Vacancy Rate for Bangor (Oct 24) as 21.0%. Regeneration commissioned McGarry Consulting, in partnership with Queen's University Belfast (QUB) to undertake a study into Dereliction & Vacancy within the city centre and how it could be addressed, they identified the vacancy rate as 20.0% (Jan 25).

Newtownards-Tackle hotspots (of dereliction):

Within Newtownards town centre initiatives have already successfully begun to tackle areas of dereliction through the use of public art and murals, breathing new life and transforming public perceptions of vacant buildings. The Newtownards Masterplan Review (2022) highlights the need for further short to medium term interventions need to be explored to tackle prominent areas of dereliction within the town centre.

A proposed pilot Vacancy and Dereliction Grant Scheme to be called Empty to Energised will be delivered in Newtownards and Bangor to support property owners to revitalise vacant properties with grant assistance with an aim of attracting businesses. The result of which will increase the non-domestic rate base for the borough.

The findings from the pilot grant scheme will allow for learning for future schemes with the potential of rolling the scheme out across the remaining towns and the villages within the Borough.

9. Identify and assess risk

	Describe the source of risk and nature of potential impact on individuals. Include associated compliance and corporate risks as necessary.	Likelihood of harm	Severity of harm	Overall risk
Details	Potential risk of losing confidentiality - mistakenly sending data to wrong applicant	Possible	Minimal	Low

10. Identify measures to reduce risk

	Risk	Options to reduce to eliminate risk	Effect on risk	Residual risk	Measure approved
Details	Potential risk of losing confidentiality - mistakenly sending data to wrong applicant	Provide a unique identification code for each applicant that must be used in all correspondence from and to the applicant.	Reduced	Low	Yes

Data Protection Officer Comments

Summary of DPO advice:

Need to add in the risks of confidential data being sent by applicants as discussed. Need to ask them to send encrypted, use Zivver or deliver in person.