

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

22 July 2026

Dear Sir/Madam

You are hereby invited to attend a hybrid Meeting (in person and via Zoom) of Ards and North Down Borough Council which will be held at the City Hall, The Castle, Bangor on **Wednesday, 29 July 2026 at 7.00pm.**

Yours faithfully

Susie McCullough

Chief Executive

Ards and North Down Borough Council

A G E N D A

1. Prayer
2. Apologies
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Mayor's Business
5. Mayor and Deputy Mayor Engagements for the Month of July 2026 (Copy attached)
6. Minutes of Council meeting dated 24 June 2026 (Copy attached)
7. Minutes of Audit Committee dated 22 June 2026 (Copy attached)
8. Minutes of Planning Committee dated 7 July 2026 (Copy attached)
9. Changes to Standing Orders (Report attached)
10. Response to Notice of Motion on USA 250 (Report attached)
11. Consultation on the Bathing Waters Policy Review for Northern Ireland (Report attached)
12. Conferences and Invitations
 - 12.1 Invitation to APSE Annual Seminar 2026 (Report attached)
 - 12.2 36th La Touche Legacy Seminar 11th Festival of History (Report attached)

- 13. Sealing Documents
- 14. Transfer of Rights of Burial
- 15. Notice of Motion Status Report (Report attached)
- 16. Notices of Motion
- 16.1 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Cathcart and Councillor McClean

That this Council recognises that our city, towns and villages in our Borough are summer destinations for many. Therefore the Council agrees to bring an officers' report back on reviving the annual 'Dressing the Town' budget which was previously provided for banners and bunting and other decorative measures during the summer months. The aim of such a budget would be to provide visitors and residents with a summer welcome to our Borough, especially our seaside destinations.

IN CONFIDENCE

Items for Approval

- 17. Extension of Tender for the Provision of Legionella Services - Lot 1 (Report attached)
- 18. Extension to the Contract for the Receipt and Processing of Mixed Dry Recyclables (Lot 1) (Report attached)
- 19. Leisure Delivery Model Update (Report attached)
- 20. Request for Wayleave from NIE - Bridge Street, Comber (Report attached)
- 21. Request for a licence with NIHE in respect of land acquisition at Main Street, Conlig (Report attached)
- 22. Request for a licence for site compound - Ward Park Redevelopment Works (Report attached)

MEMBERSHIP OF ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Alderman Adair	Councillor Harbinson
Alderman Armstrong-Cotter	Councillor Hennessy
Alderman Brooks	Councillor Hollywood
Alderman Cummings	Councillor S Irvine
Alderman Graham	Councillor W Irvine
Alderman McAlpine	

Alderman McRandal	Councillor Kendall
Alderman McDowell	Councillor Kerr
Alderman McIlveen	Councillor McBurney
Alderman Smith	Councillor McClean
Councillor Ashe	Councillor McCollum
Councillor Blaney (Mayor)	Councillor McCracken
Councillor Boyle	Councillor McKee
Councillor Brady	Councillor Moore
Councillor Cathcart	Councillor Morgan
Councillor Chambers	Councillor Newman
Councillor Cochrane (Deputy Mayor)	Councillor Quinn
Councillor Douglas	Councillor Smart
Councillor Edmund	Councillor Thompson
Councillor Gilmour	Councillor Wray

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A hybrid meeting (in person and via Zoom) of Ards and North Down Borough Council was held at the City Hall, The Castle, Bangor on Wednesday 24 June 2026 commencing at 7.00pm.

In the Chair:	The Mayor (Councillor Blaney)	
Aldermen:	Adair	McAlpine (Zoom)
	Armstrong-Cotter	McDowell
	Brooks (Zoom)	McIlveen
	Cummings	McRandal
	Graham	Smith
Councillors:	Boyle	McBurney
	Brady	McCollum
	Cathcart	McClellan
	Chambers	McCracken
	Cochrane	McKee
	Douglas	Moore
	Edmund	Morgan
	Gilmour	Newman
	Hennessy	Quinn
	Irvine, S	Smart
	Irvine, W	Thompson (Zoom)
	Kendall	Wray
	Kerr (Zoom)	
Officers:	Chief Executive (S McCullough), Director of Active and Healthy Communities (A Faulkner), Director of Corporate Services (M Steele), Director of Environmental Services (G Bannister), Director of Place and Prosperity (B Dorrian), Democratic Services Manager (J Wilson) and Democratic Services Officer (H Loebnau)	

1. PRAYER

The Mayor (Councillor Blaney) welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited the Chief Executive to read the Council prayer.

NOTED.

2. APOLOGIES

The Mayor sought apologies at this stage.

Apologies were received from Councillors Ashe, Harbinson and Hollywood.

NOTED.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Mayor sought Declarations of Interest at this stage and the following were made.

Councillor S Irvine - Item 8.4.1 – Arising from Active and Healthy Communities, Funding Update

Councillor Boyle - Item 18.5 – Notice of Motion

Alderman Smith - Item 8.4.1 – Arising from Active and Healthy Communities Funding Update

NOTED.

4. MAYOR'S BUSINESS

The Mayor began by saying that he had been delighted to learn that seventeen residents of Ards and North Down had been awarded in the Birthday Honours list.

On behalf of the Council, he extended to them his sincere congratulations.

Another piece of good news this month had come from Bangor Drama Club who had won the Northern Ireland One Act Finals and would now be representing Northern Ireland at the British Finals in Wales on 3-4 July. He extended his best wishes to them for the next stage of the competition on behalf of the Council.

He reminded Members who were planning to attend the annual Somme Commemoration Wreath-Laying Service to be in position at the War Memorial at Ward Park, Bangor at 1.45 pm on Sunday, 28 June 2026 for the service at 2.00 pm. Members were asked to meet at the Bowling Pavilion at 1.15 pm and indicate their attendance so that robes could be taken.

He also reminded Members to complete their Declaration of Interest Forms which had been provided electronically by Democratic Services.

On behalf of the whole Council, he also wished to extend support to Ciara Mageean following the recent news of her diagnosis. He knew Members would join him in keeping Ciara in their thoughts and he wished her strength and courage as she navigated this difficult and challenging time.

NOTED.

5. MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR ENGAGEMENTS FOR THE MONTH OF JUNE 2026

(Appendix I)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor Engagements for the month of June 2026.

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The Mayor said that he had had a whirlwind month since being appointed and he had loved every moment of that time. He had attended some amazing events and a couple of those had stood out;

- Celebration and Recognition Event for Volunteers, Newtownards;
- Nowhere to Run - 5k Fun Run, Ward Park, Bangor;
- Kilcooley Women's Centre and International Event, Bangor Castle
- Record of Achievement Day P7, Clifton Special School, Bangor;
- Love Bangor Litter Pick and Weeding, Bloomfield Estate, Bangor;
- Love Ballyholme Community Day, Ballyholme;
- Comber Potato Festival, Comber;
- Ballygowan Flute Band 150th Anniversary Concert, Ballygowan.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor McCollum, seconded by Councillor Smart, that the information be noted.

6. MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING DATED 27 MAY 2026

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Adair, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that the minutes be agreed as a correct record.

7. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING DATED 3 JUNE 2026

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Alderman Graham, that the minutes be agreed as a correct record.

8. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

8.1 Planning Committee dated 9 June 2026

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor McCollum, seconded by Alderman Graham, that the minutes be approved and adopted.

8.2 Environment Committee dated 10 June 2026

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

Proposed by Councillor Cathcart, seconded by Alderman McRandal, that the minutes be adopted.

Councillor Cathcart informed the meeting that since the Environment Committee meeting Mr Alistair Kerr, Waste Services Manager, had retired after 45 years of incredible service to the Council. He was sure that most Members would have contacted Alistair at some point, and he wished him well in his retirement.

In respect of Item 14 – Donaghadee Football and Hockey Update

Councillor Cochrane proposed an amendment which was seconded by Alderman Brooks:

That this Council notes this report and further agrees to bring back a follow-up report assessing the wider issue of sports provision in Donaghadee. While Council notes the development of an updated Outline Business Case (OBC) is a positive step, Council acknowledges the deep sense of frustration in Donaghadee around how overdue these works are.

Council Officers should also bring back a follow-up report around indicative timings for the process surrounding potential upgrades to Crommelin Park's football facilities and creation of hockey facilities at this site, such as when will the OBC be completed and ultimately when would we see work on the ground. Further to this, officers should fully explore all external funding opportunities to assist with the development of these facilities.

Councillor Cochrane said this was more a question of when those issues would be resolved, asking what the earliest delivery timeframe for the initiative could be. He stated that he would like to see a clear timeline, noting that while this was a positive development, people were asking when it would come to fruition. While the Outline Business Case was welcome, he suggested that a follow-up report should be brought back assessing Donaghadee's sports provision overall.

Alderman Brooks offered his congratulations to the new Mayor on his role and explained he would not revisit all of the issues at Donaghadee, as he could "write a book" on the subject. However, he asked the Director of Environment to comment on a PeacePlus meeting that had taken place in 2023, at which it had been mentioned that the Council would be spending up to £9M over the coming years on pitches and sports provision in Donaghadee. In response the Director of Environmental Services replied that there had certainly been a budget for sports facilities in general at that time, and since then a new Outline Business Case had been produced which set out options for moving forward. He added that Leisure Services were managing leased facilities such as rugby and cricket and Parks would manage sports such as hockey and football at Crommelin Park.

Alderman Brooks said that the discussion at the PeacePlus meeting had taken place when there had been a request for a potential MUGA pitch, and that had not been considered further because it had been indicated that £9M would be invested in sports facilities in Donaghadee. He said that the lack of progress on the MUGA pitch since then had caused frustration among those calling for improved facilities and it continued to be a source of annoyance among the people of Donaghadee.

Councillor Hennessy agreed to support the amendment and pointed to the significant disappointment and local frustration surrounding the issue, stating that progress would be welcomed.

Councillor McCollum stated that she, and other local Councillors, had attended numerous meetings and that there was, understandably, a great deal of resentment regarding the funding for sports facilities and the lack of progress in Donaghadee. She said that there had been considerable frustration at the lack of meaningful action, noting that Donaghadee Ladies Hockey Club had its home pitch in Bangor. She added that local volunteers were willing to support developments, and that it now fell to the Council to make a tangible effort to move forward.

Alderman Smith said he was content to support the amendment, adding that as more issues emerged there was a need to take a more strategic approach to Council investment and prioritisation. He noted that this required careful consideration to ensure ambitions were realised, particularly given the scale of the capital requirements and the need to determine how best to progress across the Borough.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Cathcart, seconded by Alderman McRandal, that the minutes be approved and adopted and that an amendment be made at Item 14 that:

That this Council notes this report and further agrees to bring back a follow-up report assessing the wider issue of sports provision in Donaghadee. While Council notes the development of an updated Outline Business Case (OBC) is a positive step, Council acknowledges the deep sense of frustration in Donaghadee around how overdue these works are.

Council Officers should also bring back a follow-up report around indicative timings for the process surrounding potential upgrades to Crommelin Park's football facilities and creation of hockey facilities at this site, such as when will the OBC be completed and ultimately when would we see work on the ground. Further to this, officers should fully explore all external funding opportunities to assist with the development of these facilities.

8.3 Place and Prosperity Committee dated 11 June 2026

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Smart, seconded by Alderman Adair, that the minutes be approved and adopted.

8.4 Active and Healthy Communities Committee dated 15 June 2026

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

Proposed by Alderman Cummings, seconded by Councillor W Irvine that the minutes be adopted.

Matters Arising - In respect of Item 10 – EVAWG Terms of Reference

Recommended that the Council approves the Terms of Reference and make the following appointments;

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Proposed by Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Alderman Adair, that Councillor Gilmour and Councillor Thompson be nominated.

Proposed by Alderman McRandal, seconded by Councillor Moore, that Councillor McCollum be nominated.

Proposed by Alderman Smith, seconded by Councillor Smart, that Councillor Newman be nominated.

Proposed by Councillor Brady, seconded by Councillor McKee, that Councillor Brady be nominated.

AGREED.

Matters Arising - In respect of Item 13 - Funding Update

Alderman McIlveen acknowledged that circumstances had changed since the report was prepared and asked the Director to outline the current position.

The Director of Active and Healthy Communities advised that officers had been in contact with the Permanent Secretaries of the Department of Justice (DoJ), Department for Communities (DfC), and The Executive Office (TEO). Confirmation had been received from DoJ that it would issue letters of offer based on the funding level outlined in the Council report which had been approximately £210k.

Shortly before the meeting, correspondence had also been received from DfC confirming funding for quarters 1 and 2 which were also broadly in line with what the Council had anticipated. That provided welcome certainty for the summer period. However, TEO had not yet confirmed funding for its programme.

Alderman McIlveen noted, in light of that, that the proposal agreed at Committee at Item 10 regarding good relations and the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) funding requirements over the summer had effectively been met. He proposed that the original recommendation should remain unchanged, with the understanding that funding beyond this period would need to be kept under review. He emphasised the importance of certainty for community groups and expressed disappointment over the anxiety caused by the Executive's delayed funding decisions.

Councillor Wray welcomed the update, noting that he had expected funding to be confirmed at some point. For clarity, he requested that Council letters of offer be issued after the five-day call-in period had expired. Providing further clarity, the Chief Executive confirmed that DoJ funding would cover the full year for PCSP, while DfC funding would cover quarters 1 and 2 (up to the end of September). TEO funding remained uncertain, with the Council agreeing to provide interim support for EVAWG until the end of August.

Councillor Wray reiterated his concern about selectively funding projects and questioned why EVAWG had been categorised as a medium rather than high risk. He attributed the situation to the Executive and suggested a review of external

funding programmes next year to ensure decisions were made earlier and provided greater certainty for community planning.

Councillor Gilmour seconded Alderman McIlveen's proposal to retain the Committee's recommendation, noting the high costs involved. While mindful of ratepayers' money, she stressed the need to avoid disruption to projects and was reassured that funding could be reviewed later in the year.

Councillor Boyle supported this view but expressed strong dissatisfaction with the situation, describing it as a significant failure of the Executive. He highlighted the challenges faced by community groups that planned well in advance and criticised the recurring uncertainty around funding.

Councillor Brady described the situation as shocking, particularly given the recognised importance of addressing violence against women and girls. He questioned the lack of ring-fenced funding and echoed concerns about the risk rating assigned to the EVAWG initiative.

Councillor Kendall emphasised the vital role of the community and voluntary sector, noting that delays in funding placed essential services at risk. She supported the proposal and expressed concern that the Council had been forced to act without firm commitments from the relevant Departments and concluded that while Members were committed to supporting communities, the Executive had failed to provide timely support.

NOTED.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Cummings, seconded by Councillor W Irvine, that the minutes be approved and adopted.

8.4.1 Arising from Active and Healthy Communities Committee – Funding Update (Appendix II)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Active and Healthy Communities detailing that Members would be aware of the Funding update item that was discussed at the Active and Healthy Communities Committee meeting on 15th June 2026.

The Council received external funding on an annual basis from a number of central government departments including the Department of Justice, Department for Communities and The Executive Office. The funding delivered a range of community focused programmes including for example PCSP, Good Relations, including the Cultural Expressions Programme and the Ending Violence against Women and Girls Programme, as outlined in Appendix 1.

Key Issues

To date no letters of offer/comfort had been received for 2026 – 2027. The Council also did not know how much funding would be granted or if the budget would be reduced this year.

The Council had this week received a letter in relation to the Ending Violence against Women and Girls Local Change Fund stating that ***“By way of update on the budget position; as you may know, there is still no Executive agreement, therefore we are not yet in a position to issue Letters of Offer for the Local Change Fund”.***

Officers had been in regular communications with the relevant departments in relation to the funding, the position from the departmental officials was consistent across the Board that their budgets had not been agreed by Stormont.

The Chief Executive had also been in contact with the Permanent Secretaries from each of the Departments, DoJ, DfC and TEO, in relation to the difficulties the lack of a Letter of Offer or even a Letter of Comfort was creating.

The Council was concerned about its ability to deliver Central Government funded community programmes. Detailed information on each of the programmes was attached in Appendix 1 including the total anticipated funding from Government for 2026/27. As outlined c£1m in central government funding was due to Council to delivery those programmes. Just over £350,000 was required to support the programmes from April – August 2026. Considering the potential implications of not being able to deliver those key community programmes, £217,592 of the funding was highlighted as high risk and was urgently required to support delivery of those programmes over the summer months. A further £108,000 was medium risk and £37,000 low risk.

The Council could not deliver the full programmes without the Government funding and officers had written to the departments again requesting confirmation that funding required in the short term could be guaranteed to provide the Council with the reassurance and ability to support important programmes over the next few months. To date a response had not been received.

Summary

Members agreed at June’s Active and Healthy Communities Committee to recommend that the Council proceed, at risk, with the Good Relations Funding and £50,000 to assist PCSP and EVAWG over the summer and also to keep the other activity budgets under review and to ask for a fuller update report to come to Council.

Members would be aware that any distribution of funds without confirmation of funding from Government Departments would be at the Council’s risk. Therefore, it was important that if the Council took a risk in that regard, that it sought to minimise the risk as far as possible, by limiting the distribution of funds to only those programmes which were time critical. The Council should then reevaluate its approach at a future date when (i) another stage of criticality was reached for a particular programme, or (ii) Government funding was confirmed.

Members would note that to deliver all the outlined programmes up to the end of August required a budget of c£633k, that being well over the total yearly budget the Council had to support those programmes. However, the programmes deemed high risk, came to c£342k which could in the interim be covered by the Council budget.

Note this related to the totality of the Council's budget across those programmes being c£502k.

RECOMMENDED that the Council considers the report and agrees to fund the programmes identified as high risk as outlined in the report, up to but not exceeding the total Council allocated budget and writes to the Permanent Secretaries in DoJ, DfC and TEO requesting urgent confirmation of the budgets, with a further report to be brought back to Council.

This Item was withdrawn, following a verbal update on confirmation from the Department of Justice and Department for Communities on funding under Item 8.4 under Item 13 – Funding Update.

NOTED.

8.5. Corporate Services Committee dated 16 June 2026

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

RESOLVED on the proposal of Alderman Smith, seconded by Councillor Moore, that the minutes be approved and adopted.

9. DEPUTATION REQUEST

9.1 BANGOR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (Appendix III)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Chief Executive stating that a deputation request had been received from Frank Shivers and Alison Blaney on behalf of Bangor Chamber of Commerce.

The attached request form stated that Bangor Chamber of Commerce wished to make the deputation to a relevant committee or full Council regarding the proposal to establish a Business Improvement District (BID) for Bangor.

The deputation request form was attached at Appendix 1.

RECOMMENDED that the Council considers the deputation request.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Councillor McCollum, that the Deputation be heard by the Place and Prosperity Committee.

10. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2027 (Appendix IV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Chief Executive detailing that Members would find attached a schedule of meetings for 2027.

Members would be aware that the Local Government election was currently scheduled for 6 May 2027. Dates of meetings had been altered to take that into account, with the Annual Meeting proposed for Wednesday 26 May and an additional Council meeting to take place on Wednesday 2 June.

Members would also note due to the timing of the Local Government election, apart from Planning Committee there would be no Committee meetings in April, and no Committee or Council meetings in May, apart from the AGM. In line with Standing Orders and the Council's Scheme of Delegation the Chief Executive, or nominated Director, had delegated authority to exercise the functions of the Council except those which were reserved to the Council pursuant to Section 7 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014.

In addition, the Council meeting had been scheduled for Wednesday 15 December rather than 22 December, due to its proximity to the Christmas holidays.

RECOMMENDATION that the Council notes this report.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Smith, seconded by Councillor Boyle, that the recommendation be adopted.

11. BATTLE OF THE SOMME PILGRIMAGE

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Chief Executive detailing that at the February meeting of the Corporate Services Committee, it was agreed to send a small delegation to attend the commemoration events and wreath laying at the Thiepval Monument, Ulster Memorial Tower and the Memorial at Guillemont, to mark the anniversary of the Battle of the Somme on 1 July. The delegation was scheduled to depart on 29 June and return on 3 July 2026.

It was agreed to nominate a Member to attend alongside the Mayor, the Chief Executive (or their nominee) and one other officer.

Key Issues

It was previously agreed that Councillor Ashe would attend as the nominated Member. However, Councillor Ashe was no longer available to do so, and the nomination therefore returned to the Council for consideration. Councillor Moore had confirmed she was available to attend, and it was therefore recommended that the composition of the delegation be amended to replace Councillor Ashe with Councillor Moore.

RECOMMENDED that the Council agrees to the nomination that Councillor Moore attend the anniversary commemorations of the Battle of the Somme 2026.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman McRandal, seconded by Councillor McCollum, that the recommendation be adopted.

12. CHANGES TO THE STANDING ORDERS

(Appendix V)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Chief Executive detailing that in line with the Policy Development Process, the Standing Orders were reviewed every three years or as required.

Key Issues

The full list of proposed changes were outlined in Appendix 1 within this report.

Members should note that in line with the proposed change to Standing Order 3, it also proposed to introduce a Special Meeting Requisition Form which could be found at appendix 2.

Updated training on Standing Orders for Members and Officers was currently being reviewed and would be rolled out in due course.

Next Steps

Members would be aware that when making those decisions, any Motion to add to, vary or revoke those Standing Orders would, when proposed and seconded, stand adjourned and be referred without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council and any resultant amendment would be ratified at an ordinary meeting of the Council.

Therefore, these Standing Orders would be stood down for discussion at the next meeting on 29 July 2026.

RECOMMENDED that the Council considers the recommended changes to the Standing Orders as set out and agrees that they are stood down without debate for one month, being brought back to the Council meeting in July 2026.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Boyle, seconded by Alderman McRandal, that the recommendation be adopted.

13. UPDATE ON THE JOINT NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS 2027 FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

(Appendix VI)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Chief Executive detailing that she had received a letter dated 10 June 2026 from The Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which set out a number of key issues in advance of the joint Northern Ireland Assembly and Local Government elections scheduled for 6 May 2027.

Key Issues

The Secretary of State intended to address a number of issues through secondary legislation relating to the two standalone elections taking place on the same day. The proposed legislation was expected to resolve matters including:

- Arrangements for polling cards, polling stations, ballot boxes and the ballot verification process. Although not referenced in the letter, Members should note that the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland would launch an eight-week public consultation on its draft Polling Place Scheme on 31 July and would also engage with political parties in advance of its launch.
- The timetable for verification and count arrangements, including amendments to the provisions governing the date on which councillors took office following the election. It was proposed that councillors would take office on the seventh day after the election.
- Changes to the election timetable to help alleviate operational pressures on those delivering the election, including provision for the Assembly to dissolve on 23 March 2027.
- Additional forms of accepted voter identification in Northern Ireland.
- An increase in the candidate expenditure limits for local election candidates.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the contents of this report and the letter attached at Appendix 1.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that the recommendation be adopted.

14. A PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE LOCAL GROWTH FUND IN NI 2026-2029 (Appendix VII & VIII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Place and Prosperity detailing that as part of the 2025 Spending Review, £43 million per annum had been provided by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) for the Local Growth Fund for Northern Ireland 2026-29 and had set allocations for two different types of spending: Resource and Capital spendings.

The aim of the consultation was to determine how the Capital Funding for 2026/27 should be apportioned, as well as how the Capital and Resource funding for the remainder of the spending review period should be allocated.

The response to the consultation had been developed at a workshop in Craigavon on 28th May 2026 with the Department for the Economy, the Northern Ireland Office in an observer capacity and representatives from the eleven local Councils in Northern Ireland present. The consultation was submitted to SOLACE on 5th June 2026 for consideration and further Ards and North Down specific comments were added as highlighted in Appendix 2.

The response to the consultation needed to be submitted by the deadline of 26th June at 5pm.

RECOMMENDED that the Council approves the report and submits this response subject to additional comments and ratification by the Council.

Proposed by Alderman Smith, seconded by Councillor McCollum, that the recommendation be adopted.

Alderman Smith stated that he supported the proposed consultation responses, though he raised concerns about the impact of budget constraints, including issues around grants, and he noted that some of what was proposed did not make sense such as noting a deficit in graduate provision while at the same time offering fewer graduate places from September. He questioned the split between capital and revenue funding and how that would work in practice, suggesting a stronger focus was needed on revenue linked to economic development. While he felt the consultation had identified the right responses, including *Go Succeed*, he emphasised that infrastructure remained a key challenge and that £20 million per year in capital funding would have limited impact in Northern Ireland.

Councillor McCollum seconded those remarks and highlighted the need to reduce economic inactivity, referring to Orchardville as an organisation able to deliver meaningful employment outcomes but who were now facing a funding cliff edge. She expressed concern that progress in this area appeared to be limited and that the consultation response could have more strongly reflected the consequences for individuals. The Director of Place and Prosperity informed Members that the submission would be supplemented with Members' additional views, which Councillor McCollum welcomed.

Councillor Wray concurred, adding that high levels of deprivation and unemployment existed on the Ards Peninsula and that poor public transport also created a barrier, resulting in a 'vicious circle' in poorer communities. He also raised concerns about young people not in education, employment and training and limited course provision, along with a lack of essential skills programmes, noting that the Borough did not receive the same level of resources to assist compared to similar areas of deprivation in Belfast for example.

Alderman McDowell also emphasised concern about funding, suggesting that resources passed through the Northern Ireland Assembly may not even reach Councils. He called for a stronger Council role in economic development supported by long-term planning and a fairer share of funding. The Director thanked Members for their input and confirmed those points could be added to the response, while noting ongoing uncertainty around funding, limited flexibility, and delays in the transfer of urban regeneration powers and resources.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Smith, seconded by Councillor McCollum, that the recommendation be adopted.

15. SEALING DOCUMENTS

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Graham, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that the Seal of the Council be affixed to the following documents:-

- (a) Grants of Rights of Burials – D41382 – D41406
- (b) Duplicate – Loughview C62 David Nelson
- (c) Licence for alterations (x4) relating to Seabed at Portaferry – His Majesty the King (1) The Crown Estate Commissioners (2) Ards and North Down Borough Council (3) Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute for NI.
- (d) Statutory Receipt in respect of Compensation for land vested from Council by Dfl at William Street, Newtownards.
- (e) Grant of Easement – Ards and North Down Borough Council to Innova Developments Limited.

16. TRANSFER OF RIGHTS OF BURIAL

Redburn 2602

Jennifer Morrow – David Wilton

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that the information be noted.

17. NOTICE OF MOTION STATUS REPORT

(Appendix IX)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Chief Executive attaching a Status Report in respect of Notices of Motion.

This was a standing item on the Council agenda each month and its aim was to keep Members updated on the outcome of Motions. It should be noted that as each Motion was dealt with it would be removed from the report.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the report.

Proposed by Councillor Wray, seconded by Councillor Moore that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor Wray referred to Notice of Motion 698 that he had brought previously and asked for more information on how that was progressing. The Director of Active and Healthy Communities stated that a report would be brought to the September meeting and she was currently working with finance in relation to it.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Wray, seconded by Councillor Moore, that the recommendation be adopted.

18. NOTICES OF MOTION

18.1 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Cathcart and Councillor Gilmour

That this Council condemns recent anti-social behaviour witnessed in Bangor and the North Down coast and commits to reviewing our own resources, as well as working with relevant agencies to tackle this problem. Whilst grateful for police action taken, this Council recognises that the officers need additional powers to tackle anti-social behaviour and expresses disappointment that the Justice Minister has ruled out passing relevant legislation during this Assembly mandate. This Council therefore agrees to write to the Justice Minister, calling for action on anti-social behaviour legislation, more police officers for the Borough, the reopening of Bangor custody suite and the rejection of any lowering of the age of criminal responsibility.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Cathcart, seconded by Councillor Gilmour, that the Notice of Motion be referred to the Active and Healthy Communities Committee.

18.2 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Cochrane, Alderman Brooks, Councillor Chambers, Councillor Quinn, Councillor Thompson and Councillor Hennessy

That this Council notes the publication of NICCAP3 and recognises the need for practical measures to address coastal erosion, flooding and infrastructure resilience in Northern Ireland.

Further to this, Council notes that the delivery of the associated Adaptation Delivery Plan would 'designate responsibility to a NICS department to oversee coastal management and bring forward policy and legislation on managing coastal change' and believes this designation must be supported with associated Executive funding.

- Recognises that coastal councils, including Ards and North Down Borough Council, are increasingly exposed to the impacts of coastal change, while lacking the statutory powers and resources to respond effectively;
- Further notes that Ards and North Down has the longest coastline of any council area in Northern Ireland and is therefore particularly affected by these risks;
- Further notes that the coast and coastal walks are arguably the 'jewel in the crown' of our community and tourism assets;
- Acknowledges the increasing evidence of coastal impacts within the Borough, including flooding, storm damage, and pressure on public infrastructure.

Accordingly, this Council calls on the Northern Ireland Executive to:

1. Designate a lead department or agency with statutory responsibility for both coastal flooding and coastal erosion and clarify its relationship with Councils in delivering improved intelligence, monitoring and protection;
2. Introduce a framework for long-term coastal planning, such as Shoreline Management Plans or a Northern Ireland equivalent;

3. Establish a dedicated coastal protection and resilience fund to support councils and relevant agencies in delivering necessary infrastructure and adaptation measures;
4. Bring forward proposals, within a defined timeframe, to address governance, funding, and delivery of coastal protection in Northern Ireland.

The Council further agrees to:

- Write to the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, and relevant Executive Ministers, outlining this position;
- Engage with the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) and other coastal councils to seek a coordinated, regional approach to this issue;
- Support efforts to ensure that coastal communities are adequately protected from flooding, coastal erosion and other environmental pressures.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Cochrane, seconded by Councillor Hennessy, that the Notice of Motion be referred to the Environment Committee.

18.3 Notice of Motion submitted by Alderman Smith and Councillor Chambers

That Council writes to the Department for Communities requesting a review of their current policy that stops businesses located outside of town centre core boundaries from applying for grant support.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Smith, seconded by Councillor Chambers, that the Notice of Motion be referred to the Place and Prosperity Committee.

18.4 Notice of Motion submitted by Alderman McRandal and Councillor Harbinson

That this Council acknowledges the financial costs that it incurs in dealing with and disposing of litter and in seeking to take enforcement action.

That this Council acknowledges that it needs to take further action to positively influence the attitude of some people towards littering.

This Council therefore resolves to consider what additional actions it can reasonably take both to inform the public about the various harms that result from littering and to seek to change people's attitudes towards littering.

Council should furthermore consider developing and implementing a formal litter action plan, where all actions relating to the handling and disposal of litter, enforcement and education and prevention are brought together in one place.

A report should be brought back to the Committee with recommendations in respect of the above.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman McRandal, seconded by Councillor McCollum, that the Notice of Motion be referred to the Active and Healthy Communities Committee.

(Having declared an interest in Item 18.5 Councillor Boyle left the meeting at 8.05 pm).

18.5 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Brady and seconded by Councillor McKee

That Council reverse its decision of 29th October 2025 to withdraw funding from the NAC NI Region and reinstates its membership, in line with the other ten councils in Northern Ireland.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Brady, seconded by Councillor McKee, that the Notice of Motion be referred to the Corporate Services Committee.

(Councillor Boyle was readmitted to the meeting at 8.06 pm)

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

AGREED, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, that the public and press be excluded from the following items of confidential business.

NOTED.

(Councillor Kerr left the meeting at 8.06 pm).

19. FORMER ARDS LEISURE CENTRE SITE, WILLIAM STREET, NEWTOWNARDS – VESTING COMPENSATION

*****IN CONFIDENCE*****

NOT FOR PUBLICATION – CONSULTATIONS OR NEGOTIATIONS

The Council was asked to note the action taken by officers in relation to the vesting of the old Leisure Centre site and to retrospectively agree the compensation amount as determined by Land and Property Services.

The recommendation was noted.

20. REQUEST FOR RENT ABATEMENT – LEASE TO DONAGHADEE SAILING CLUB

(Appendix X & XI)

*****IN CONFIDENCE*****

NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)

The Council was asked to consider a request from Donaghadee Sailing Club for a rent abatement at the boatyard on Shore Street, Donaghadee.

The recommendation was that Council agree to write to DfC to seek a 50% reduction in the rent as assessed by Council's valuer.

The recommendation was agreed.

MAYOR'S CLOSING REMARKS

The Mayor drew the meeting to a close by paying a massive thank you to Gary McCormick for all his service to the Council. Forty-two years was an incredible amount of time and the Council was extremely grateful for all Gary's hard work and commitment, it was very much appreciated.

READMITTANCE OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

AGREED, on the proposal of Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, seconded by Councillor Smart, that the public and press be readmitted to the meeting.

NOTED.

TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated at 8.20 pm.

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A hybrid meeting (in person and via Zoom) of the Audit Committee was held at the Council Chamber, Church Street, Newtownards, on Monday 22 June 2026 at 7.00pm.

PRESENT: -

In the Chair: Councillor Morgan

Aldermen: McAlpine (Zoom)

Councillors: Harbinson (Zoom) Newman (Zoom)
Hollywood (Zoom) Wray
McKee (Zoom)

In Attendance: NIAO – Ms Anu Kane

Officers: Chief Executive (S McCullough), Director of Corporate Services (M Steele), Head of Finance (S Grieve) and Democratic Services Officer (R King)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, Councillor Thompson and Mr Paul Cummings.

NOTED.

2. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Chair (Councillor Morgan) welcomed Ms Kane, attending from the Northern Ireland Audit Office.

She went on to explain that Mr Cummings was unable to attend what would have been his final meeting due to the end of his four year term as Independent Member. Mr Cummings had asked her to share the following comments:

"I want to apologise for being unable to attend the meeting this evening especially given it is my last. I will miss my trips down to Ards and I hope over the past four years I have been of some assistance. I want to pay tribute to your officers who have been very open and professional in all my dealings with them. They sometimes don't get the credit they deserve. It has been really enjoyable to work with such passionate people. One final suggestion. During my term I have seen a significant turnover of members and while this brings fresh perspectives it reduces the effectiveness of the committee. So please stick with it for the four years. May I wish you well and should you or your new independent member ever wish to contact me please just lift the phone."

The Chair suggested writing a letter of thanks to Mr Cummings and the Committee agreed to that.

NOTED.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman sought Declarations of Interest at this stage.

No Declarations of Interest were declared. Members were reminded that they could declare throughout the meeting.

NOTED.

4. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS

There were no items of Any Other Notified Business.

NOTED.

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC/PRESS

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Wray, seconded by Councillor Harbinson, that the public/press be excluded during the discussion of the undernoted items of confidential business.

5. DRAFT FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2025/26

****IN CONFIDENCE****

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

SCHEDULE 6 - 3. Exemption: relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person

A report was presented detailing the Councils financial and overall revenue performance for the year. Once audited, those would be published before 30 September 2026.

The recommendation was adopted.

RE-ADMITTANCE OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Wray, seconded by Councillor Newman, that the public/press be re-admitted to the meeting.

TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated at 7.45pm.

AC.22.06.2026 PM

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ITEM 8

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ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A hybrid meeting (in person and via Zoom) of the Planning Committee was held in the Council Chamber, Church Street, Newtownards, on Tuesday 7 July 2026 at 7.00 pm.

PRESENT:

In the Chair: Alderman Graham

Aldermen: McAlpine (Zoom) McIlveen
McDowell Smith

Councillors: McClean (8.13 pm) Smart
McKee Wray
Morgan (Zoom)

Officers: Director of Place and Prosperity (B Dorrian), Head of Planning and Building Control (A McCullough), Principal Planner (G Kerr), Senior Planner (J Hanna) and Democratic Services Officer (H Loebnau)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from the Chair (Councillor McCollum) and Councillor Cathcart. Apologies for lateness were given by Councillor McClean.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Alderman McAlpine declared an interest in the following applications.

Item 4.3 - LA06/2025/0707/S54 – Strangford Integrated College, Carrowdore

Item 4.6 - LA06/2025/0948/F – 8 The Crescent, Holywood

Item 4.7 – LA06/2025/0950/LBC – 8 The Crescent, Holywood

NOTED.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES OF 9 JUNE 2026

(Appendix I)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above.

AGREED, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Councillor Smart, that the minutes be noted.

4. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

4.1 LA06/2020/0770/F – INSTALLATION OF FLOODLIGHTS TO SERVE 3 TENNIS COURTS, BANGOR LAWN TENNIS CLUB, COURTS 4-6, IMMEDIATELY WEST OF 28 FARNHAM PARK, BANGOR

(Appendices II - V)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Case Officer's report.

DEA: Bangor West

Committee Interest: Local Objection

Proposal: Installation of floodlights to serve 3 tennis courts.

Site Location: Bangor Lawn Tennis Club Courts 4-6, immediately west of 28 Farnham Park, Bangor

Recommendation: Grant Planning Permission

The Planning Officer began by explaining that this Item was for the Installation of floodlights to serve 3 tennis courts (courts 4-6) at Bangor Lawn Tennis Club and the application was being recommended for approval of planning permission. The application was being considered by the Committee as there were six or more applications contrary to the officer recommendation. It was noted that at the time of publication of the case officer's report there were 76 objections from 16 separate addresses, and also 6 letters of support and a petition of support with 181 signatures.

Since the publication of the case officer's report an additional objection had been received with an addendum to the issues raised, prepared, published and circulated to Members.

Members should note that the original proposal was for eight lighting columns at a height of 10m and that was amended during the processing of the application to six columns at 12m in height which was what was being considered.

The recommendation was to grant planning permission.

The site was located within the settlement development limit of Bangor as shown in the North Down and Ards Area Plan 1984-1995 and the Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) 2015 and was located within a proposed Area of Townscape Character BR 15) as per draft BMAP.

Vehicular and pedestrian access was through Farnham Park to the east. There were a total of 6 tennis courts on the site, three of which with existing floodlighting at courts 1-3.

Bangor Lawn Tennis Club was a long established club set within Bangor West within a residential area and a picture was shown providing some context of the site and its surrounds.

The image from Farnham Park and Maxwell Park respectively showed that public vantage points of the tennis club and existing lighting did not appear prominent and read as a contained recreational use that integrated well within its landscaped surroundings. The use of fencing, boundary walls and mature vegetation assisted in mitigating visual impact and allowed the development to blend into the established residential townscape.

Turning to the site where proposed floodlighting was to be located at courts 4-6 it was explained that the tennis courts were surfaced with artificial grass and were enclosed by metal mesh fencing approximately 3m in height. Boundary treatments between the tennis club and adjoining residential gardens comprised a mixture of fencing, walls and mature vegetation, which provided a degree of physical and visual screening. Views into the site were generally restricted until reaching the immediate vicinity of the site entrance, approximately 3-4m from the boundary. As a result, visibility of the proposed floodlighting structures from the surrounding area would be limited.

During various site visits the case officer also took images from inside 19 Knockmore Park to assess the site from a neighbouring property. In respect of existing floodlighting on the site an image was shown of courts 4, 5 and 6, together with the existing floodlighting serving the courts located to the south of the clubhouse. The existing lighting infrastructure comprised 10 steel floodlight columns, each approximately 10m in height. According to historical records it would appear that lighting had been in place since at least 2005. Those existing floodlit courts were also situated within a residential context and, despite the presence of floodlighting, did not appear visually dominant or incongruous within the surrounding area.

It should be noted that the existing floodlighting operated without any restriction on hours, having been confirmed as lawful through a Certificate of Lawful Existing Use or Development.

The Planner turned to the proposal itself and showed the proposed location of the six flood lights on the block plan. The red line indicated the extent of the boundary for the submitted lighting (lux) assessment. Each column was 12m in height to serve tennis courts located within the northern part of the club site. The proposed floodlighting columns would be two metres higher than those currently on the site but it was considered when taking the site as a whole within the context of its setting the overall development would appear similar in scale and appearance to the existing lighting on site, as well as to other vertical elements and street furniture within the surrounding residential area.

Views into the site are generally restricted until reaching the immediate vicinity of the site entrance, approximately 3-4m from the boundary. As a result, visibility of the proposed floodlighting structures from the surrounding area would be limited. Given the context of the immediate site and surrounding area it was the opinion that the proposal would not appear visually incongruous within the context of Bangor West Area of Townscape Character.

The agent acting on behalf of the applicant had confirmed that the floodlights were anticipated to be used predominantly between 7 pm and 9 pm, approximately three to four times per week during the winter months and only during periods of suitable weather. A curfew of 10 pm was sought to allow for occasional competitive matches associated with the Club's participation in the Belfast and District leagues, which may occasionally extend beyond 9 pm.

Given the existing use and floodlighting already on the site what was required to be considered this evening was the intensification of an existing and established use rather than the introduction of a new form of development. The proposed floodlights would introduce an additional illumination during evening hours and so the assessment therefore focused on whether the proposal would give rise to an *unacceptable intensification* of impact, rather than the elimination of any impact.

The assessment therefore focused on the impact of the proposed floodlighting itself, which could be appropriately regulated through conditions relating to hours of operation and lighting levels.

Significant weight was afforded to the professional advice of Environmental Health as the competent authority in assessing lighting impacts. Accordingly, it was considered that sufficient and robust technical information had been provided through updated reports to allow a full and proper assessment of the proposal, and that the concerns raised in relation to the lighting reports had been appropriately addressed through the revised submissions and consultation process.

Environmental Health confirmed that the cumulative vertical illuminance at the nearest receptors had been assessed through the combination of the Musco Lighting Report (September 2023), supplementary information received in January 2024, and site measurements undertaken in December 2023. Additional measurements undertaken in December 2023 indicated that cumulative light levels remained within the 10 lux limit set out for Environmental Zone E3 and was satisfied that the proposed scheme would not give rise to unacceptable levels of light intrusion.

With regard to representations, it was acknowledged that the proposal had attracted a high volume of representation. Full details of the issues raised were detailed in the Case Officer's report with clarification provided.

Objections had been received raising concerns in relation to potential light spill, noise disturbance and traffic nuisance arising from the proposed floodlighting and impact on biodiversity.

In response to objections, additional supporting information was submitted which included a detailed lighting assessment published on the planning register in March 2026. Environmental Health confirmed that it had no objections and provided clarification regarding the assessment of lighting impacts and proposed mitigation measures.

For mitigation, the lighting scheme incorporated oversized visors designed to limit upward and lateral light spill, ensuring that illumination was directed downwards onto the tennis courts.

The design approach assisted in minimising light trespass beyond the site boundaries.

Further mitigation was secured through the recommended planning conditions including as followed:

- compliance with ILP GN01:2021 for Environmental Zone E3
- limitations on vertical lux levels at neighbouring receptors
- submission of a Lighting Verification Report
- restriction of operating hours to 22:00 hours

With regard to biodiversity, Part 2 of the Biodiversity Checklist identified that the proposal had the potential to impact bats due to the provision of floodlighting. In response, the applicant submitted a bat activity survey alongside a revised lighting plan and NIEA: Natural Environment Division (NED), were consulted on the proposal and additional supporting information.

Having taken into consideration the updated bat survey and the revised lighting plan (dated 19 July 2023), NED welcomed the inclusion of light-spill reduction measures and advised that the proposal was unlikely to have a significant impact on the local bat population, provided that the use of the floodlighting was restricted outside the core bat activity season. It was therefore recommended that the operation of the floodlights be limited to the period from 1 November through to 31 March and that had been conditioned. The seasonal restriction would ensure that potential disturbance to bats during their most active months was avoided.

Clarification with NED prior to this committee meeting had confirmed that they were content no updated bat survey would be required.

In conclusion, Members were advised that, based on the submitted information, consultation responses, and proposed conditions, it was the planning judgement that the proposal would not result in an unacceptable adverse impact on the amenity of nearby residents that would warrant a refusal of planning permission.

The proposal had been fully conditioned in the Case Officer's Report with all consultees content with objections raised, fully detailed and rebutted and on balance the recommendation was to grant planning permission subject to conditions.

Councillor McKee referred to the addendum to the report and noted that it had not been circulated to Members in advance of the meeting. He acknowledged that the document had been available on the Planning Portal but had not been included within the published committee papers. He stated that, whilst the addendum largely summarised matters already contained within the report, it raised concerns regarding the proposed lighting and the associated technical assessment. He also noted that a number of the issues raised had already been considered within the Case Officer's Report. It was requested that the addendum be read to the Committee, and the Planning Officer read its contents for the Committee.

Alderman McAlpine queried the proposed height of the lighting columns. She noted that the existing columns were approximately 10 metres in height, whereas the proposed columns would be 12 metres high. She asked why an increase in height was considered necessary when the existing lighting arrangements appeared to be acceptable and questioned whether the same level of light spill could be achieved with columns of a similar height to those currently in place. In response, it was noted that the Committee was required to determine the application as submitted. Members were advised that the original proposal had sought eight lighting columns at a height of 10 metres and that the current application represented a reduction in the number of columns, albeit with an increase in their height.

The Chair invited Mr Haghighi to speak on behalf of the objectors to the application. Mr Haghighi thanked the Committee for the opportunity to present the concerns of local residents to the tennis courts. He clarified that the objectors were not opposed to the development of tennis facilities, sport and recreation but were concerned that the assessment of the proposed lighting had been carried out incorrectly. He stated that the development would result in unacceptable light pollution and overspill affecting neighbouring properties and the local habitat. He further advised that the lighting assessment was incomplete, that issues relating to glare had not been adequately addressed, and that those matters should be resolved as part of the application rather than through any future enforcement action.

Mr Haghighi referred to Farnham Park and other nearby properties and stated that the lighting modelling did not accurately assess impacts on both ground floor and first floor windows of those. He advised that no revised lighting model had been submitted and that not all affected properties had been included within the assessment. He also expressed concerns regarding the absence of baseline data and the potential difficulties that created when assessing the impact of the proposals. In addition, he raised concerns about the seasonal use of lighting and stated that the existing lights had frequently remained lit beyond 10 pm and, on occasions, until 11 pm. For those

reasons, local residents objected to the application in its current form. He concluded by requesting that Members undertake a site visit to observe the situation for themselves.

Alderman McIlveen referred to concerns raised by residents regarding the lighting remaining on for extended periods. He noted that the proposed conditions included a non-overridable switch and asked for clarification on the type of control system that would be used. In response, it was explained that concerns arose from the current arrangement whereby club members used the courts and then left, requiring neighbours to contact the Club when lights remained on late into the evening. It was noted that the proposed system would allow only the courts in use to be illuminated. However, it was also acknowledged that the issue related more to the actions of court users than to the Club itself and that it was not possible to determine how frequently such incidents occurred. Alderman McIlveen thought that an over-rideable switch could help but agreed with the objector's comment that no system could be considered entirely foolproof and noted that that formed part of the residents' concern.

Councillor McKee thanked Mr Haghighi for his presentation and sought clarification regarding the closest residential property to the tennis courts. He observed that photographs shown during the presentation suggested that the courts were located further from neighbouring properties than might actually be the case. In response, Mr Haghighi stated that No. 28 Farnham Park was situated only a short distance from the boundary hedge and that the hedge provided the only form of screening between the property and the tennis courts, with no other physical barrier present.

There were no further questions to the objector and he returned to the public gallery. The Chair then invited Ms Whitla to speak in support of the application.

Ms Whitla thanked Members for the opportunity to speak and explained that she was the Club Captain of Bangor Lawn Tennis Club, a not-for-profit organisation that had served the local community for approximately 100 years. She advised that the Club currently had around 150 junior members and stated that, although the Club had experienced a decline in participation two years previously, the appointment of a new tennis coach and the introduction of a range of coaching programmes had resulted in significant growth, particularly in junior and adolescent participation.

She stated that the Club catered for both male and female members but was currently restricted to the use of three courts during the winter months, creating a bottleneck in court availability. She advised that court capacity was greatly reduced during the darker evenings and noted that other comparable facilities, including CIYMS in Belfast, benefited from fully lit courts. She highlighted the health and wellbeing benefits provided by the Club for members ranging in age from four to ninety-four years old.

The speaker emphasised the role of the Club in providing positive recreational opportunities for young people, including coaching and youth activities on Sunday evenings. She stated that additional court lighting would help facilitate participation, encourage greater involvement in sport, and provide an alternative to online activities

and other pressures facing young people. She further advised that the Club was actively seeking to attract new participants from the wider community and was committed to engaging with older people and individuals with disabilities to ensure that opportunities were available to all.

In relation to the application, she acknowledged that the provision of floodlighting carried responsibilities which the Club took seriously. She advised that the Club had been pursuing the proposal for approximately seven years and had invested significantly in modern lighting technology to minimise impacts. She stated that the Club was willing to work with any reasonable conditions relating to operating times and switching controls to ensure the lighting was managed appropriately. She indicated that she had not been aware of reports of lights remaining on after 11 pm and stated that such occurrences would not be acceptable. She also noted that Environmental Health officers had rigorously assessed the updated reports and had raised no objections to the proposal. Finally, she advised that the floodlighting would only operate between November and March and that the Club would adhere to those timescales.

Alderman Smith asked how frequently the proposed 10 pm operating time would be used, noting that 9 pm would be the usual finishing time. He thought that use until 10 pm should be kept to a minimum and remain focused on courts 1 to 3.

Ms Whitla advised that there were currently no restrictions in place, although timers had been installed and members were encouraged to comply with Club operating practices. A 10 pm curfew had been proposed to provide consistency and flexibility during darker months for members who worked during the day. It was explained that the Club generally regarded 10 pm as its operating ceiling and would comply with any condition restricting use to that time.

Councillor Wray sought clarification on whether the lighting could be controlled on an individual court basis. Ms Whitla confirmed that courts 1 to 3 could already be lit individually and that the proposed lighting scheme would also allow individual court control. It was stated that all six courts would rarely be illuminated simultaneously, with larger league matches typically requiring no more than four courts. Courts 1 to 3 were identified as the Club's primary courts, while courts 4 to 6 experienced lower levels of use.

Alderman McAlpine asked whether there were any restrictions on use of courts 1 to 3 and whether they were lit during the summer months. Ms Whitla confirmed there were no restrictions on those courts throughout the year, while courts 4 to 6 were generally used during autumn and winter. In response to a question on the proposed 12 metre columns, it was explained that the additional height allowed lighting to be directed more accurately onto the courts and reduced light spill to neighbouring properties.

The Chair asked whether the specification focused light onto the courts rather than creating a wider spread. The Committee was advised that modern LED lighting was significantly more directional than older systems and would reduce overspill.

In response to concerns that the lighting report was no longer accurate due to changes in screening, the Planning Officer advised that Environmental Health had advised that the updated report had addressed cumulative lighting impacts. Environmental Health had reviewed the revised assessment and was satisfied that the proposal complied with relevant standards and that lighting levels remained acceptable.

Alderman Smith referred to concerns raised regarding glare. The Planning Officer explained that glare and light intrusion had been assessed against recognised criteria. Environmental Health was satisfied that the proposal would not result in unacceptable light intrusion and noted that visors and modern LED technology would reduce glare and direct light downward.

Councillor McKee sought clarification regarding assessment of the nearest residential properties and was advised that assessments had been based on the closest façades facing the courts. The assessment had demonstrated compliance with relevant standards, and officers were satisfied that impacts on more distant properties would also be acceptable. The officer further confirmed that changes to boundary screening had been considered and did not alter the conclusions of the assessment.

Alderman McIlveen proposed, seconded by Councillor Morgan, that planning permission be granted.

In supporting the application, Alderman McIlveen acknowledged the difficulty of balancing the needs of an established sports facility within a residential area but considered that mitigation measures had been thoroughly assessed and that the proposal was acceptable on balance.

Councillor Morgan stated that reasonable steps had been taken to minimise adverse impacts and considered the proposal acceptable overall.

Alderman Smith noted that the Club had operated for approximately 100 years and that floodlighting had existed for around 20 years. He considered the proposal to represent an intensification of an existing use rather than a new use and was satisfied that concerns regarding lighting had been adequately addressed by Environmental Health.

On being put to the meeting, with 7 voting FOR, 0 voting AGAINST, 2 ABSTAINING, and 7 ABSENT, the proposal was CARRIED.

The voting was as follows:

FOR (7)	AGAINST (0)	ABSTAINED (2)	ABSENT (7)
Aldermen		Alderman	Councillors
McAlpine		Graham	Cathcart
McDowell		Councillor	Harbinson
McIlveen		McKee	Hennessy
Smith			Kendall

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Councillors

Morgan
Smart
Wray

Kerr
McClean
McCollum

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Councillor Morgan, that the recommendation be adopted and that planning permission be granted.

(Councillor McClean entered the meeting 8.13 pm).

4.2 LA06/2025/0587/F – REPLACEMENT DWELLING AND GARAGE (CHANGE OF HOUSE TYPE TO PREVIOUSLY APPROVED APPLICATION LA06/2022/1288/F – 17 DEMESNE PARK, HOLYWOOD

(Appendices VI - IX)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Case Officer's report.

DEA: Holywood and Clandeboye

Committee Interest:

Proposal: Replacement dwelling and garage (change of house type to previously approved application LA06/2022/1288/F

Site Location: 17 Demesne Park, Holywood

Recommendation: Grant Planning Permission

The Planning Officer outlined the application advising that it was for a replacement dwelling and garage at 17 Demesne Park, Holywood.

The application was coming before the Committee due to there being six or more representations contrary to the recommendation for approval of planning permission. Members were also drawn attention to the fact that this was for a Change of House Type to a previously approved application LA06/2022/1288/F. The principle of development had been established at this site and it was the amendment of the design which was the subject of the application.

All consultees were content and the recommendation was to grant planning permission.

Members were advised that the application lay inside the settlement of Holywood within the proposed Holywood South Area of Townscape Character (as designated in dBMAP).

The surrounding area was largely residential in character, with neighbouring dwellings generally consisting of a traditional style. Holywood Golf Club sat directly to

the rear of the site with the site sitting at a prominent location at the top of Demesne Park.

The former dwelling had been fully demolished, with the site cleared ready for development with retaining structures and a significant amount of excavation towards the rear of the site, in line with the rear of the proposed dwelling.

The site was steeply sloped, with steps to the northern boundary of the site, and a steep driveway along the south. The boundaries were largely defined by hedging, with a lawn at a higher level to the rear boundary of the site.

To provide some context, images were shown of the site and its surrounds and the planning history was of particular material significance.

The demolition of and replacement of the existing dwelling, detached garage, retaining wall and fence at the site was granted *Approval of planning permission on 12 August 2024 under Planning ref LA06/2022/1288/F*. Subsequent applications for NMCs as detailed in the case officer's report were refused.

The principle of a replacement dwelling within a ATC had been established and implemented through the previous permission.

Further slides were shown of the elevations of the proposal detailed (against that originally approved).

The proposal was considered to comply with the requirements set out in policy QD1 of PPS7.

The design of the proposal was largely similar to that previously approved in terms of its general design. The dwelling was split-level, with the ground floor only visible to the front of the site, forming a partially sub-terranean dwelling. From the rear and sides, it would effectively have the appearance of a single storey dwelling. It was also noted in this instance that careful consideration had been taken in regard to the external finish of the dwelling, with the brick finish agreed under LA06/2025/0188/DC to be "Multicoloured Belfast Solid Brick", from Architectural Salvage.

The garage on the site was originally directly at the roadside, but amended plans were submitted showing the current position 7.7m back allowing for two car parking spaces at the front of the site, and a further parking space within the garage.

The amended positioning was largely similar to the original approval and the principle in this location was acceptable.

In addition, the reduced scale of the garage shown on the amended plans resulted in it having a similar visual impact to the former garage on the site.

By having the garage set back from the road it allowed for a densely planted bank adjacent to the garage, which softened the visual impact of the proposal when viewed from the north.

Given the sloping site retaining structures were included in the proposal.

Retaining structures on the southeastern boundary would not be visible due to boundary landscaping.

The northwestern boundary retaining walls would be finished in “fair faced block”. They would not be directly visible from the public road and therefore would not detract from the character of the area.

There was also a retaining structure to the rear of the planted bank next to the garage, and again that would not be directly visible due to the planting adjacent to it.

With regard to hardstanding the ratio to green space within the site was approx. 2.6:1 in favour of hardstanding which included the dwelling. The ratio of hardstanding to green space varied in the area and given the irregular plot sizes and varied designs of dwellings. As the majority of hardstanding was to be located to the rear with planting to the front and sides of the dwelling it would not be out of character with the area.

Careful consideration had been given to the external finish of the dwelling under the discharge of condition consideration with it determined that the dwelling shall be finished in “Multicoloured Belfast Solid Brick” from Architectural Salvage. That was the closest match to any neighbouring properties on Demesne Park, finished in brick and did not detract from the appearance of the surrounding proposed ATC.

Full details of representations received had been detailed in the Case Officer’s Report. All material matters had been addressed with clarification set out within the report.

The application had been fully assessed with amendments sought during the processing of the application with structural drawings submitted for retaining walls. This was a residential area with amendments to a previous approval for a replacement dwelling sought. There was a presumption in favour of development within settlement limits as long as no demonstrable harm was caused. Given the extant previous permission on the site which represented a fallback position, the compliance of planning policy and no objections from consultees the recommendation was to grant planning permission.

Alderman McIlveen asked for clarification on the extent to which objections relating to engineering aspects could be taken into account when determining the application.

The Planning Officer advised that the planning assessment was concerned with the principle of development only and confirmed that structural engineering reports had

been submitted. The Officer stated that the proposed retaining walls met the relevant requirements and that planning officers were satisfied with that.

Alderman McIlveen further queried water egress, noting that the proposed development differed significantly from what had originally been on the site and would be located very close to the boundary of the neighbouring property. He asked whether any evidence had been submitted regarding the potential impact of that.

The Planning Officer advised that there had previously been a dwelling on the site and reiterated that there were separate planning and building control processes. The Officer stated that Planning was satisfied that the appropriate drawings had been submitted and that officers were content with the information provided.

The Chair invited the objectors, Jason and Paula McGonigle, to speak to the Committee about their concerns in respect of the application.

Mrs McGonigle thanked the Committee for the opportunity to speak and advised that she resided at 15 Demesne Park. She stated that the previous year had been stressful, challenging and costly for neighbouring residents, with increasing insurance claims. She expressed the view that the officer's report did not adequately reflect the concerns raised by neighbours and contended that the application should be refused in its current form.

She stated that her concerns related to overdevelopment, the deliverability of the project and loss of amenity. She argued that the proposal was not a straightforward build and represented an overdevelopment of the site. In her view, the development could not be constructed without the use of neighbouring land and she noted that, while the site had reduced in size, the scale of the proposed development had increased considerably. She also referred to a reported 3% increase in site coverage from similar previously submitted drawings and considered that the proposal was contrary to the character of the area.

The objector further stated that photographs included within the application did not accurately reflect the extent of construction already undertaken at the rear of the site and encouraged Members to undertake a site visit.

In relation to deliverability, she questioned whether the development could be adequately constructed and drained, noting that the engineering requirements had increased as the site had reduced in size. She stated that, during the most recent neighbour consultation process, drawings had been removed with the suggestion that these could be provided at a later stage. She also raised concerns regarding excavation works and the absence of retaining wall details, which she considered had not been sufficiently explained. She requested that the terrace be moved further back within the site to maintain drainage arrangements.

The objector also raised concerns regarding loss of amenity, stating that the assessment focused on the front of the development while ongoing privacy issues affecting neighbouring gardens had not been adequately addressed. She contended that officers had placed significant reliance on a previously approved proposal, despite the site now being smaller and the scale of development larger, which she considered amounted to a fundamental change. Taking account of the cumulative impact of those changes, she requested that the application be refused or deferred to allow further consideration of whether the proposal constituted overdevelopment of the site.

Members were invited to ask questions and Alderman Smith thanked the objector for speaking and asked them to elaborate on two points in relation to overdevelopment of the site and the fact that the site had shrunk.

Mr McGonigle advised that there had been a boundary dispute which had been the subject of High Court proceedings and had subsequently resulted in an agreement with neighbouring landowners to redefine the boundary. He stated that, following the boundary adjustment, there was no longer any overlap and the site plan had been amended accordingly.

Mr McGonigle contended that the previously approved dwelling no longer fitted within the revised site boundaries and had therefore been altered. He stated that the amended proposal had been adjusted to fill the available site area and argued that it represented an intensified form of development. He expressed concern that a substantial retaining wall would require access over neighbouring land and that access would also be necessary to address drainage matters. He further argued that the close proximity of the building to the boundary would necessitate the use of neighbouring land during construction and for future maintenance purposes and suggested that the dwelling should be moved further back from the boundary.

Mr McGonigle also raised concerns regarding the provision of screening, stating that the constrained nature of the site left limited space for effective screening measures. He noted that the proposal appeared to rely on screening associated with a neighbouring property, while neighbouring landowners had indicated that they had their own plans for the use and development of their land.

The Chair then invited Mr Robert Jamison to speak in support of the application. Mr Jamison advised that he was speaking for the applicant for the proposal in respect of 17 Demesne Park, Holywood.

Mr Jamison stated that the proposal was, at its core, a straightforward application to replace the existing dwelling with a high-quality family home. He advised that the proposal had been carefully assessed and found to comply with relevant planning policy, would not result in any unacceptable impacts and would make a positive contribution to the character of the area. He noted that the officer's report had concluded that the application met the required planning standards.

Mr Jamison explained that the original application had been submitted in 2022 and approved in 2024. However, construction costs had increased significantly and the amendment sought represented a modest change involving the realignment of an external wall in order to reduce construction costs. He stated that the amendment did not alter the height of the building or increase its footprint.

Mr Jamison also referred to separate legal proceedings relating to the site boundary and noted that the planning process had been ongoing for approximately 43 months. He stated that he was seeking to replace the existing dwelling and reminded Members that planning applications had a significant impact on those involved. He urged the Committee to determine the application on planning grounds, noting that the principle of development had already been accepted through the previous approval. He stated that, after more than three and a half years, he wished to proceed with a development that had already been deemed acceptable in principle. He thanked the Committee and confirmed that he was available to answer any questions from Members.

Councillor Wray, going back to what the objectors had said that they did not believe that the work could be carried out within the confines of the proposed site, asked for clarity on that. Mr Jamison referred to the Planning Officer having spoken regards the application going through both the Planning process and Building Control, and both had viewed and approved the application. Structural engineers had been appointed for the build to ensure that what the applicant processed was buildable and deliverable.

Following from Councillor Wray's question, Councillor McClean said that it was his understanding that there was a distinction between the planning process and civil issues. In order to provide mitigation and difficulties between the neighbours he asked if there could be assurances given that the red line would not be crossed into the adjoining property. Mr Jamison assured the Committee that there was no need to go beyond the site boundaries, and it was professional practice to ensure boundaries were maintained/made good.

Alderman Smith asked the Planning Officer to summarise the changes that had taken place since the previous application and the Committee was advised that the garage had been repositioned and the property itself was slightly larger, the front garden had been reshaped, the roof lights had been altered and the flue repositioned but the general design of the building was similar. Referring to the boundary dispute she explained that they were outside the remit of a planning application.

Alderman McDowell asked if there would be the potential for overlooking and it was explained that there would be privacy glazing in all windows that had the potential to overlook. The front of buildings was not considered to be private amenity place so the privacy screening at the front of the property was deemed to be sufficient. The neighbouring property would not be impacted by overlooking.

Councillor McKee asked for clarification on the comments made by the objectors about the size of the ground floor size. The Planning officer stated that the floor size was

slightly larger being 134 metres square compared to the previous permission which was for 129 metres square. It was still considered that there was sufficient amenity and living space. Further to that Alderman McIlveen asked how that area was spread and Members were advised that overall the footprint had not changed and she understood that the increase was related to the repositioning of the garage but that was still deemed to be acceptable in planning terms.

Councillor Smart referred to the terrace and asked was he right in thinking the previous proposal for the terrace was slightly larger, it had been at the front but was now at the side of the proposal. He asked for assurances about drainage and the Planning Officer explained that the provision of a walkway would not warrant a drainage assessment.

Proposed by Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Councillor Morgan, that the planning consent be granted.

Alderman McIlveen believed that the planners had thoroughly questioned the application, there was planning permission already for the site and the new proposal did not differ substantially from that and he was content to propose. Seconding that Councillor Morgan was happy to concur with Alderman McIlveen's view.

Councillor Wray was concerned about the application and did not feel comfortable giving it his approval since he viewed the changes from the original proposal substantial.

On being put to the meeting, with 5 voting FOR, 2 voting AGAINST, 3 ABSTAINING, and 6 ABSENT, the proposal was CARRIED.

The voting was as follows:

FOR (5)	AGAINST (2)	ABSTAINED (3)	ABSENT (6)
Aldermen	Councillors	Alderman	Councillors
McAlpine	McKee	Graham	Cathcart
McDowell	Wray	Smith	Harbinson
McIlveen		Councillor	Hennessy
Councillors		Smart	Kendall
McClellan			Kerr
Morgan			McCollum

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Councillor Morgan, that the recommendation be adopted and that planning permission be granted.

(Having declared an interest in Item 4.3 Alderman McAlpine was excluded from the meeting at 8.56 pm)

- 4.3 LA06/2025/0707/S54 – PHASED CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW SCHOOL BUILDING AND SPORTS HALL, WITH ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE INCORPORATING THE FOLLOWING COMPONENTS: PHASED DEMOLITION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS, IN-CURTLAGE CAR/BUS PARKING AND CIRCULATION AND ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS, PROVISION OF 3 NO. PLAY FIELDS, PROVISION OF 4 NO. TENNIS COURTS, CULVERTING OF WATERCOURSE, ELECTRICITY/WASTE/SERVICE INFRASTRUCTURE, HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPING WORKS, BOUNDARY TREATMENTS, DRAINAGE WORKS AND OTHER ASSOCIATED SITE WORKS. VARIATION OF CONDITION 2 OF PLANNING APPROVAL LA06/2019/1207/F RE VEHICULAR ACCESS AND SIGHT SPLAYS. STRANGFORD INTEGRATED COLLEGE ABBEY ROAD, CARROWDORE**
(Appendix X)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Case Officer's report.

DEA: Ards Peninsula

Committee Interest:

Proposal: Phased construction of a new school building and sports hall, with associated infrastructure incorporating the following components: phased demolition of existing buildings, in-curtilage car/bus parking and circulation and access arrangements, provision of 3 No. playing fields, provision of 4 No. tennis courts, culverting of watercourse, electricity/waste/serviced infrastructure, hard and soft landscaping works, boundary treatments, drainage works and other associated site works. Variation of Condition 2 of planning approval LA06/2019/1207/F re vehicular access and sight splays

Site Location: Strangford Integrated College Abbey Road, Carrowdore BT22 2GB

Recommendation: Grant Planning Permission

The Planning Officer explained that this was a Section 54 application for variation of condition 2 of LA06/2019/1207/F for the phased construction of a new school building and sports hall, with associated infrastructure incorporating a number of elements shown on the slide. The application was before the Committee since it fell within the major category of development.

No objections had been received in relation to the application.

The application site was located on Abbey Road, Carrowdore, and comprised the existing Strangford College and associated playing fields and adjacent agricultural field.

Under Section 54 Members would note that it was only the question of the condition which must be considered. In this instance the application sought to vary Condition 2 of the original approval relating to the provision of access to the site. The proposal sought to amend the condition to have the access in place prior to occupation instead of commencement. The approved access arrangement would cause difficulties in the ongoing operation of the school during construction and was the reasoning behind the variation of the condition.

The existing access to the school was shown which was still in use and which would be part of the upgrade prior to the operation of the new buildings.

The service access to the school would be utilised by construction traffic. DFI Roads had been consulted and offered no objection to the proposal. Officers were content it met policy requirements under PPS3 and recommended the proposal for approval.

Proposed by Councillor McClean, seconded by Councillor Wray, that planning permission be granted.

Alderman McIlveen, in terms of the rewording of the condition prior to commencement of use asked what the practical difference was between those, the Planning Officer said it was a more practical wording to permit the pitches to come into use if necessary.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor McClean, seconded by Councillor Wray, that planning permission be granted.

(Alderman McAlpine entered the meeting at 9.00 pm).

RECESS 9.00 pm

RECOMMENCED 9.14 pm

4.4 LA06/2025/1074/F – PROPOSED BMX TRACK, JUMP PARK AND ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING SPECTATOR STAND FOR BICYCLE WORKSHOP AND SHARED SPACE AREA. BANGOR SPORTSPLEX, 292 OLD BELFAST ROAD, BANGOR

(Appendix XI)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Case Officer's report.

DEA: Bangor West

Committee Interest:

Proposal: BMX Track, Jump Park and alterations to existing spectator stand for bicycle workshop and shared space.

Site Location: Bangor Sportsplex, 292 Old Belfast Road, Bangor

Recommendation: Grant Planning Permission

The Planning Officer stated that this was a full application submitted by the Council for a proposed BMX track, Jump Park and alterations to existing spectator stand for bicycle workshop and shared space area. There had been 8 letters of objection and 59 letters of support in relation to the application.

The application site was located on the grounds of the Bangor Sportsplex off the Old Belfast Road within the settlement limit of Bangor. The site had been utilised for a variety of sporting uses. An aerial image was shown which gave more context to the site. The application involved an old hockey pitch on the western end and it was surrounded by a number of residential properties with the tree lined boundary.

Further slides showed the site layout of various elements and their proposed locations.

Turning to the existing spectator stand it could be seen that it was proposed to add cladding to create a bike workshop and shared space.

It was noted from the plans that the Jump Track was in close proximity to several trees. Those were protected by a TPO on the site and were being retained. The Council's tree officer was content that those would not be adversely impacted subject to conditions which were noted in the Case Officer's Report.

In respect to the impact on amenity, there were several residential properties bordering the site. There was a strong vegetation boundary consisting of trees at large sections which would help screen the development and reduce impacts on visual amenity.

The existing use of the site was material to the assessment with the proposed activities considered to not be more significant than those which could already take place on the site. A noise impact assessment had also been provided and Environmental Health had no objections. It was noted that some aspects such as the repurposing of the spectator stand would lead to a reduction in noise.

The proposal was just a section of a wider site for the purposes of outdoor sports and recreation, PPS8 was material to the proposal and as noted within the officer's report was considered to comply with all relevant policy. The wider site was also considered to be capable of handling traffic to the site with approximately 30 less movements a day being anticipated. In this respect it was considered to comply with PPS3.

The site in its current form was discussed. The underlying land was formerly used as a Council landfill site; however, subsequent site investigation reports indicated no significant contamination and consultees were content.

There was some subsidence on the site. The proposed development consisted primarily of earthworks, surface cycle tracks and associated recreational infrastructure. No permanently occupied buildings, deep foundations or sensitive structures are proposed. It was considered that the submitted assessments provided sufficient information to demonstrate that the site was suitable for the intended use.

As noted from the Case Officer's Report, several objections were submitted raising issues such as;

- Subsidence
- Destruction of Habitat
- Electrical Infrastructure
- Noise
- Events occurring on site
- Anti-Social Behaviour

Members would note detailed responses within the Officer's report. Officers were content those had been fully considered and given appropriate weight in the consideration.

In summary, officers were content the proposal met the relevant policy provisions and recommended the proposal for approval.

Councillor McKee referred to trees that had been removed close to the boundary and close to the jump track and he asked if that had been considered in terms of screening and noise disturbance to neighbouring homes. The Planning Officer confirmed that it had been considered and Environment Health was aware of the site and the noise impact report had shown only a slight rise in noise which is roughly the same volume as someone speaking in a regular conversation. Officers were content with the application and there would be no detrimental impact on the amenity for the surrounding area.

Councillor Smart referred to subsidence and asked was the material described appropriate for that. It was explained that this would be a stone and aggregate construction which was tailored in that way because of problems at the site in respect of potential subsidence. It would be of crushed aggregate and bitmac with ridges to stop wear and tear which was a standard approach to those developments.

Proposed by Councillor Wray, seconded by Alderman Smith, that planning permission be granted.

Councillor Wray viewed the application as a positive proposal for the Borough and was reassured that the noise would not be intense and was pleased the objections had been considered. As seconder, Alderman Smith echoed those comments but thought it unfortunate that NI Water could not provide water for a café and toilets at the site.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Wray, seconded by Alderman Smith, that the recommendation be adopted and planning permission be granted.

**4.5 LA06/2026/0317/F – SINGLE STOREY EXTENSION –
BRYANSBURN RANGERS FOOTBALL CLUB, BALLYWOOLEY
PLAYING FIELDS, CRAWFORDSBURN ROAD, BANGOR**
(Appendix XII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Case Officer's report.

DEA: Bangor West

Committee Interest: Council Interest

Proposal: Single Storey Extension

Site Location: Bryansburn Rangers Football Club, Ballywooley Playing Fields, Crawfordsburn Road, Bangor

Recommendation: Grant Planning Permission

The Planning Officer outlined the application for a single storey extension. The application was before the Council as it was on land in which the Council had an interest.

No objections had been received in relation to the application.

Members would recollect an application the site before the Committee in November. The site was located at the Ballywooley Playing Fields with access off the Crawfordsburn Road and sat within the countryside. There was a single storey detached building, used as a clubhouse, e in the northwestern corner of the playing fields. To the east of that there was a gravel parking area, and two football pitches were located to the south.

Slides were shown of the extent and location of the proposed extension on the existing building and details of the existing elevations of the building and the proposed layout. The floorspace did not exceed what was approved for the same use under LA06/2025/0538/F.

It could be seen from the elevations with the alternative single level design that that previously considered by the Committee.

Further images were shown and officers were content that the separation distance from nearby properties would result in no adverse affect and the proposal complied with the relevant policy provisions under the SPPS and PPS8.

Officers recommended the proposal for approval.

Councillor McClean thanked officers for processing the application so quickly to help the Club develop further.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor McClean, seconded by Councillor Smart, that the recommendation be adopted and that planning permission be granted.

(Having declared an interest in the following applications Alderman McAlpine withdrew from the meeting at 9.25 pm)

4.6 LA06/2025/0948/F – TWO-STOREY EXTENSION SIDE AND REAR; RENOVATION WORKS (DEMOLITION OF SIDE AND REAR RETURNS), 8 THE CRESCENT, HOLYWOOD
(Appendix XIII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Case Officer's report.

DEA: Hollywood and Clandeboye

Committee Interest: Applicant an Elected Representative

Proposal: Two-storey extension side and rear; renovation works (demolition of side and rear returns)

Site Location: 8 The Crescent, Hollywood

Recommendation: Grant Planning Permission

The Planning Officer explained that this was a full application for a two-storey extension side and rear; renovation works (demolition of side and rear returns). The application was before the Council as it had been made by a member of the Planning Committee.

No objections had been received in relation to the application.

The site was located at 8 The Crescent within the settlement limit of Hollywood. It was a Georgian three storey end terrace and was also Listed. The building also sat within the Hollywood conservation area and proposed Hollywood South Area of Townscape Character.

The properties with The Crescent were in the form of two terraced blocks facing onto a central green. The development was gated with views available within The Crescent itself.

Slides were shown of the site layout of the proposed extensions beside the existing floor plans of the building and the elevations in detail.

The proposed elevations could be seen and it was intended to replace the side and rear returns with a more modern extension. The extension would be two-storey to the side and single -storey to the rear. The extension had a very contemporary design which would be in sharp contrast to the house. The proposal would use brick, would have a flat roof and be designed with large panels of glazing. In terms of footprint, the proposal

would not be significantly different to the existing extensions. Furthermore, the extension to the side was itself 'stepped' and set back from the front elevation and would be very much subordinate in scale to the host building. Given the secluded nature of the site, it was considered that it would not have an adverse affect on the prosed ATC or Conservation Area. PPS8 was also material and the proposal was considered to comply with Policies BH8 and BH10. HED had been consulted and was content with the proposal.

The floor plans were shown and Members noted some internal alterations to the layout of the existing rooms. The rear amenity space was shown. It was not considered that the works raised any material concerns in respect to residential amenity. The house was set in a corner of The Crescent with no other property beyond. Number 7 was adjacent and was the only property that could potentially be affected. However, the extension at the rear was built away from the property boundary and was single storey. There would be no loss of light, no sense of dominance and no overlooking.

Adjacent trees were protected given the location in the Hollywood Conservation Area. The application had been accompanied with a Tree Survey. The Survey had identified four trees to be removed. The Council's Tree Officer was consulted on the proposal. Due to the health and condition of the trees, the officer raised no objections to their removal. The survey indicated that trees would be replaced with beech trees on a one for one basis.

It was noted that access and parking would not be affected. There was a large rear garden and there would be no material impact on amenity space. In summary, officers considered the proposal to meet all relevant policies and recommended the proposal for approval.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Wray, seconded by Councillor Smart, that the recommendation be adopted and that planning permission be granted.

4.7 LA06/2025/0950/LBC – TWO-STOREY EXTENSION SIDE AND REAR; RENOVATION WORKS (DEMOLITION OF SIDE AND REAR RETURNS), 8 THE CRESCENT, HOLYWOOD

(Appendix XIV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Case Officer's report.

DEA: Hollywood and Clandeboye

Committee Interest: Applicant was an Elected Representative

Proposal: Two-storey extension side and rear; renovation works (demolition of side and rear returns)

Site Location: 8 The Crescent, Hollywood

Recommendation: Grant Listed Building Consent

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Smith, seconded by Councillor McKee, that the recommendation be adopted and that Listed Building Consent be granted.

(Alderman McAlpine was readmitted to the meeting).

5. TREES AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE BOROUGH (Appendices XV & XVI)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Place and Prosperity detailing that Members may remember the NI Public Services Ombudsman undertook ‘an own initiative’ investigation into concerns raised with her office indicating potential systematic maladministration in how public bodies fulfilled their duties to protect trees within the planning system. That resulted in publication of an overview report on tree protection in the planning system entitled ‘Strengthening our Roots’. This was reported to Members as Item 8 of meeting of Planning Committee on 7 November 2023.

This report was prepared in response to concerns about the protection given to trees and the lack of enforcement action following reported breaches of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). The Council’s response to the findings was attached for Members’ convenience.

Recommendation 3 of that Report was worded as follows:

Recommendation 3

Councils should ensure that they have their own procedural guidance in place to supplement the legislative framework around trees which are subject to TPOs and conservation area protection. Given the difference in the level of protection afforded, the guidance should also set out clearly the circumstances TPOs should be used instead of, or alongside, planning conditions to best secure the long term protection of trees.

In response to the above, officers had produced the attached document entitled ‘Trees and Development in the Borough’ which was intended as a guidance document on trees in the Borough, including protected trees, with advice on submitting a planning application on sites with existing trees. The document set out the legislative basis for tree protection, the TPO process, and how to deal with applications for consent to carry out works to protected trees. It further advised those intending to carry out development in and around trees, a comprehensive list of FAQs and a detailed glossary.

It was proposed to publish this document on the planning pages of the Council’s website.

RECOMMENDED that the Council agrees this report and the attached Guidance Document.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Alderman Smith, that the recommendation be adopted.

6. APPEALS UPDATE

(Appendices XVII – XXIII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Place and Prosperity detailed as follows:-

Appeal Decisions

1. The following appeal was dismissed on 29 May 2026.

PAC Ref	2025/A0112
Council Ref	LA06/2025/0549/F
Appellant	J McNinch
Subject of Appeal	Refusal of planning permission for: Replacement dwelling (retrospective).
Location	14 Ballyvester Road, Donaghadee

The Council refused the application via the delegated list 12 November 2025 for the following reasons:

- i. The proposal is contrary to the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland and Policy CTY 1 of Planning Policy Statement 21, Sustainable Development in the Countryside, in that there are no overriding reasons why this development is essential in this rural location and could not be located within a settlement.
- ii. The proposal is contrary to the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland and Policy CTY 3 of Planning Policy Statement 21, Sustainable Development in the Countryside, in that insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate that the building which has been replaced exhibited the essential characteristics of a dwelling and that all external structural walls were suitably intact. As such, the proposal fails to meet the criteria for a replacement dwelling in the countryside.
- iii. The proposal is contrary to the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland and Policy CTY 8 of Planning Policy Statement 21, Sustainable Development in the Countryside, in that it does not constitute a small gap site sufficient only to accommodate up to a maximum of two houses within an otherwise substantial and continuously built-up frontage and therefore contributes to ribbon development.
- iv. The proposal is contrary to the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland and Policy CTY 14 of Planning Policy Statement 21, Sustainable

Development in the Countryside, in that, if approved, the proposal would contribute to a ribbon of development in line with Policy CTY 8.

- v. The proposal is contrary to Policy AMP2 of Planning Policy Statement 3, Access, Movement and Parking, in that it has not been demonstrated that access will not prejudice road safety or significantly inconvenience the flow of traffic.

The application was made in relation to a structure that had been previously removed from the site, and an assertion that the structure for replacement was a dwelling eligible for replacement under the policy.

Due to the prior removal of the structure prior to submission of the planning application, reliance was placed on other evidence submitted to assess the eligibility of that since-removed structure for replacement under Policy CTY3; however, the Commissioner found that the limited supporting evidence was not persuasive in proving the former structure was a dwelling eligible for replacement under Policy CTY3.

The Commissioner sustained the third and fourth reasons for refusal in relation to ribbon development and impact on rural character, alongside part of refusal reason five, insofar as the existence of an access to a dwelling capable of replacement was unfounded.

2. The following appeal was allowed on 28 May 2026.

PAC Ref	2025/A0076
Council Ref	LA06/2025/0388/O
Appellant	Castlesaint LLP
Subject of Appeal	Non-Determination of outline planning permission 8 no. apartments with associated carparking and landscaping
Location	Lands south of 1-17, NE of 2 and SE of 4 Rockfield Meadows, Carrowdore

The Council had previously refused this proposal under LA06/2018/0996/F which was appealed but found to be an invalid appeal due to an issue with the proposal address. The application was then re-submitted and the applicant lodged an appeal with the Commission against non-determination. The previous refusal reasons were as follows:

- i. The proposal is contrary to the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) in that it has not been demonstrated that the adjacent minerals development is not likely to compromise safety or to significantly impair the amenity of people living in the proposed dwellings.
- ii. The proposal is contrary to Policy QD1 of Planning Policy Statement 7: Quality Residential Developments, in that it has not been demonstrated that residents of

the proposed dwellings will not be adversely affected by noise and dust arising from activities of the adjacent quarry.

The Commissioner was satisfied that the proposal would not result in unacceptable impacts on residential amenity, including in respect of noise and dust from the adjacent quarry. Furthermore, it was found that the proposal would provide a quality residential environment which respected the character of the surrounding area.

3. The following appeal was dismissed on 10 June 2026.

PAC Ref	2025/A0104
Council Ref	LA06/2022/0708/O
Appellant	W J Law Bespoke LLP
Subject of Appeal	Refusal of Outline Planning Permission for Erection of 5No. detached dwellings with associated landscaping, internal road layout and access provision
Location	Lands to the south and adjoining No. 90 Crawfordsburn Road and to the west of No's 71, 83, 85, 87, 89, 91 and 97 Crawfordsburn Road, Newtownards

The Council refused the application at its Committee meeting of 7 October 2025, further to an officer recommendation of approval, for the following reasons:

- i. The proposal is contrary to paragraph 6.201 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland ("SPPS") and Policy OS 1 of Planning Policy Statement 8 Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation ("PPS8") in that it would result in the loss of open space and no exceptions to the policy have been demonstrated
- ii. The proposal is contrary to paragraph 6.192 of the SPPS and Policy NH 5 of Planning Policy Statement 2 Natural Heritage in that it would likely result in the loss of, or damage to, known long-established woodland and no exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated where the benefits of the proposed development outweigh the value of the species, habitat or feature.

The Commissioner found that the proposal would result in the loss of open space of public value, contrary to Policy OS 1 of PPS 8, and would also result in damage to long-established woodland, a feature of natural heritage importance, contrary to Policy NH 5 of PPS 2 and paragraph 6.192 of the SPPS. Whilst having regard to the mitigation proposed by the appellant, and the absence of significant adverse ecological effects identified by consultees, he did not consider that those outweighed or would overcome the identified policy conflicts.

4. The following appeal against an Enforcement Notice resulted in the Notice being varied, but upheld, on 19 June 2026.

PAC Ref	2025/E0064
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Council Ref	LA06/2021/0360/CA
Appellant	Peter Kelly
Subject of Appeal	Alleged unauthorised agricultural shed and area of hardstanding
Location	Land adjacent to the rear boundary of 2a Ballyblack Road, Portaferry

The Notice was appealed under the following grounds:

- (a) Planning permission ought to be granted
- (f) steps required to be taken exceed what is necessary to remedy the breach
- (g) the period specified in the Notice for which the remedy must be completed by falls short of what should reasonably be allowed

In respect of (a), the main issue related to whether the appeal development was acceptable in the countryside. It fell to be considered under PPS 21, Policy CTY 12 – Agricultural and Forestry Development. The Council argued that insufficient evidence had been submitted to demonstrate that the shed was necessary for the efficient use of the agricultural holding.

Whilst acknowledging that evidence of a family dispute currently being heard before the High Court gave rise to practical difficulties in accessing established farm buildings, the Commissioner considered this a private and unresolved matter, concluding that the policy test required an assessment to be made of the holding in its entirety, rather than to personal/temporary constraints affecting the operation. The Commissioner agreed with the Council that insufficient evidence had been submitted to prove that the shed was essential to the efficient operation of the holding – and considered that a range of buildings already existed which could be utilised.

The Commissioner, in further consideration of the Policy agreed with objectors that vehicle movements and associated activity in respect of the location of the shed extremely close to the rear boundary of the curtilage of 2a Ballyblack Road could result in detrimental impact on the residential amenity.

It was also considered that the shed was overbearing, adversely affecting privacy and reducing light to 2a Ballyblack Road.

Policy CTY 12 further required that new buildings were sited beside existing farm buildings (plural) and the Commissioner considered that one of the buildings relied upon was a domestic garage, which did not constitute a farm building. Additionally, it was not accepted that a cattle shed was located too far from the appeal building to be considered as ‘sited beside’ as required by the policy.

Finally, the Commissioner referred to a lack of evidence to demonstrate that there were no alternative sites and no health and safety considerations to make the appeal building

acceptable. Therefore, the appeal building failed to comply with Policy CTY 12 and ground (a) failed.

The appeal under ground (f) failed in relation to removal of the shed, but the Commissioner deleted removal of 'area of hardstanding' from the Notice.

In relation to ground (g) the Commissioner increased the time period for removal from 70 days to 9 months from the date of the appeal decision.

5. The following appeal was allowed on 18 June 2026.

PAC Ref	2025/A0079
Council Ref	LA06/2023/1556/O
Appellant	William Gilmore
Subject of Appeal	Refusal of permission for a dwelling on a farm
Location	50m NE of 51 Kempe Stones Road, Newtownards

The Council had requested the Commission to amend the decision as it erroneously referred to this as having been an appeal against a non-determination of a proposal.

The Council refused this application on 13 October 2025 further to being heard at Planning Committee for the following single reason:

- The proposal is contrary to Planning Policy Statement 3, Access, Movement and Parking, Policy AMP 3, in that it would, if permitted, result in the intensification of use of an existing access onto a Main Traffic Route/Protected Route, thereby prejudicing the free flow of traffic and conditions of general safety.

The Council considered that traffic generated by the proposal would exceed the 5% intensification threshold such that it would prejudice the free flow of traffic and conditions of general safety in relation to the Kempe Stones Road, a protected route.

The Commissioner was satisfied that the appellant's 24-hour traffic survey, based on a metrocount and TRICS database analysis, provided an accurate assessment of the baseline, and additional traffic movements using the existing access would not exceed the 5% threshold.

Furthermore, the Commissioner considered his experience at the site in that he was able to safely enter the road on a number of occasions without causing any disturbance to the free flow of traffic or any conditions of general safety.

The appeal was granted subject to conditions including a ridge height and underbuild restriction and retention of the existing site visibility splays in perpetuity.

6. The following appeal was dismissed on 18 June 2026.

PAC Ref	2025/A0132
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Council Ref	LA06/2024/0058/F
Appellant	Glenn McDowell
Subject of Appeal	Refusal of planning permission for a two-storey detached dwelling with attached garage
Location	Site between 45 Ballyhay Road and 11 New Line, Donaghadee

The Council refused the above application on 2 November 2025 for the following reasons:

- i. The proposal is contrary to The Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland and Policy CTY1 of Planning Policy Statement 21, Sustainable Development in the Countryside in that there are no overriding reasons why this development is essential in this rural location and could not be located within a settlement.
- ii. The proposal is contrary to The Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland and Policy CTY8 of Planning Policy Statement 21, Sustainable Development in the Countryside in that the proposal does not constitute a small gap sufficient only to accommodate up to a maximum of two houses within an otherwise substantial and continuously built-up frontage, and would, if permitted, result in the loss of an important visual break in development and, if permitted, result in the creation of ribbon development along New Line.
- iii. The proposal is contrary to The Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland and policy CTY14 of Planning Policy Statement 21, Sustainable Development in the Countryside in that the dwelling would, if permitted result in a suburban style build-up of development when viewed with existing and approved buildings and create a ribbon of development which would therefore result in a detrimental change to further erode the rural character of the countryside.

The Commissioner agreed with the Council's assessment that a substantial and continuously built-up frontage consisting of at least three buildings existed, but that the gap between those buildings exceeded what could reasonably be regarded as 'a small gap'. The Council's consideration that the proposal would erode an important visual break along the frontage and result in ribbon development was also sustained by the Commissioner, in that the proposed dwelling would share a common frontage with No. 11 New Line and its associated outbuildings, and would appear visually linked to No. 45 Ballyhay Road, thereby forming a ribbon of development.

All three refusal reasons were sustained and the appeal dismissed.

New Appeals

7. The following appeal was lodged on 17 June 2026.

PAC Ref	2026/E0027
Council Ref	LA06/2025/0141/CA
Appellant	Matthew McAree
Subject of Appeal	Alleged unauthorised cabin for residential and storage use
Location	Land at land approx. 40m SE of No.4 Cunningburn Road, Newtownards

Appeals Withdrawn

8. The following appeal was withdrawn on 26 May 2026, after planning permission was granted under LA06/2025/0981/F for a farm dwelling (retrospective) on 22 May 2026.

PAC Ref	2025/E0075
Council Ref	LA06/2022/0134/CA
Appellant	Denis Crawford
Subject of Appeal	Enforcement Notice appeal – alleged: Unauthorised erection of a building used as a dwelling unit; Unauthorised laying of an area of hardstanding; Unauthorised erection of an oil tank
Location	Land adjacent to 2d Tullymally Road, Portaferry

Details of appeal decisions, new appeals and scheduled hearings could be viewed at www.pacni.gov.uk.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes this report and attachments.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Smith, seconded by Councillor Wray, that the recommendation be adopted.

7. QUARTERLY UPDATE ON TREES

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Place and Prosperity detailing that this report represented the quarterly update to Planning Committee regarding detail relating to Tree Preservation Orders served and applications for consent to carry out works to protected trees. This update provided information from 1 April 2026 to 15 June 2026.

Table 1 Tree Preservation Orders Served

TPO (Full or Provisional)	Date Served	Address
Confirmed	6 May 2026	Lands to the north and west of Killaire House, 22 Killaire Road, Bangor
Provisional	2 April 2026	Lands at 9-11 Whinney Hill, Holywood
Provisional	15 April 2026	'Dromkeen House', Sullivan Upper School Prep Department, 1 Alexandra Park, Holywood

Provisional	23 April 2026	Lands to the rear of 2 Dalwhinney Road, Holywood
Provisional	20 April 2026	Lands at 67 Station Road, Holywood

Table 2 Consent for Works Decisions

TPO or Conservation Area	Consent Granted / Notification Accepted*	Consent Refused
Tree Preservation Orders	7	0
Address		
1. 45 Glen Road, Holywood		
2. 2 Croft Manor, Holywood		
3. 26a Old Cultra Road, Holywood		
4. 40 Ballymenoch Road, Holywood		
5. Prospect House, 10 Prospect Road, Ballygowan		
6. Tudor Park Development, Holywood		
7. 6 Ballymullan Road, Crawfordsburn		
Conservation Area	4	0
Address		
1. 1 Riverside, Holywood		
2. 18 Church Avenue, Holywood		
3. Brook Street Surgery, Brook Street, Holywood		
4. Tudor Park Development, Holywood		

* Notification referred to when the Council received notification of proposed works to trees within a conservation area. If the Council did not accept the proposed works, it must serve a TPO within the 6-week period from the date of notification. 'Notification Accepted' meant that the Council did not consider it necessary to serve a TPO and thus there was no objection to the proposed works.

Detail

Works to Trees - Tree Preservation Order Protection

1. 45 Glen Road, Holywood – felling of 7 no. trees

- 7 no. trees were requested for felling for safety reasons. 2 no. trees were not protected and therefore consent was not required from the Council to remove these trees.
- 4 no. trees showed a significant loss of vigour, one of which had significant decay at the base. 1 no. tree was located on the riverbank and requested for removal for this reason.

- The Council considered the felling works to 4 no. trees to be acceptable for safety reasons.
- The Council considered the felling of 1 no. tree located on the riverbank to be unacceptable. Appropriate remedial works for the tree were agreed through liaison with the applicant.
- Replacement tree planting was conditioned with 4 no. standard native trees at a height of 3-3.5m to be located within the curtilage of the property and carried out during the next available planting season following commencement of the works permitted.

2. 2 Croft Manor, Holywood – works to 1 no. tree

- 1 no. tree was requested for remedial works for management and safety reasons.
- The tree had evidence of Kretzschmaria at the base. That was a fungal pathogen which was characterised by its ability to decay wood and lead to structural instability
- The Council considered the remedial works to 1 no. tree to be acceptable as they would aid the stability of the tree.

3. 26a Old Cultra Road, Holywood – works to 3 no. trees

- 3 no. trees were requested for remedial works for management and maintenance reasons.
- The Council considered all remedial works to 3 no. trees to be appropriate and acceptable for management and maintenance reasons.

4. 40 Ballymenoch Road, Holywood – to fell 2 no. trees and carry out works to 4 no. trees and 3 no. tree groups

- 2 no. trees were requested removal for safety reasons and the remaining works to 4 no. trees and 3 no. tree groups were requested for management and maintenance reasons. 2 no. trees requested for removal and 3 no. tree groups requested for remedial works were not protected and therefore the Council's consent was not required to carry out works to those trees.
- The Council considered all remedial works to 4 no. remaining trees to be acceptable and appropriate.

5. Prospect House, 10 Prospect Road, Ballygowan – felling of 1 no. tree and works to 1 no. tree

- 1 no. tree was requested for removal for safety reasons and 1 no. tree for remedial works for management and maintenance reasons.
- The tree requested for removal had poor form and showed a significant loss of vigour.
- The Council considered removal of 1 no. tree acceptable for safety reasons.
- The remedial works proposed to 1 no. tree were considered appropriate and acceptable for management and maintenance reasons.
- Replacement tree planting was conditioned for the tree to be felled with 1 no. standard beech tree at a height of 3-3.5m. The tree was to be located in as

close proximity as possible to the tree to be removed and planting carried out during the next available planting season following commencement of the works.

6. Tudor Park Development, Holywood (specifically to the rear of 2 Martello Gate) – felling of 1 no. tree and works to 7 no. trees

- 1 no. tree was requested for removal for safety reasons and 7 no. trees for remedial works for management and maintenance reasons. 1 no. tree requested for removal was considered dangerous and therefore was exempt under Section 122(5) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. It was also agreed that 3 no. trees required no action by liaising with the applicant.
- The Council considered the remedial works to the 4 no. remaining trees to be appropriate and acceptable.

Conservation Area Notifications

1. Riverside, Holywood – works to 1 no. tree

- The applicant served notice on the Council of intent to carry out remedial works to 1 no. tree for safety and management reasons.
- The tree had suffered storm damage and required a reduction and removal of damaged branches.
- The Council considered works to 1 no. tree to be appropriate and acceptable.

2. 18 Church Avenue, Holywood – felling of 11 no. trees

- The applicant served notice on the Council of intent to fell 11 no. trees for safety reasons. 1 no. tree was dead and 1 no. tree had already failed on site and therefore notification to the Council of intent to remove these trees was not required as they were exempt under Section 122(5) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.
- 1 no. tree had an advanced stage of ash dieback, 2 no. trees had significant decay at the base and a showed a loss of vigour as a result, and the remaining 6 no. trees had poor form and very small crowns which showed a significant loss of vigour. Given the poor condition of those trees, they would not merit protection by virtue of a TPO.
- The Council considered all felling works to 9 no. trees to be acceptable for safety reasons.
- Replacement tree planting was not a requirement within a Conservation Area, however, was recommended in this case.

1. Brook Street Surgery, Brook Street, Holywood – felling of 7 no. trees

- The applicant served notice on the Council of intent to fell 7 no. trees for safety reasons.

- All 7 no. trees were located on the edge of the riverbank and leant significantly towards the surgery building. All 7 no. trees had an advanced stage of ash dieback, poor form and a significant loss of vigour was evident within the crowns. Given the poor condition of the trees, they would not merit protection by virtue of a TPO.
- The Council considered all felling works to 7 no. trees to be acceptable for safety reasons.
- Replacement tree planting was not a requirement within a Conservation Area and was not recommended in this case given the restricted nature of the site.

2. Tudor Park Development, Holywood (specifically to the rear of 2 Martello Gate) – felling of 7 no. trees

- The applicant served notice on the Council of intent to fell 7 no. trees due to their location and damage to an adjacent wall.
- All 7 no. trees were young single stemmed trees which ranged between approximately 2m and 3m in height. All trees were located immediately adjacent to a boundary wall with Martello Terrace and, although, there was no evidence of damage to this wall it was noted that the trees were located below the canopy of a number of very mature trees. That restrictive location would impact upon the condition and form of those trees over time as they strive to mature. The trees would not be considered for protection by virtue of a TPO due to their present stature and limited public visual amenity.
- The Council considered all felling works to 7 no. trees to be acceptable given the restricted location of the trees.
- Replacement tree planting was not a requirement with a Conservation Area and was not recommended in this case given the restrictive nature of the site.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes this report.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Smith, seconded by Councillor Smart, that the recommendation be adopted.

8. UPDATE FROM MINISTERIAL FORUM

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Place and Prosperity detailing the following;

Background – Planning Improvement Programme

Members would be aware of the inception of the NI Planning Improvement Programme (PIP) following recommendations arising from both the NI Audit Office and Public Accounts Committee Reports into Planning in Northern Ireland, published February and March 2022 respectively.

Planning Improvement Learning and Engagement Programme – Ministerial Engagement

As part of the PIP, NILGA previously held a Planning Improvement Task and Finish Advisory Group meeting on 18 May 2026 as part of the wider Planning Improvement Learning and Engagement Programme.

At that meeting, through NILGA's planning improvement engagement work with DfI and Solace NI, elected Members from Planning Committees engaged with the DfI Chief Planner, Rosemary Daly, on the challenges and opportunities within the planning system, and on how elected members could be supported to make sound and defensible decisions.

The discussion generated valuable practical insight, examples of good practice, and a clearer shared understanding of the areas where further support and improvement activity may be beneficial. NILGA was now working with DfI and Solace NI to reflect these issues in draft proposals for a future programme of work and would engage further with councils in due course as that developed.

A key strand of the wider Planning Improvement Learning and Engagement Programme had been to strengthen direct political engagement between the Minister and Council Planning Committees, ensuring that local government experience and elected member perspectives could help inform the ongoing improvement agenda.

As such, Chairs of Planning Committee or nominated Committee Members were invited to attend a meeting with Minister Liz Kimmins MLA on 18 June 2026 at James House, Cromac Avenue, Belfast.

Ministerial Planning Forum

A pre-meet was held via MS Teams with NILGA on 16 June for Members to summarise discussion points in order to support constructive engagement with the Minister on key system-wide issues facing delivery, investment and local place-shaping.

The Council's Head of Planning and Building Control, Ann McCullough, attended the meeting in her capacity as Chair of the NI Heads of Planning Group, alongside Councillor McCollum as Chair of ANDBC Planning Committee.

A precise of the discussion in relation to the topic areas raised is outlined below:

- Strategic Planning Framework (RDS / Regional Alignment)
- Planning for rural towns, villages and countryside
- Infrastructure – Planning policy and investment alignment
- Operation Performance and Statutory Consultees
- Major and Regionally Significant Applications
- Placemaking and Quality of Development
- Strategic Whole-System Thinking

Strategic Planning Framework (RDS / Regional Alignment) & Planning for Rural towns, villages and countryside

The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035 was a long term plan which aimed to deliver the spatial aspects of the Programme for Government. In doing so it recognised the important role of Belfast in generating regional prosperity and that Londonderry was the focus for economic growth in the North West. To ensure all areas benefited from economic growth, the RDS reflected the Programme for Government approach of balanced sub-regional growth and recognised the importance of key settlements as centres for growth and prosperity. The RDS had a statutory basis and was material to decisions on individual planning applications and appeals. Local councils must take account of the RDS when drawing up their Development Plans.

Concern was voiced in respect of more rural council areas in what was viewed by some as a moratorium on development in the countryside. Social and economic impacts of lack of growth was visible whereby businesses were struggling, more people requiring access to childcare, family carer responsibilities via housing in the countryside etc.

The Minister was cognisant of those matters, referencing a meeting held with representatives of the GAA in the context of its response to Ireland's Demographic Shift, in which it highlighted the ripple effect of the explosive growth of urban towns and cities of decimating and eroding rural life, and the resultant impact on such clubs.

Whilst recognising there needed to be a balance between meeting rural needs and protection of the countryside, her officers had commenced scoping work in respect of a review of the RDS and the SPPS with potential for matters to be addressed in a Planning Bill. The Minister acknowledged elected members were familiar with their respective local contexts and communities and the PIP had recognised a need for examining whether the regional policy framework remained fit for purpose.

The Chief Planner reiterated the need for growth in the rural areas to be balanced against protection of the environment, recognising a constant tension in attaining sustainable outcomes.

Infrastructure – Planning policy and investment alignment

There occurred the obvious discussion regards the state of the water and drainage infrastructure which the Minister addressed in the context of the current budget review, in which the monies required to address the necessary upgrades in NI costed more than the entire budget allocation to DFI. She referenced ongoing NIW pilots in settlements to try and release capacity at lower costs, and steps to maximise the amount of investment by NIW.

Operation Performance and Statutory Consultees

Members heard of the impact of the introduction of statutory validation checklists in respect of ensuring applications were properly front-loaded before being accepted into the system, as well as the formation of the Planning Statutory Consultee Forum for discussions around improvement and efficiencies, such as introduction of more Standing Advice for planning officers to negate requirement for consultation etc.

The Chief Planner advised Members of ongoing work between the Department and Heads of Planning to formulate a protocol to tackle the late submission of information or late objections, often seen as attempts to frustrate the determination of applications in the system.

Councillor McCollum raised concern with the legislative ability to determine an application in the absence of a consultee response within the statutory timeframe as it could put councils in an invidious position if road safety or environmental governance were compromised because of such decisions.

In referencing the tension between development and the environment, Councillor McCollum was keen that a meeting to include the DAERA Minister could be organised in the same vein as this forum to permit similar Member engagement, which the DFI Minister was very receptive to.

Engagement with agents was highlighted as opportunity to improve behaviour in this regard, in addition to ensuring planning officers made clear to statutory consultees what they were being asked to comment upon.

Investigation into the use of AI in terms of validation procedures was discussed in the context of how it could reduce administrative burden on planning officers to enable focus on policy assessment.

Major and Regionally Significant Applications

Frustration was aired in relation to the Department's ability to call-in applications and lack of timeframes for decisions.

The Chief Planner referenced the legislation requiring notification to the Department for major or local proposals, in the context of ensuring there was no inadvertent undermining of regional policy/setting of unwanted precedents, but was receptive to review of the legislation in this regard, to ensure not stymying development.

The Minister highlighted that the Department normally did not want to deal with such applications, but that third parties often requested DFI call-in proposals as an additional oversight check – appreciating that that needed to be addressed.

Placemaking and Quality of Development

Discussion around this theme focussed again on rural communities in the context of providing homes, services and employment opportunities.

Strategic Whole-System Thinking

Members generally welcomed the transfer of planning powers as a positive, and the Chief Planner advised of Heads of Planning being asked to put forward examples of positive outcomes in the planning system to counter-balance negativity and criticism. That would further enable greater understanding of the PIP and strengthen communications regards the planning system.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes this report.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Smart, seconded by Alderman Smith, that the recommendation be adopted.

*****ITEM 9 IN CONFIDENCE*****

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

AGREED, on the proposal of Councillor Smart, seconded by Alderman McIlveen, that the public and press be excluded from the following item of confidential business.

9. QUARTERLY UPDATE ON ENFORCEMENT MATTERS (Appendix IX)

*****IN CONFIDENCE*****

Exemption Reason: 6a. Exemption: Statutory Provision

The report was presented in confidence to Members under Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014, Exemption 6a – Information which reveals that the council proposes to give under any statutory provision a notice by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person. It related to the status of current Planning Enforcement cases or Summons in respect of proposed actions.

It provided updates for Members in respect of the status of live enforcement notices, court proceedings and proposed summons action.

READMITTANCE OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

AGREED on the proposal of Councillor Smart, seconded by Alderman McIlveen, that the public and press be readmitted to the meeting.

TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated at 9.38 pm.

Unclassified

ITEM 9

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
	If multiple:
Meeting	Council
Date of Meeting	29 July 2026
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	
Report title	Changes to the Standing Orders
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Proposed changes (in body of report) Appendix 2 - Special Meeting Requisition Form - DRAFT
File Reference (if applicable)	
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 carried out – Screened out
Link to Corporate Plan Priority and Outcome	Priority 3: Social 7. Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation If multiple:

Background

In line with the Policy Development Process, the Standing Orders are reviewed every three years or as required.

Key Issues

The full list of proposed changes are outlined in Appendix 1 within this report.

Members should note that in line with the proposed change to Standing Order 3, it also proposed to introduce a Special Meeting Requisition Form which can be found at appendix 2.

Updated training on Standing Orders for Members and Officers is currently being reviewed and will be rolled out in due course.

Next Steps

Members will be aware when making these decisions, that under Standing Order 30, version 12, any motion to, add to, vary or revoke these Standing Orders will, when proposed and seconded, stand adjourned and be referred without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council and any resultant amendment will be ratified at an ordinary meeting of the Council.

Therefore, these Standing Orders were stood down at the Council meeting on 24 June 2026, for discussion at the meeting on 29 July.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council **agrees** to amend the Standing Orders as set out in this report.

Appendix 1

Glossary of Terms

For the purposes of submitting an item of business (a Notice of Motion, an amendment, a call-in requisition, **a Special Meeting requisition, or speaking rights at a Committee**), the day of submission is excluded from the definition of a Working Day. Days in which Meetings of the Council are held are not included in the definition of a Working Day.

3. Convening Special Meetings

The Mayor of the Council may call a meeting of the Council at any time giving 5 working days' notice. In the event of an emergency where it would not be pragmatic to await 5 working days before holding the meeting, or in exceptional circumstances, the meeting may be called with 24 hours' notice.

(2) The Mayor may call a meeting of the Council if a requisition for such a meeting, signed by eight Members, is presented to them; and; if they refuse to call a meeting on such a requisition or if, without so refusing they do not call a meeting within the period of five working days from the date of the service of the requisition on them, the eight Members may, on that refusal or on the expiration of the five working day period, call a meeting of the Council. **Members should complete a copy of the Special Meeting requisition form when doing so.**

Where a meeting is called by the Mayor or Members further to such a requisition, the meeting shall be called in accordance with Standing Order 3(1).

Upon receiving the requisition, the Mayor shall make a decision as to whether or not to call a meeting as soon as reasonably practicable, but in any event a decision if being made should be given within five working days.

11. Attendance of Members at Committees

Any Elected Member may attend a Committee meeting of which he/she is not a Member but may not take a Council seat within the main meeting area and instead should sit in the public gallery save where he/she wishes to speak on an item or items.

To register an interest to speak, a Member should submit a request in writing to the relevant Director **by 5pm** at least one working day in advance of the date of the Committee meeting at which they wish to be heard.

13. Order of Business

Subject to any statutory requirements to the contrary, the order of business at every meeting of the Council shall be as follows:

- a) Apologies;
- b) declaration of Members' interests;
- c) Mayor's Remarks;

- d) confirmation of the Minutes of the last stated meeting and of all adjourned meetings and special meetings held since the last stated meeting;
- e) matters arising;
- f) adoption of the minutes of the proceedings of any Committees and consideration of reports, if any, from such Committees;
- g) requests for deputations;
- h) business required by statute to be transacted at the meeting;
- i) reports on decisions/recommendations subject to the reconsideration procedure;
- j) ~~correspondence~~ **items circulated for information**;
- k) sealing of documents, and
- l) consideration of motions of which due notice has been given, in the order in which they have been received.

14. Minutes of the Council

14.1 Keeping of; as evidence; etc.

- (1) Minutes of the proceedings of a meeting of the Council, or of a Committee or sub-Committee, shall be drawn up and entered in a bound book kept for that purpose.
- (2) No discussion shall take place upon the previous month's Council **or Special Council** Minutes except upon their accuracy or matters for information.
- (3) Any minute purporting to be signed as mentioned in sub-paragraph (1) shall be received in evidence without further proof.
- (4) Until the contrary is proved, a meeting of the Council or of a Committee or Sub-Committee thereof in respect of the proceedings of which a minute has been so made and signed shall be deemed to have been duly convened and held, and all the Members present at the meeting shall be deemed to have been duly qualified, and where the proceedings are proceedings of a Committee or Sub-Committee, the Committee or Sub-Committee shall be deemed to have been duly constituted and to have had power to deal with the matters referred to in the minutes.

[Paragraphs 10(2) and 10(3) of Schedule 5 to the 2014 Act applies].

17 Motions

17.1 On notice

- (8) If a notice of motion fails to be considered at a meeting of the Council/relevant Committee, such a notice of motion will only be included on the Summons Paper for the following meeting if submitted in writing to the Chief Executive by the Member concerned not later than five working days, at least, before the Council **relevant** meeting.

(12)(a) Substantial amendments made by the proposer and seconder of a notice of motion must be submitted in writing to the Chief Executive **by 5pm** at least ~~five calendar days~~ **3 working days** in advance of the date of the Council or Committee meeting which they will be heard.

(b) Substantial amendments to a notice of motion by any Member other than the proposer and seconder must be submitted in writing to the Chief Executive **by 5pm** at least one working day in advance of the date of the Council or Committee meeting at which they will be heard. Any such amendment will be debated at the Council or Committee meeting in the order in which they have been received by the Chief Executive.

22. Decision Logs

(4) If an ~~invalid~~ **admissible** requisition for a call-in of a decision recorded in a Council or Committee decision log has been received by 5pm on the fifth working day after the relevant decision log has been issued, implementation of the decision, or the tabling of the decision for ratification by Council, must be postponed until the decision has been reconsidered in line with Standing Order 23.

26. Rescission of a Preceding Resolution

(1) No motion to rescind any resolution passed within the preceding six months, and no motion or amendment to the same effect as one which has been rejected within the preceding six months, shall be proposed by a Member unless the notice thereof given in pursuance of Standing Order 17.1 bears the names of at least 15% (6 Members) of the Members of the Council. Such Motions, including the names, shall be entered by the Chief Executive in their proper place upon the Summons Paper in the order in which they are received.

(2) When any such motion or amendment has been disposed of by the Council, it shall not be open to any Member to propose a similar motion within a further period of six months.

(3) This Standing Order shall not apply to motions moved in pursuance of a recommendation of a Committee or a Call-in.

(4) Voting on such a motion will be by a simple majority vote.

27. Members' conduct

27.6 Conduct during the meeting

Members must have due regard to the provisions of the Northern Ireland Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors in relation to their conduct during the whole proceedings of a meeting of Council or Committee. In relation to Planning Committee meetings, Members must also have due regard to:

Annex 1 Protocol for the Operation of Ards and North Down Borough Council Planning Committee

~~Annex 2 Protocol for Virtual Planning Committee Meetings~~

31. Delegated Authority

In the event of any civil emergency or any situation in which urgent actions are required to ensure the continued delivery of Council services and statutory functions and it is either not reasonably practicable to convene a meeting of Council or Committee, or if any such meetings if called are inquorate, the Chief Executive or any Director nominated ~~by him~~ **by them** may exercise all or any of the functions of the Council except those which are reserved to the Council pursuant to Section 7 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014. Any decisions taken pursuant to this Standing Order will be reported to the relevant Committee or Council at the next available meeting. This Standing Order may be read alongside the Council's Scheme of Delegation but operates separately to it.

Special Council Meeting requisition form

Standing Order 3, Convening Special Meetings, provides that the Mayor of the Council may call a meeting of the Council at any time giving 5 working days’ notice.

In the event of an emergency where it would not be pragmatic to await 5 working days before holding the meeting, or in exceptional circumstances, the meeting may be called within 24 hours’ notice.

The Mayor may call a meeting of the Council if a requisition for such a meeting, signed by eight Members, is presented to them; and; if they refuse to call a meeting on such a requisition or if, without so refusing they do not call a meeting within the period of five working days from the date of the service of the requisition on them, the eight Members may, on that refusal or on the expiration of the five working day period, call a meeting of the Council.

Where a meeting is called by the Mayor or Members further to such a requisition, the meeting shall be called in accordance with Standing Order 3(1).

Upon receiving the requisition, the Mayor shall make a decision as to whether or not to call a meeting as soon as reasonably practicable, but in any event a decision if being made should be given within five working days.

To make such a requisition, Members should fill in the form below.

We, the undersigned request that the Mayor convene a Special Meeting of the Council for the following reasons:

Details of the Requisition

	Print name	Signature
Councillor		
Councillor		
Councillor		
Councillor		
Councillor		
Councillor		
Councillor		
Councillor		

Date of submission: _____

Unclassified

ITEM 10

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
	If multiple:
Meeting	Council
Date of Meeting	29 July 2026
Responsible Director	Director of Corporate Services
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Communications and Marketing
Report title	United States Semiquincentennial (USA 250)
Attachments	
File Reference (if applicable)	
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 Choose an item. If multiple:

Background

The purpose of this report is to present an update in response to the Notice of Motion, which requests:

“That this Council, mindful of our close connections to the United States and our role in their history, commit to mark and celebrate the United States Semiquincentennial. Officers should consider options for events of different scales, including the theming of an existing event in the calendar, as well as exploring options to collaborate on an event of an appropriate level that complements the proposals of other councils (Causeway Coast and Glens, Antrim and Newtownabbey, Lisburn and Castlereagh) and would run in the latter half of this year.”

Northern Ireland Context

Officers have engaged with neighbouring councils and joined a cross-council working group established for information sharing on proposals. As of July 2026, the emerging approach across these councils continues to prioritise complementary activity and the reframing of existing programmes where possible and appropriate, with any new initiatives being modest and subject to available budgets and resources.

Local Context

The Council is aware that local groups are planning activity to mark the anniversary. With the following events taking place during the period covered by the request:

- **Monday 29 June to Friday 24 July | Livingston Centre**

A special exhibition marking the 250th Anniversary of US Independence ran from 29 June to 24 July, which highlighted the role of the Livingston family in the American Revolution.

- **Sunday 5 July and Saturday 16 August | Donaghadee Harbour**

The Donaghadee Community Development Association has planned two dramas to mark the 250th anniversary of the signing of the United States Declaration of Independence delivered by local drama provider Valhalla Street Theatre.

- **First weekend in September | Eagle Wing Festival, Groomsport**

Delivered by Discover Groomsport (subject to confirmation of funding from the Ulster Scots Agency at the time of writing).

- **Tourism NI Experience Development Fund**

Two local experience providers, Sustainable Journeys and NI Silver, have secured funding through the Tourism NI Experience Development Fund (funded by DfC) to develop immersive experiences for North American and domestic markets. The two local providers participating in the programme will present elements of the local Ulster-Scots story.

A blog has been created on the visitardsandnorthdown.com website, setting out the Borough's links with the USA. It will be updated as further information becomes available: www.visitardsandnorthdown.com/blog/read/2026/03/america-250-local-links-b320.

Council Considerations

The 2026/27 summer/autumn events calendar (excluding smaller-scale arts, heritage and parks events) is expansive. Officers considered whether an existing event could be themed or expanded to reflect the United States Semiquincentennial (USA 250). Where possible, options to expand the programme were explored; however, due to cost and resource implications, it has not been possible to progress additional activity beyond the proposed approach.

Sea Bangor, given its links with the United States, would have been the only suitable event for a themed approach. However, timescales did not allow this option to be progressed.

Other events through to the end of October are either fully programmed or well advanced in development and have either well-established identities or are establishing identities focused on the Borough's key strengths, for example Shorelife Celebration.

Officers engaged with a key event partner, Open House Festival, to explore the potential for incorporating the USA 250 theme into an element of its programming. The partner confirmed that this was not feasible, as the programme had already been launched.

Officers also explored avenues with external providers, including the option of commissioning an external event organiser to deliver an event at an estimated cost of c. £15k. This would require a procurement exercise, which typically takes a minimum of five weeks, in addition to the identification of a suitable location and date, subject to availability, and ongoing project management. No viable external-provider option was identified that could be delivered within the available budget, timescale and staffing capacity.

Officers have reviewed the summer/autumn event calendar and have not identified a suitable date. As noted above, early July and mid-August weekend dates align with the planned USA 250 Donaghadee activity (5 July and 16 August).

Based on officers' previous experience of delivering events in the latter part of July, this period tends to be less attractive for attendance due to the holiday season. It is intended that the Eagle Wing Festival, delivered by Discover Groomsport (subject to Ulster-Scots Agency funding at the time of writing), will return on the first weekend in September — the same weekend suggested for the Cockle Row Cottage activity. Officers have moved the Tide and Turf Festival a week later to avoid competing with this year's Belfast Maritime Festival and the Eats and Beats Festival, Newcastle, from both customer and supplier perspectives. October/November is also currently being targeted for the launch of Marine Gardens.

In view of the above, including existing commitments, associated project management demands, cost implications and resource pressures, delivery via outsourcing is considered unachievable. Officers have therefore concluded that, although expansion of the programme was explored where possible, there is no deliverable option to expand the programme.

Council confirmed events

The following approach is proposed, focusing on the strategic alignment, theming and promotion of relevant existing Council activity under a unified USA 250 commemorative framework. This will enable the Council to recognise the anniversary appropriately and complement planned Borough-wide activity, while maintaining delivery standards within existing operational capacity.

From September to November 2026, Ards and North Down Borough Council proposes a programme of commemorative activity to mark the United States Semiquincentennial (USA 250).

The programme reflects the Borough's historic connections with the United States and aligns with existing activity to maximise impact and value.

Groomsport will be the focal point for two of the Council's anniversary events. It is the earliest port on the North Down coast and the scene of the Eagle Wing's attempted emigration to America in September 1636.

- **Saturday 5 September | Cockle Row Cottages, Groomsport**

A themed heritage event focusing on Ulster American migration and shared history, delivered in a family-friendly and engaging format.

- **Wednesday 9 September | Commemorative Tree Planting, Donaghadee**

A civic ceremony to mark the USA 250 anniversary, featuring the planting of five commemorative trees symbolising enduring links between Ards and North Down and the United States, providing a lasting and visible legacy.

- **November 2026 | Leid AND Lairn Ulster-Scots Programme**

The Council will deliver the existing Leid AND Lairn festival as part of its USA 250 commemorations. Organised by Ards and North Down Borough Council, the festival celebrates Ulster-Scots language, culture and history. The programme will provide opportunities to explore Ulster-Scots traditions through music, storytelling and related experiences, highlighting language, folklore and cultural heritage. It will also consider the historic influence of Ulster-Scots communities locally. Events will take place across the Borough, offering accessible opportunities for residents, schools and visitors to engage with shared heritage through learning, participation and cultural celebration.

Other Opportunities

The Council has also explored links with a local author and the possibility of a literary event aimed at children, based on his current book, *The Story of Charles Thomson and the Declaration of Independence*. This remains subject to feasibility within existing resources.

Council has also had discussions with Trevor Marshall, creator of the *On Eagle's Wing* musical, about the possibility of staging an event. This is at a very early stage. Should a more definitive proposal prove possible, Officers will bring back a report to Council for consideration.

Resource Implications

Officers have explored opportunities to meet the brief where possible, including through external providers and rebranding existing events. The proposed events at this point will be incorporated into existing programmes and as such will not require additional funding. Should funding be required for the other opportunities identified above, a further report will be brought back to Council.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council Notes this report.

Unclassified

ITEM 11

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
	If multiple:
Meeting	Council
Date of Meeting	29 July 2026
Responsible Director	Director of Active and Healthy Communities
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Environmental Health and Regulatory Services
Report title	Consultation on the Bathing Waters Policy Review for Northern Ireland
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Consultation on the Bathing Waters Policy Review for Northern Ireland Appendix 2 - Bathing Waters Review Workshop Factual Report Appendix 3 - Draft ANDBC Response to Bathing Waters Policy Review Consultation
File Reference (if applicable)	
Legislation	Other Bathing Water Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008
Resource Implications	Budget Narrative: Signage and potential provision/upgrade of facilities should additional beaches be nominated. Increased officer resource should bathing season be extended.
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	Priority 2: Environmental 4. A vibrant, attractive, sustainable Borough for citizens, visitors, businesses and investors If multiple:

Background

Bathing water quality in Northern Ireland is regulated under the Quality of Bathing Water Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008, as amended.

There are currently 9 designated bathing water sites within the Borough, with the Council acting as Operator at 7 beaches, these being:

- Brompton
- Ballyholme
- Groomsport
- Donaghadee
- Millisle
- Ballywalter
- Cloughey

In addition, DAERA act as Operator at the following sites:

- Helen's Bay
- Crawfordsburn

Under these Regulations and associated DAERA arrangements, the Council, where it is the Bathing Water Operator, supports public information, liaises on monitoring and water quality, assists with pollution or waste incidents, and helps identify potential candidate bathing sites within the Borough.

The bathing season currently runs annually from 1 June to 15 September. During this period, DAERA carries out weekly water quality monitoring at identified bathing waters and publishes the results on their Dashboard at:

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/bathing-water-quality-dashboard>

The Council provides and manages signage at all identified bathing water sites, including bathing advice and a QR code linking to the latest DAERA bathing water sampling results on the Council website. Environmental Health Officers manage signage at these locations and place 'No Bathing' signage when notified of a Poor water quality result.

Bathing water quality results are published the week after samples are taken. While this does not provide a real-time indication of water quality for swimmers on a particular day, it provides an indication of general bathing water quality. Predictive water quality data is not currently available in Northern Ireland.

DAERA has issued a consultation on the future policy and legislative framework for bathing waters in Northern Ireland. The consultation considers how bathing waters are identified, monitored and managed, including the arrangements for periodic review of bathing water sites.

Prior to publication of the consultation, DAERA held a one-day stakeholder workshop at Stormont Buildings in November 2025, which was attended by Council Officers. The workshop outcome report is attached at Appendix 2.

Key Issues

The Consultation seeks views on proposals to:

1. Improve communication with bathing water users

DAERA proposes that new signage could include a Quick Response (QR) code linking users directly to online water quality information. This approach has already been implemented by the Council's Environmental Health Service across bathing water sites in the Borough, as it is compliant with current legislation.

DAERA proposes that it continues to improve its risk forecasting and modelling and it is hoped that this would be available for all designated sites and not just those with frequent poor sample results.

2. Consider the length and flexibility of the bathing season

DAERA is seeking views on whether the current bathing season, which runs from 1 June to 15 September, should be changed. The bathing season determines when bathing water monitoring and associated public health protections are put in place. There is evidence that bathing activity increasingly takes place outside the current season, particularly in late spring and early autumn, and with events such as Christmas Day swims attracting large numbers of bathers.

Extending the bathing season could therefore better reflect current patterns of use and provide more comprehensive protection for public health during periods when bathing activity remains high but would stretch sampling resources across the longer season. A longer bathing season could potentially result in poorer overall water quality sampling results as wetter weather conditions and less sunlight may increase bacterial and algal counts.

In addition to introducing an expanded bathing season, DAERA is also seeking views on having year round monitoring, or 'winter only' bathing at sites impacted by seasonal problems such as algal blooms.

3. Adopt a more risk-based monitoring approach

DAERA currently monitors each of our bathing water sites on 20 occasions during the bathing season. Their proposal is that stable, consistently 'Excellent' bathing waters are monitored less frequently and poorer quality waters are monitored more frequently, based on risk factors specific to each site.

4. Refine the criteria for identification

DAERA is seeking views on whether the criteria used to determine if a site qualifies for identification as a bathing water should be reviewed, to ensure these remain appropriate and reflect current and future patterns of recreational water use.

Currently, a bathing water site in Northern Ireland can only be formally identified through a legislative amendment to Schedule 1 of The Quality of Bathing Water (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008.

DAERA proposes moving to an alternative approach already used elsewhere in the UK, whereby a list of bathing waters to be monitored is published annually. This would provide greater flexibility in the identification and de-identification of bathing waters in Northern Ireland. Applications for new bathing waters would still be required, but designation would be achieved through updating the published list rather than making amendments to Schedule 1 through legislation.

5. Strengthen arrangements for candidate sites

Historically, bathing waters were formally identified before routine monitoring was initiated. DAERA proposes that a more structured 'pre-application' or 'candidate site' stage would be a useful approach for managing bathing waters in the future. Under such an approach, selected sites could be monitored for a defined period before any decision is taken on formal identification.

Officers welcome this proposal, as it would provide a more transparent and consistent approach to the identification of bathing waters. The use of clear assessment criteria, particularly in relation to site safety and water quality, is particularly welcomed and should help ensure that decisions are evidence-based and easily understood by stakeholders.

6. Review the automatic de-identification provision

Currently, where an identified bathing water is considered unlikely to achieve at least a "sufficient" classification, or where doing so would be infeasible or disproportionately expensive, DAERA may de-designate the site and issue permanent advice against bathing following a five-year review period.

DAERA is proposing to replace this approach with a more flexible, case-by-case process that would allow bathing water status to be extended for a specified period where there is a realistic prospect of achieving at least a "sufficient" classification. This would support a more evidence-based approach to decision-making, allowing additional time for water quality improvements while continuing to protect public health and maintain confidence in the bathing waters programme.

7. Ensure monitoring locations reflect actual use

DAERA is requesting that respondents review their local identified bathing water sites and consider whether the current monitoring locations reflect where most people now enter the water and swim.

8. Nominations for new sites

DAERA has amended the nomination form for new sites. Please note that Council has previously agreed that we propose Ballyhalbert (Burr Point) and Portavogie (north beach) as designated bathing waters when the nomination window reopens.

Next Steps

A draft response to the consultation has been prepared by Officers and is attached as Appendix 3. The response includes input from Environmental Health & Regulatory Services, Tourism, Parks & Cemeteries, and Estates.

Overall, the changes proposed by DAERA are welcomed, particularly those relating to a bathing season that more accurately reflects how and when our beaches are used, and to a more transparent nomination process with improved engagement with potential beach operators. This is important where there are concerns about water safety, microbiological quality, or wider pollution issues.

It is worth noting that Council is not required to provide facilities such as showers at designated bathing waters. However, designation can create expectations for investment in infrastructure, site management and visitor facilities over time. Members should therefore carefully consider the potential resource and financial implications of nominating additional bathing waters where the Council agrees to act as Operator. The attached draft consultation response includes a request for DAERA to provide funding support for any newly designated sites, although this is unlikely to be adopted.

Members attention is drawn to Question 6 in the draft response, which relates to proposed changes to the length of the bathing season. Officers are proposing that Council's preferred option is to have an extended season that runs from 1st April to 31st October each year. In choosing this option, we are aware that Members may decide to choose an alternative option such as there being no recognised season, with water monitoring being undertaken and results being published for the entire year. While this option has merit as sea swimming continues for many enthusiasts at all periods of the year, with increasing popularity of organised events on Christmas Day and New Year's Day, an extended season is preferable for the following reasons:

- DAERA has a limited budget for water quality testing. Extending the bathing season without a corresponding increase in resources would likely reduce sampling frequency, resulting in less reliable data and reduced confidence in water quality classifications.
- Extending the bathing season from 1st April to 31st October would better reflect current patterns of beach use by both residents and visitors. This would ensure that water quality monitoring and public information are available during the period when demand is highest and when coastal tourism activity is most significant.
- Including winter sampling results within annual bathing water classifications may lead to poorer outcomes as a result of seasonal weather conditions,

particularly increased rainfall and runoff. This may not accurately reflect water quality during the spring and summer months when bathing waters experience their highest levels of use.

Summary

DAERA is consulting on proposed changes to the bathing waters policy and legislative framework for Northern Ireland. The consultation covers a range of matters including public information, the length of the bathing season, risk-based monitoring, criteria for identifying bathing waters, candidate site arrangements, de-identification procedures and monitoring locations.

The Council currently acts as Operator for seven designated bathing waters within the Borough and has an important role in providing public information, managing site signage, responding to poor water quality notifications and supporting the identification of potential candidate sites. Officers generally welcome the direction of the proposed changes, particularly the move towards improved communication with beach users, greater flexibility in the bathing season and a more transparent approach to the nomination and assessment of bathing waters.

The draft consultation response attached at Appendix 3 supports an extended bathing season from 1st April to 31st October, as this would better reflect current patterns of beach use while avoiding the potential drawbacks of year-round classification based on winter sampling results. Members should note, however, that any extension to the bathing season or designation of additional bathing waters may have resource implications for water quality monitoring, signage, officer time and future expectations around site management and infrastructure.

Members are asked to consider the draft response and agree the Council's position on the consultation, including the proposed approach to an extended bathing season.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council **Approves** the draft consultation response, attached as Appendix 3.



Consultation on the Bathing Waters Policy Review for Northern Ireland



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**
www.daera-ni.gov.uk

An Roinn
**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Department o'
**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

Consultation on the Bathing Waters Policy Review for Northern Ireland

This document is also available on the DAERA website at:

www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-bathing-waters-policy-review-northern-ireland

On request, we can arrange to provide other formats of this document, such as:

- Paper Copy
- Large Print
- Braille
- Other Languages

To request an alternative format, please contact us:

Water Policy Branch
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
Clare House
303 Airport Road West
Sydenham Intake
Belfast
BT3 9ED

Email: waterpolicy@daera-ni.gov.uk

Guidance is provided on the 'Confidentiality' of responses on Pages 29 and 30 for your reference.

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1. Ministerial Foreword

As Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, I am pleased to present this consultation on the Bathing Waters Policy Review for Northern Ireland. This review reflects our ongoing commitment to safeguarding public health, enhancing water quality, and protecting our natural environment.

Northern Ireland's bathing waters are among our most precious natural assets. They provide recreational opportunities, support local economies and foster a vital connection between our communities and the environment.

In May 2025, I expanded the bathing water programme from twenty-six to thirty-three identified bathing water sites, adding seven new locations at Brompton Bay; Cushendall; Donaghadee; Drain's Bay; Portmuck; Rea's Wood; and Warrenpoint.

In recent years, we have seen encouraging improvements in bathing water quality, with twenty-four of our thirty-three sites meeting the 'Excellent' standard in 2025. This progress reflects sustained effort and the dedicated collaborative work of my department and partners across sectors, including particularly those councils and the National Trust which act as Bathing Water Operators, often dealing with challenges such as the risks associated with blue-green algae.

This review provides an opportunity to consider how the bathing water programme should continue to evolve. It takes account of evidence, stakeholder engagement, and the findings of the Office for Environmental Protection's (OEP) 2024 report on the implementation of Bathing Water Regulations and considers whether current policies and regulations remain sufficient. I particularly welcome the OEP's emphasis on a "source to sea" approach and agree that collaborative, catchment-based solutions are essential to sustaining and improving water quality.

The review also fulfils an action within the Environmental Improvement Plan agreed by the Executive in September 2024 and a measure in the third cycle River Basin Management Plan.

The review has been shaped and informed by input from councils, environmental organisations, water sports communities which have proved invaluable in informing the way forward. I am now keen to seek your views so that we can ensure that our final decisions on the way forward are robust and well-informed. I encourage everyone with an interest in bathing waters to respond to this consultation. Your views will help inform future policy and shape the bathing water programme for generations to come.



Andrew Muir, MLA

Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

2. Setting the scene

2.1 Introduction and Purpose of this Consultation

Protecting and improving the quality of Northern Ireland's bathing waters is fundamental to safeguarding public health, supporting tourism, and preserving the natural environment.

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) undertakes a review of bathing water sites at least every three years. The previous bathing waters review (2022–23) resulted in the identification of seven new bathing waters. Under the Environmental Improvement Plan agreed by the Executive in September 2024, the Department has committed to completing the next review by the end of 2026.

This consultation is seeking your views on potential changes to policy and legislation for bathing waters in Northern Ireland that are being considered by DAERA.

Why is a Review Needed Now?

Bathing and water based recreational activities are an integral part of life in Northern Ireland, contributing not only to physical wellbeing but also to positive mental health and wider community wellbeing. Since the Bathing Waters Monitoring Programme was introduced in the late 1980s, patterns of recreational use have changed. Northern Ireland's programme has expanded and stakeholder expectations have evolved, including growing interest in inland sites and year-round use. In addition, identified bathing waters and other bathing sites increasingly serve a broad range of recreational users from swimmers and paddleboarders to kayakers and walkers, and there is a need to ensure that our policy, monitoring, and management arrangements remain fit for purpose in a changing environmental and societal context.

This review reflects the need to align the core principles of the Bathing Waters Programme with River Basin Management Planning, while also considering emerging international public health guidance. By also recognising that public health is connected to the health of animals and of our environment, we are seeking to take a more joined-up approach to how we develop and deliver policies and programmes, making better use of the 'One Health' approach.

In 2025, twenty-four of our thirty-three identified bathing waters achieved the 'Excellent' standard. These were all coastal sites that achieved either good or moderate ecological status under the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) Regulations (NI) 2017 (the Water Framework Regulations). However, Rea's Wood at Lough Neagh was classified as poor status in 2025 meaning that there will be advice against bathing in the 2026 bathing season. Lough Neagh is also classified as poor ecological status under the Water Framework Regulations and it is highly likely that other inland waters that are failing to achieve good ecological status, in particular those classified as poor or bad ecological status, could present health risks to users.

Scope of the review

This review looks at the existing policy and legislative framework governing bathing waters in Northern Ireland, including how sites are identified, monitored, and managed.

It seeks views on proposals to:

- improve communication with bathing water users,
- consider the length and flexibility of the bathing season,
- adopt a more risk-based monitoring approach,
- refine the criteria for identification,
- strengthen arrangements for candidate sites,
- review the automatic de-identification provision,
- ensure monitoring locations reflect actual use,
- and invite nominations for new sites.

The review also sets out other water quality monitoring carried out by DAERA to meet requirements of the Water Framework Regulations that can be used to inform public health advice.

To inform this consultation, DAERA has worked with the Department of Finance's Innovation & Consultancy Services (ICS) to develop and deliver a collaborative co-design approach for initial stakeholder involvement in this Bathing Waters Policy Review. A one-day workshop took place in November 2025. The primary goal of the workshop was to gather valuable insights from stakeholders on ways to enhance our bathing water programme and generate options. The report on the Co-Design Workshop is published on DAERA's website. This process proved to be invaluable in shaping this consultation document.

2.2 Background and Legal Context

Bathing water quality in Northern Ireland is regulated under the Quality of Bathing Water Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008 (the Bathing Water Regulations), as amended, which transpose Directive 2006/7/EC concerning the management of bathing water quality. The Regulations set out how bathing waters are identified, monitored, classified and managed to protect and inform public health communications and protect the environment and manage pollution incidents.

The bathing season currently runs annually from 1 June to 15 September. During this period, DAERA carries out approximately weekly water quality monitoring at identified bathing waters and publishes the results to keep the public informed.

The Bathing Water Regulations have a requirement to achieve at least “sufficient” classification status at all bathing waters and, to take realistic and proportionate measures to increase the number of bathing waters meeting the ‘good’ or ‘excellent’ classifications. Where a bathing water is classified as ‘poor’, DAERA and the bathing water operator have a duty to issue advice against bathing.

The Bathing Water Regulations are complementary to The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017 which provide a comprehensive framework for the protection, sustainable management, and improvement of rivers, lakes, groundwater and transitional and coastal waters. DAERA is currently consulting on Significant Water Management Issues to inform the development of the fourth cycle River Basin Management Plans. Measures to achieve objectives for bathing water protected areas must be included in River Basin Management Plans.

Currently Identified Bathing Waters

There are currently 33 identified bathing water sites in Northern Ireland - see [Annex A](#) for Map of Identified Bathing Waters. These include both coastal and one inland location.

2.3 Existing Monitoring and Assessment

Bathing Waters Monitoring and Assessment

DAERA monitors each identified bathing water to check whether it meets the required public health standards. The results help to determine water cleanliness and the public is informed by both annual classification and weekly updates.

DAERA establishes and publishes a bathing water profile for every identified bathing water site in Northern Ireland. This document provides key information about the location, including:

- the physical characteristics of the beach or inland site,
- potential sources of pollution,
- historical water quality results, and
- advice for the public about risks or conditions to be aware of.

These bathing water profiles are available on DAERA’s website ([2025 Bathing Water Profiles](#)).

Together, monitoring and the bathing water profile ensure that accurate, up to date information is available to protect public health and support informed choices by bathing water users.

The bathing water monitoring programme must, as a minimum:

- take and test/analyse at least four water samples from every bathing water during every bathing season;
- take the first such water sample for every bathing season shortly before the start of that season; and
- take water samples from every bathing water throughout the bathing season at regular intervals not exceeding one month.

In practice, the current monitoring programme aims to deliver:

- Weekly water testing for E. coli and intestinal enterococci at every bathing water during the bathing season
- Visual inspections for signs of pollution, including litter, algal blooms, and macroalgae
- Public reporting through the [Bathing Water Quality Dashboard](#), which provides colour-coded results and detailed information for each site

Bathing waters are classified into four categories:

- Excellent
- Good
- Sufficient
- Poor

The current classifications for Northern Ireland's bathing waters can be found on DAERA's website [About Bathing Water Quality | 2025 Classifications](#)

The analysis of bathing water samples is undertaken in accordance with the international standards that are required by the Bathing Water Regulations and the laboratory is accredited by UKAS. This ensures that the sample collection and analysis is robust. However, it is resource-intensive and any proposals to extend the bathing water programme must take into consideration the feasibility and affordability of increased sampling and analysis.

Monitoring Blue Green Algae (Cyanobacteria)

In comparison to the detail provided for monitoring E. coli and intestinal enterococci, The Bathing Water Regulations are not prescriptive about the requirements for monitoring blue green algae. It is for DAERA to determine the monitoring frequency that is necessary to enable the implementation of adequate management measures to prevent exposing bathers to health risks.

Consultation on the Bathing Waters Policy Review for Northern Ireland

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While there has regularly been blue-green algae present in Lough Neagh, the algal blooms that were witnessed in 2023 presented a significant risk to public health. This was the same year that monitoring was initiated at Rea's Wood, Lough Neagh, the first freshwater site monitored as part of the bathing water programme in Northern Ireland. However, for each year from 2023-2025, 'advice against bathing' has had to be posted at Rea's Wood from approximately mid-July through to the autumn, due to a substantial presence of blue-green algae.

The occurrence of blue-green algae has resulted in expanded monitoring arrangements at any identified sites likely to be impacted. This has included Rea's Wood and the north coast.

DAERA led the development of a multi-agency Protocol for monitoring and decision-making around blue-green algae presence. This has recently been reviewed by the agencies involved and is based on World Health Organisation guidance.



[Inter-agency Blue-Green Algae Monitoring Protocol January 2026](#)

Other relevant water quality monitoring

DAERA and NIEA monitor 450 river water bodies, 21 lake water bodies and 25 transitional and coastal water bodies to provide an assessment of the surface water status and identify the pressures on each water body. This monitoring is undertaken to meet the requirements of the Water Framework Regulations, and while it does not include microbiological testing, it includes parameters such as Total Phosphorus, Chlorophyll and Cyanobacteria which the World Health Organisation recommends can be used to screen for potential risks to public health.

Nominating a New Bathing Water Site

To support greater transparency and consistency in how new bathing waters are identified in Northern Ireland, we are introducing a formal application process similar to the approach used in England. This includes the provision of a standardised application form, which accompanies this consultation, for proposing new nominated sites.

Applicants will be required to provide key evidence such as patterns of water use, information on local facilities, details of land ownership or permissions, and any relevant environmental considerations. This structured process will help ensure that proposals are assessed fairly, based on clear criteria, and that new designations are supported by robust and transparent information.

Pollution Reporting

Urgent or ongoing water pollution incidents should be reported to the water pollution hotline immediately any time, day or night on **0800 80 70 60**.

Non urgent water pollution issues can be reported to the following email address:

emergency-pollution@daera-ni.gov.uk

Suspected Blue Green Algae can be reported using the Bloomin' Algae App

You can download the app directly on **[Google Play](#)** or on the **[App Store](#)**.



For further
information and
guidance on the
Bloomin' Algae App
scan the QR code



3. Consultation - Policy Proposals

To achieve the aims of the Bathing Waters Policy Review, your views on the following areas are sought through this consultation:

1. How information is communicated to bathing water users.
2. Length of the bathing season.
3. A risk-based approach to bathing water monitoring.
4. Criteria for identification of bathing waters.
5. Monitoring of candidate sites.
6. Removal of automatic de-identification.
7. Ensuring monitored locations match usage.
8. Other stakeholder recommendations.

1: How information is communicated to bathing water users

We want your views on whether the current communication of bathing water quality information is sufficient and accessible for bathing water users.

Current position

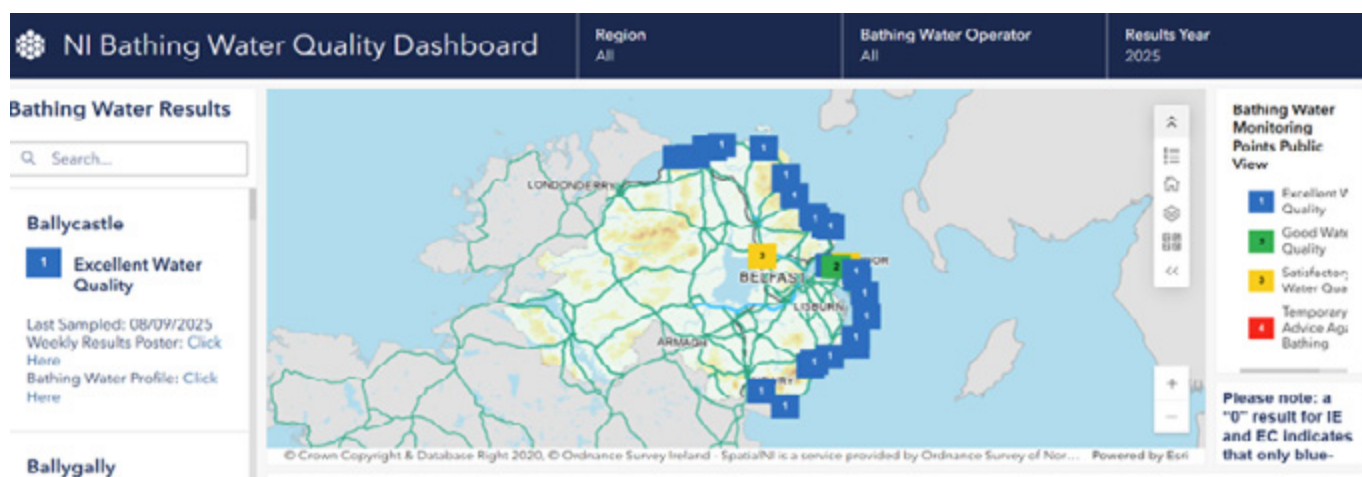
Bathing water operators are required to display public information during the bathing season in an easily accessible location near identified bathing waters. This is typically provided through a bathing water poster displayed on a site information board.

DAERA is also required to disseminate bathing water information actively and promptly using appropriate media and technologies. In July 2025, DAERA launched an interactive Bathing Water Quality Dashboard, bringing together information for all 33 identified bathing waters in Northern Ireland on a single online platform.

The dashboard provides weekly bathing water quality results, with updates issued as soon as possible and typically within 24 hours where a poor result or pollution incident occurs. It includes an interactive map, search and filter functions, and clear presentation of sampling results, with links to detailed Bathing Water Profiles. Temporary Advice Against Bathing notices are published as soon as information is available.

To support transparency, the dashboard includes clear information explaining that results are not provided in real time. Overall, the dashboard represents an important step in improving public access to bathing water information and supporting informed decision-making.

([NI Bathing Water Quality Dashboard](#))



Proposal

DAERA and bathing water operators are exploring options to improve how information is made available. It has been proposed that new signage could include a Quick Response (QR) code linking users directly to online water quality information, consistent with approaches used elsewhere in the UK. Where a bathing water is classified as 'poor', a clear symbol would be displayed advising against bathing, along with information on sources of pollution and actions being taken to address this.

Risk forecasting is currently available for six 'at-risk' bathing waters via the SWIM NI app. Forecasting is precautionary in nature, and results broadly align with advice to avoid bathing for 48 hours after rainfall and at sites not classified as 'Excellent'. DAERA is continuing to improve its risk forecasting and is working with NI Water on a trial using Event and Duration Monitors at two vulnerable bathing water sites.



Consultation Questions:

Q1. Have you used the DAERA Bathing Water Quality Dashboard to make informed decisions about where and when to swim at identified bathing waters?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not aware of dashboard.

Q2. If yes, did you find the dashboard easy to use and understand?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Please include any suggestions for how this could be further improved.

Q3. When do you usually check the water quality information for your preferred identified bathing water site? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ I check the information displayed at the site (e.g., notice boards, signage).
- ☐ I check the DAERA Bathing Water Quality Dashboard before deciding which bathing site to visit.
- ☐ I do not usually check water quality information.
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

Q4. How would you prefer bathing water quality information to be communicated at an identified bathing water? (Select one option)

- ☐ Scan a QR code to obtain up to date information.
- ☐ I would prefer the notice board to be updated regularly with a poster as it is now.
- ☐ I would accept the notice board only being updated when a pollution incident or public health concern is identified, with a QR displayed to obtain the most recent results.
- ☐ Not sure.

Please explain your answer.

Q5. Do you have any suggestions on how risk forecasting could be improved?

Please explain your answer.

2: Length of the bathing season

DAERA is seeking views on whether the current bathing season, which runs from 1 June to 15 September, should be changed. The bathing season determines when bathing water monitoring and associated public health protections are put in place.

Current position

Northern Ireland's current bathing season aligns with that currently operating in Ireland and Scotland. England and Wales have a longer bathing season running from 15 May to 30 September.

There is evidence that bathing activity increasingly takes place outside the current season, particularly in late spring and early autumn. Extending the bathing season could therefore better reflect current patterns of use and provide more comprehensive protection for public health during periods when bathing activity remains high.

Since the completion of the 2022-23 Bathing Water Review in 2024, DAERA has been monitoring outside of the bathing season on a monthly basis. This is to inform the discussion on lengthening the season. To date, the data gathered has been displayed on the web but has not been used for classification purposes. A move to year-round monitoring may have implications for classification as wetter weather conditions and less sunlight may increase bacterial counts.

Proposal

The options being considered for extending the bathing season are:

- No change - keep as 1 June to 15 September.
- All year round.
- 1 April to 31 October.
- 1 November to 31 March (winter season only, ie, potentially at a selection of sites that are vulnerable to blue-green algae blooms during the period 1 April to 31 October).

DAERA is also exploring the potential for a more flexible approach to bathing season length, whereby different sites could have different season durations. This approach would allow bathing seasons to be tailored to local circumstances, taking account of site-specific usage patterns, environmental conditions, and risk factors. The proposal for bathing waters that are only monitored in the winter season is to explore whether waters that have algal blooms in warmer weather could still be safe for bathing during the winter season. We welcome your feedback to the questions below.

Consultation Questions:

Q6. Of the following options please indicate your preference for the bathing water season. (Select one option)

- ☐ No change - keep as 1 June to 15 September.
- ☐ All year round/no set dates for bathing season.
- ☐ 1 April to 31 October.

Q7. Do you think it would be useful to incorporate a winter-season only, i.e. from 1 November to 31 March, at a selection of sites that are vulnerable to blue-green algae blooms in the spring / summer / autumn?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure.

Please explain your answer.

Q8. If you selected, all year round as your response to Question 6, i.e. there will be no set dates for the bathing season. Are you content with DAERA adopting a more flexible, site-specific monitoring timetable based on usage and risk throughout the year?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure.

Please explain your answer.

3: Bathing Water Monitoring

The Department is seeking your views on the potential to move towards a risk-based approach to bathing water monitoring.

Current approach

At present, DAERA monitors all identified bathing waters on twenty occasions during each bathing season. This approach ensures a robust dataset for classification purposes and public health protection.

Proposed approach

Evidence indicates that the current level of sampling may not be necessary to adequately assess water quality at all sites, particularly those that have demonstrated long-term stability and consistently high-quality classification results.

The Department is therefore seeking your views on whether monitoring could move towards a risk-based sampling model, whereby stable, consistently 'Excellent' bathing waters are monitored less frequently, but no less than the minimum legal requirement of one sample per month. While sites that are more variable or higher risk receive greater monitoring focus. Sampling effort would continue to be linked to bathing water classifications and risk profiles, ensuring that public health protection remains central to the approach.

Adopting this proposed risk-based approach could enable more strategic use of resources across both existing and potential new bathing water sites, while maintaining confidence in the monitoring programme and the information provided to the public. It could also support the proposed extension of the bathing season, as a risk-based approach would permit monitoring effort to be adjusted in a way that ensures resources are focused where they are most needed to protect public health, while maintaining appropriate coverage across the bathing water network.

Consultation Questions:

Q9. Do you agree with the proposal set out above to introduce a risk-based sampling approach?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure.

Please explain your answer, including any risks or benefits you wish to highlight.

4: Criteria for identification of Bathing Waters

DAERA is seeking your views on whether the criteria used to determine if a site qualifies for identification as a bathing water should be reviewed, to ensure these remain appropriate and reflect current patterns of recreational water use.

How bathing waters are currently identified

Sites nominated for consideration as bathing waters are assessed through a staged evaluation process. Progression through this process depends on a number of factors, including whether there is a Bathing Water Operator willing to manage the site, whether the location is safe and accessible for monitoring, and whether there is sufficient evidence the site is used by a large number of bathers. The guide value used in Northern Ireland to define a “large” number of bathers at a site is 45 bathers on at least one occasion or 100 site users on at least two occasions.

Where nominated sites meet these criteria, these have been identified under the Bathing Water Regulations. Sites that do not fully meet the criteria, or which are assessed as lower priority at a particular point in time, may be retained for future consideration, allowing the Department to take account of changes in usage, management arrangements, or other relevant factors over time.

Proposed approach

The Department is seeking views on whether the existing criteria and assessment process remain fit for purpose, or whether changes could improve transparency, consistency, or the ability to reflect evolving recreational use of waters, while continuing to ensure effective public health protection.

Currently, sites are formally identified by an amendment to Schedule 1 of The Quality of Bathing Water (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008. An alternative approach used in the rest of the UK is to publish a list of sites to be monitored each year. This would allow for a more flexible approach to identification and de-identification of Northern Ireland bathing waters.

Under this proposal, DAERA would continue to seek applications for new bathing waters, but the identification would only require an updated publication and no longer require legislative amendments to Schedule 1.

DAERA is also considering whether the scope of the Bathing Waters programme should be expanded to reflect the wide variety of people who spend time on or near the water, including paddleboarders, kayakers, and others engaged in recreational activities.

This was discussed specifically at the stakeholder workshop in November 2025, along with the concept of risk and targeting resources towards the highest risk activities.

The World Health Organisation recognises that risks to health will depend on the degree of water contact and these may be classified as follows:

- No contact
- Incidental contact - recreational activity in which only the limbs are regularly wetted and greater contact (including swallowing water) is unusual (e.g. boating, fishing, wading).
- Whole-body contact - recreational activity in which the whole body or the face and trunk are frequently immersed, or the face is frequently wetted by spray, and where it is likely that some water will be swallowed (e.g. swimming, diving, surfing, sailboarding, kiteboarding, whitewater canoeing).

The Bathing Water Directive was introduced to manage public health risks associated with bathing and this has been the focus of the Bathing Waters programme to date. However, there are other recreational activities that take place at existing bathing waters which benefit indirectly from the water quality monitoring and public information that is provided for bathers e.g. our most popular surf beaches on the North Antrim coast are also monitored as bathing waters and all 33 sites have had year-round monitoring since 2024.

DAERA has very limited information on other recreational activities that take place in waters that are not currently identified as bathing waters. DAERA is requesting information to understand the scale of the activities and whether they are taking place in waters where there may be a risk to public health.

Consultation Questions:

Q10. Do you think the current criteria used to determine whether a site qualifies for identification as a bathing water remains appropriate? (Criteria include evidence of high numbers of bathers, site safety and accessibility, and the presence of an operator.)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure.

Please explain the reasons for your answer.

Q11. Should Northern Ireland adopt an approach similar to other UK regions where the list of bathing waters is published annually rather than amended through legislation?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure.

Please explain your answer.

Q12. Should the bathing water programme be extended to include other recreational activities that involve whole-body contact such as diving, surfing, sailboarding, kiteboarding, whitewater canoeing?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure.

Please explain your answer.

Q13. Are you aware of any locations where recreational whole-body water contact activities occur that are not currently identified bathing waters?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure.

If yes, please list these locations and describe the activities taking place.

5: Monitoring of Candidate Sites

DAERA is seeking your views on whether the introduction of a more structured ‘pre-identification’ or ‘candidate site’ stage would be a useful approach for managing the identification of new bathing waters in the future.

How candidate sites have been monitored

Historically, bathing waters were formally identified before routine monitoring was initiated. However, during the 2022–23 Bathing Waters Review, a different approach was taken, whereby a number of sites were monitored in advance of formal identification. This provided additional evidence on water quality and site characteristics helping to inform subsequent decisions on identification.

Proposed approach

Building on this experience, DAERA is interested in views on whether the introduction of a more structured ‘pre-application’ or ‘candidate site’ stage would be a useful approach for managing bathing waters in the future. Under such an approach, selected sites could be monitored for a defined period before any decision is taken on formal identification.

This proposal would enable DAERA to take an evidence-based decision on whether it is feasible and affordable to achieve at least “sufficient” bathing water quality. If DAERA assessed that it would be infeasible or disproportionately expensive, permanent advice against bathing would be provided rather than identifying the site as a bathing water.

It is important to emphasise that, where permanent advice against bathing is applied, the requirements of the Water Framework Regulations would continue to apply to the water body. In such cases, River Basin Management Plans must still include appropriate measures aimed at achieving at least good surface water status in line with statutory objectives.

The potential benefits of this approach could include:

- ensures that public health information is available at popular sites that may meet the criteria for identification as bathing waters;
- avoids identifying sites where water quality presents a persistent or unacceptable risk, ensuring that public health messaging is accurate, proportionate and evidence-based;
- targets formal identification on sites where improvement is feasible and helps ensure that monitoring, regulatory and investment resources are focused where they can deliver the greatest public health and environmental benefit.
- provides evidence to support river basin management planning, including the identification of measures that may be needed to support the achievement of Good or Excellent water quality status at a site.

The Department is seeking views on whether this approach would improve transparency, support evidence-based decision-making and strengthen public health protection, as well as any challenges or risks that should be considered in adopting such a model. Your views are also sought on whether water quality testing should take place at sites that are being considered as candidate bathing waters, prior to any formal identification decision.



Consultation Questions:

Q14. Do you think DAERA should introduce a more structured ‘pre application’ or ‘candidate site’ stage for sites being considered as bathing waters? (This would allow selected sites to be monitored for a defined period before decisions on formal identification.)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure.

Please explain the reasons for your answer.

Q15. Do you agree that monitoring candidate sites in advance of formal identification would improve transparency and public confidence in the decision making process?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure.

6: Removal of automatic de-identification

The Department is seeking your views on whether poor-performing identified bathing water sites should be reviewed on an individual basis rather than being automatically de-identified after five years.

Current Position

The Bathing Water Regulations provide that if an identified bathing water site is assessed as one for which it would be infeasible or disproportionately expensive to achieve at least “sufficient” bathing water status, a decision could be taken before the end of the 5-year period to de-identify the site and issue permanent advice against bathing.

In 2024, Defra and the Welsh Government consulted on reforms to the Bathing Water Regulations 2013 covering England and Wales, including proposals to remove the provision for automatic de-designation of bathing waters following five consecutive years of ‘poor’ classification. The consultation recognised that improvements in bathing water quality often depend on complex environmental factors and infrastructure investment, which may require longer timeframes to deliver measurable outcomes.

As a result of that consultation, the Bathing Water (Amendment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2025 came into force in November 2025. These reforms replaced automatic de-designation with a case-by-case assessment by the relevant regulators, with decisions informed by evidence on whether it is feasible and proportionate to improve water quality at a site. This approach allows continued focus on improvement measures where there is a reasonable prospect of achieving better outcomes, rather than automatically removing identification status after a fixed period of poor classification.

Proposal

The automatic de-identification provision for an identified bathing water site has never been used in Northern Ireland, as no identified bathing water site has been classified as ‘poor’ for five consecutive years. The Department is however considering whether a similar case by case approach as set out above should be adopted in Northern Ireland. This would require the removal of the automatic de-identification following five consecutive years of ‘poor’ classification and potentially replacing this with an option to extend the bathing water identification for a specified period to allow a bathing water to achieve at least “sufficient” classification.

This proposal recognises that the River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) and NI Water investment planning operate in 6-year cycles, with the 3rd cycle RBMP covering 2021-27 and NI Water’s PC21 covering up to March 2028. The Department and NI Water are already preparing for the fourth Cycle RBMP and PC28 respectively.

It would be highly unlikely for the necessary RBMP measures, including wastewater treatment infrastructure improvements, to be identified, developed and delivered for newly identified

bathing waters within the period 2028–2033. In such circumstances, it may be preferable to allow additional time for the development and implementation of improvement measures through the next RBMP and price control cycles, rather than requiring automatic de-identification of the bathing water after five years.

This proposal would introduce greater flexibility and enable better alignment with RBMP and PC cycles. It would allow a bathing water site to remain identified beyond five years where an evidence-based assessment shows that it is feasible and affordable to implement appropriate measures to achieve effective improvements in bathing water quality.

Your views are sought on whether a more flexible, evidence-based decision-making process would better support long-term water quality improvements and public health protection, while maintaining transparency and confidence in the bathing waters programme.

Consultation Questions:

Q16. Do you agree that the automatic de identification of bathing waters after five consecutive years of ‘poor’ classification should be changed?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure.

Q17. Do you agree that poor performing bathing waters should instead be reviewed on a case by case basis rather than automatically de identified after five years?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure.

Q18. Do you think a more flexible, evidence based decision making process would better support long term water quality improvements?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure.

Q19. Do you think this approach would strengthen or maintain public health protection at poor performing sites?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure.

Additional comments.

7: Ensuring monitored locations match actual usage

DAERA is seeking your views on whether the current bathing water monitoring locations accurately reflect where people are swimming at each identified bathing water site.

Current Position

The Department currently monitors 33 identified bathing water sites across Northern Ireland. Details of these sites and their monitoring locations are available at: [see Annex A for Map of Identified Bathing Waters](#).

The Department recognises that the popularity and use of bathing waters can change over time. Changes in access arrangements, the provision of new facilities, local coastal processes, or evolving recreational trends may result in bathers using different parts of a beach, river or shoreline than those originally identified for monitoring.

Proposal

We are therefore inviting respondents to review their local identified bathing water site and consider whether the current monitoring location reflects where most people now enter the water and swim. The information you provide will help ensure that monitoring remains representative, robust, and continues to provide accurate public health advice.

Further information on current monitoring locations can be found at: [2025 Bathing Water Profiles](#).

Consultation Questions:

Q20. Are the current monitoring locations for the 33 identified bathing waters appropriate?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure.

If not, please tell us the swimming location for your identified bathing water site.

8: Other stakeholder recommendations

The Department welcomes any additional stakeholder recommendations that could help to improve the effectiveness, transparency and long term sustainability of the bathing water programme.

You are invited to provide any additional recommendations you believe could support improvements to bathing water management, public health protection, environmental outcomes or user engagement. These may relate to operational practices, communication and information provision, monitoring approaches, partnership working, or any other relevant aspect of the bathing waters programme.

All responses will be considered as part of the overall review, alongside evidence gathered through earlier engagement and policy development work.

Consultation Questions:

Q21. Do you have any other recommendations for improving the bathing water programme that have not been raised in this consultation?

4. How to Respond

Responses to this consultation are invited via Citizen Space at: [Consultation on the Bathing Waters Policy Review for Northern Ireland - NI Direct - Citizen Space](#)

The online survey is quick and simple to complete. Please supplement your response with any relevant supporting information, evidence and/or analysis.

If you are unable to complete the survey online, please contact the team by email: waterpolicy@daera-ni.gov.uk

We would encourage an online response in order to limit any environmental impact

Those affected: This is a public consultation, open to all who may have an interest and who wish to be part of improving the Bathing Waters Policy for Northern Ireland. It is hoped that many will take an interest in this consultation and provide feedback. All views are welcomed by the Department.

Duration: This consultation will run for a **period of 12 weeks**.

It will open at **12 noon on Friday 29 May 2026** and closes at **5pm on Friday 21 August 2026**.

4.1. Publication of Responses

Confidentiality of Consultations

The Department may publish a summary of responses following completion of the consultation process. Your response, and all other responses to the consultation, may be disclosed on request. The Department can refuse to disclose information only in exceptional circumstances. Before you submit your response, please read the paragraphs below on the confidentiality of consultations as these provide guidance on the legal position about any information given by you in response to this consultation. Any confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system in e-mail responses will not be treated as such a request.

Data Protection

Section 8(e) of the Data Protection Act 2018 permits processing of personal data when necessary for an activity that supports or promotes democratic engagement. Information provided by respondents to this consultation exercise will be held and used for the purposes of the administration of this current exercise and subsequently disposed of in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation.

Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives the public a right of access to any information held by a public authority (the Department in this case). This right of access to information includes information provided in response to a consultation. The Department cannot automatically consider as confidential information supplied to it in response to a consultation. However, it does have the responsibility to decide whether any information provided by you in response to this consultation, including information about your identity, should be made public or treated as confidential. This means that information provided by you in response to the consultation is unlikely to be treated as confidential, except in very particular circumstances.

The Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Freedom of Information Act provides that:

- the Department should only accept information from third parties in confidence if it is necessary to obtain that information in connection with the exercise of any of the Department's functions and it would not otherwise be provided;
- the Department should not agree to hold information received from third parties 'in confidence' which is not confidential in nature;
- acceptance by the Department of confidentiality provisions must be for good reasons, capable of being justified to the Information Commissioner.

For further information about confidentiality of responses, please contact the Information Commissioner's Office:

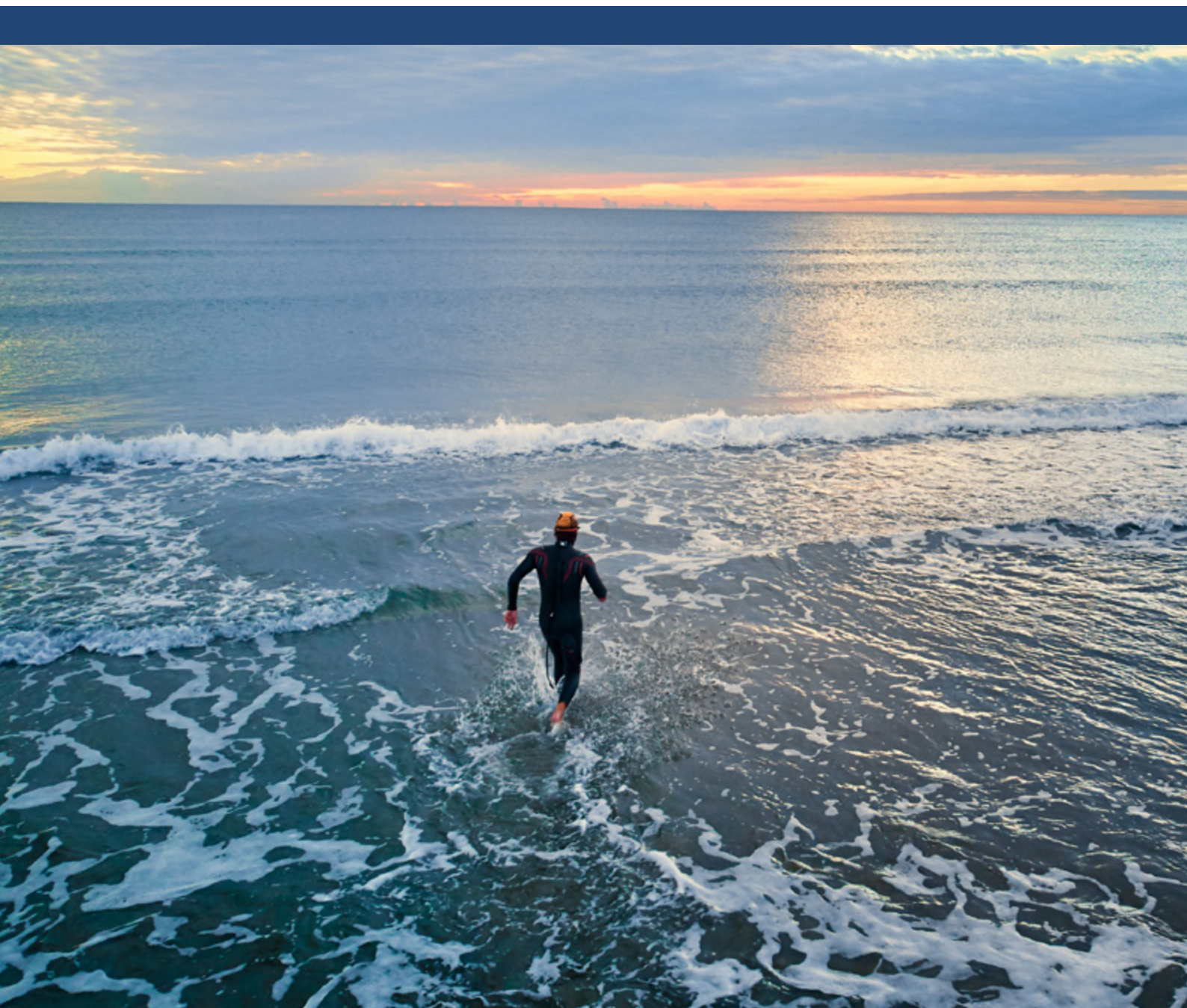
Tel: 0303 123 1113

Email: ni@ico.org.uk Website: <https://ico.org.uk>

5. Next Steps

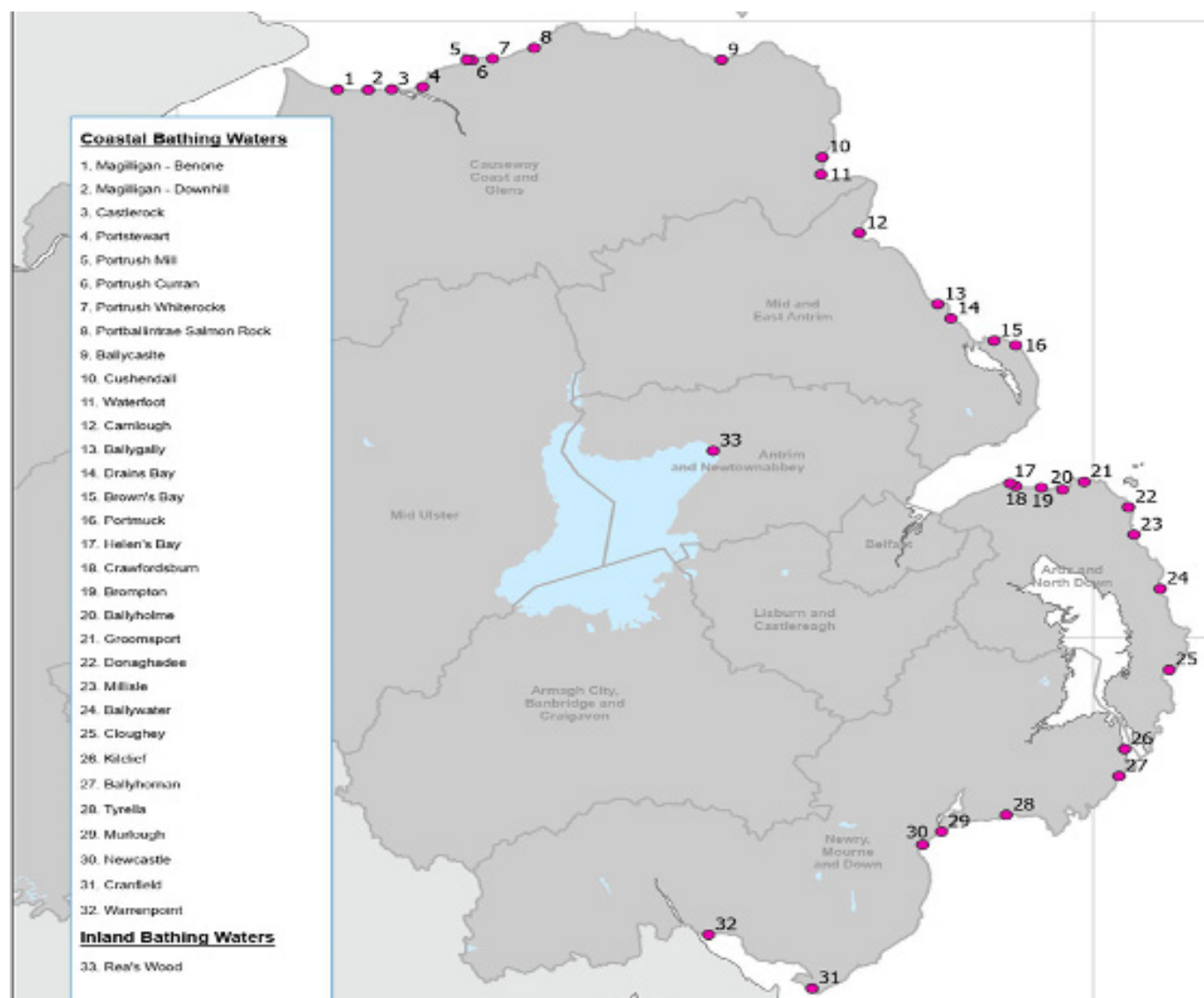
After the consultation closes, all responses will be carefully reviewed and analysed. Your feedback will help shape the Bathing Water Policy Review for Northern Ireland. The Department will use the evidence gathered to update the Review and develop a set of options for the Minister to consider.

We encourage everyone with an interest in bathing waters to participate in this important consultation and share their views. Your contribution is important in helping to inform future policy decisions.



Annex A

Map of Identified Bathing Waters in Northern Ireland Bathing Water Areas | DAERA Open Data



Annex B

Summary of Bathing Water Operator Responsibilities

The responsibilities placed on a Bathing Water Operator by the Quality of Bathing Water Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008 are summarised below:

- Bathing Water Operators must ensure that signage at a bathing water includes the information set out in the guidance for Bathing Water Operators

When Bathing Water Operators become aware of pollution incidents/ abnormal situations/ exceptional weather events that could be considered a risk to human health they should:

- consult DAERA (Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs).
- inform DAERA's pollution hotline on 0800 807 060.
- take appropriate management measures to protect bathers' health.
- provide information to the public.
- where necessary, remove any waste.
- and, if necessary, issue temporary advice against bathing.

Where DAERA (the Department) has issued a notice requiring Bathing Water Operators to comply with the Bathing Water Regulations:

- comply with and implement the measures which are specified in the notice;
- provide the Department with any information it requires in carrying out its functions under the Bathing Water Regulations.
- display the current classification of the bathing water provided by DAERA and where appropriate, any advice against bathing.

Where a bathing water receives a poor classification:

- in the following bathing season, signs must display the appropriate classification and the symbol advising the public against bathing. Information must also be provided about why the site is not recommended for bathing.

Marine and Fisheries Division
 Water Policy Branch
 Clare House
 303 Airport Road West
 Sydenham Intake
 Belfast
 BT3 9ED

Email: waterpolicy@daera-ni.gov.uk

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Bathing Waters Review Workshop Factual Report

18 November 2025

Client: Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
Date: January 2025
Status: Final Report
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Disclaimer

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Document Summary

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1. Introduction

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) commissioned Innovation and Consultancy Services (ICS) to deliver a workshop on the ongoing work on the Bathing Waters Review with key stakeholders committed to in the Environmental Improvement Programme for Northern Ireland. The review also gives an opportunity to explore some of the recommendations of the **Office of Environmental Protection Report of Bathing Water Regulations**.

A one-day workshop was held at Stormont Pavilion, on Tuesday 18 November 2025 and brought together a diverse range of stakeholders, including:

- Department Officials,
- Bathing Water Operators (BWO),
- Non-Bathing Water Operators (NBWO), and
- Open water users including sports and swimming groups.

The workshop focussed on gathering views from attendees on the following areas:

1. Length of the bathing season,
2. Risk-based approach (RBA) to sampling,
3. Criteria for identifying bathing waters and the definition of bathers,
4. The use of candidate sites, and
5. Identifying any other recommendations which had not been included in the remit of the exercises previously taken forward on the day.

Findings from each of the exercises will be discussed in the next section.

A full list of attendee organisations can be found in **Appendix I**.

This report provides a factual account of the 1-day workshop and summarises all the key information gained.

Table 1: Response in order of popularity to the question what bathing waters mean to you?

Ref	Single word response	Number of responses
1	Swimming	8
2	Clean	6
3	Summer	6
4	Fun	4
5	Health	4
6	Safe	4
7	Leisure	4
8	Swim	3
9	Accessible	2
10	Beaches	2
11	Cold	2
12	Exercise	2
13	Public	2
14	Recreation	2
15	Sport	2

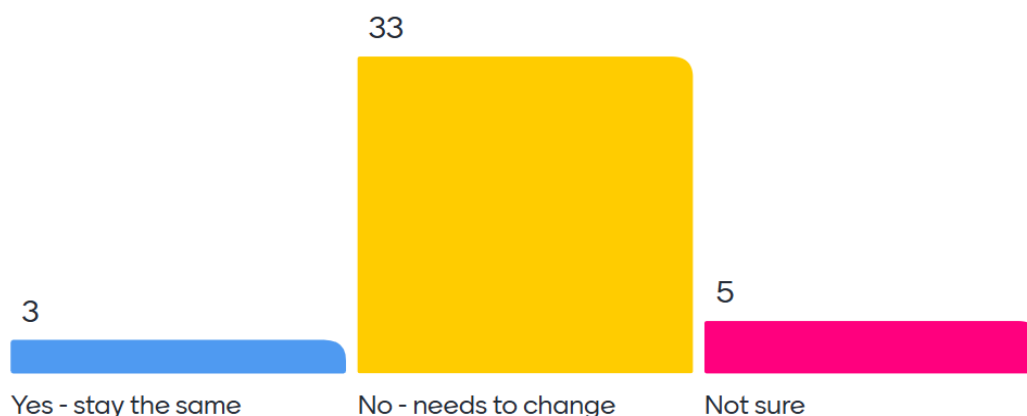
2.2 Exercise 1: Length of Bathing Waters Season

Following a short introduction from a DAERA official, who provided information on the current length of the bathing water season, attendees were asked to respond to the following questions via the online tool:

‘The bathing season is 01 June to 15 September. In your opinion, should the season stay the same, change or are you not sure?’

There was a total of 41 responses. **Figure 2** shows the majority of attendees selected that there was a need for the season to change.

Figure 2: In your opinion, should the bathing season stay the same, change or are you not sure?

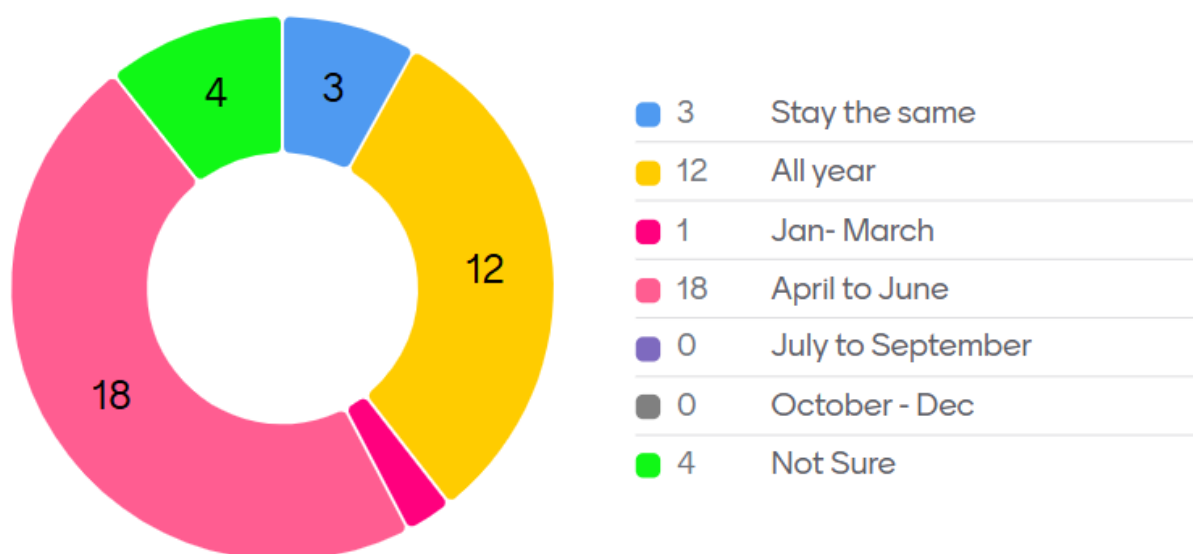


The next question posed was:

‘When should the bathing season open?’

There were a total of 38 responses for this answer. **Figure 3** shows that the most popular option was April to June, followed by all year round.

Figure 3: When should the bathing season open?

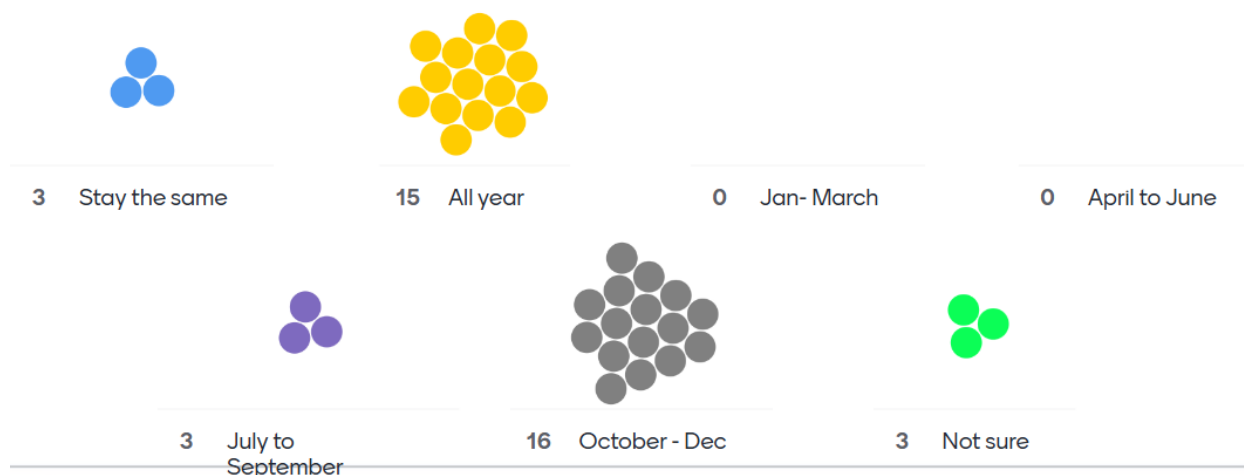


The final question posed for this session was:

When should the bathing season close?’

There was a total of 40 responses for this question, with **Figure 4** showing the most popular answer to be October to December, followed by all year round.

Figure 4: When should the bathing season close?



Attendees were then asked to discuss and contribute their own views on the bathing season opening and closing dates. Individual views were captured on templates so to ensure all views were represented.

Attendees were seated in mixed groups, representing different organisations, so to allow for a well-balanced exchange of feedback. and a number of key recurring themes for each question were discussed.

The most popular responses from both Mentimeter and desktop feedback were for a change to either Easter/April to October or to all year round for the length of the bathing season. There were three rationales provided for **not sure** and two rationales for the bathing season to **stay the same**. **Table 2** below shows the list of options and the rationale provided for each option.

Table 2: Options and associated rationale for selection of each option on the length of the bathing season

Option	Frequency of Mention	Rationale
All Year Round (AYR)	13	- There is all year-round swimming (Health & Wellbeing) - AYR – but better comms on offers - Other users – year-round too - Encouraging year round and therefore water quality improvements driver - Links to risk and long-term strategic change. Not everywhere all the time - With caveats. Resource implications for BWO - Tailor testing to usage and risk - Not sharing data in the right way - Do targeted sites to better managed resources. - Folks could travel. - Clear, not confusing - People use beach/walk year-round anyway.
April/Easter–October	7	Water usage + temperature

Option	Frequency of Mention	Rationale
		• Caravan season • Add a month either side • Most amount of users • Easter holidays. Spreading period 01 February to 15 October • More tourism at these times • NIW costs better managed • Skiers etc end up in water, break boarding. • All activity providers operating doesn't need to be every bathing site.
AYR/Not Sure	1	• Behalf of users – general consensus all year. Lack of information/understanding of AYR.
April to September	2	• Historical use. Triathlon training. Seasonal staff, caravan opening. • Precedent management of parks number using for recreation. • Resource students become available to provide additional staff.
Stay the Same	3	• Resourcing. Need more resources to monitor sites. • Impacts on budgets – NIW • Assets designed to meet 3 spills per bathing season
March to November	1	• Taking account of people who have the correct gear for colder temperatures – paddle boarders etc.
Not sure	4	• More evidence needed • Evidence based – data required. Any benefits to extending? • Don't know enough about it. • Don't know definition of bathing • Criteria for setting season in first place – risks and parameters.
Other	2	• Extend season to shoulder season – St Patricks to Halloween. • Potential all year testing of selective sites – all population within 30 minutes of a tested site. • More nuanced than mentimeter questions of open and closed. Compromises and prioritised sites for all year.
April/June to October/December	1	• Balance with resources and investment • Fewer users in colder months.

2.3 Exercise 2: Risk-based approach (RBA) to monitoring bathing water sampling

Following an introduction on the current process for monitoring bathing water sampling, each table was asked to discuss their views on possible changes to the current sampling and monitoring routine and to suggest the impact that this could have on public messaging.

Table 3 provides the feedback gathered for sampling, monitoring and combined insights for the impact and messaging for both sampling and monitoring. It is important to acknowledge that all groups did not provide insights on monitoring and sampling approaches.

Table 3: Feedback on sampling, monitoring and impact on messaging from Exercise 2

Content	Responses
Sampling	• Could be reduced gradually at consistent sites • Could be more beneficial to help extend season/site • Public may not want site reduced - historic legacy • Viable options – targeted with some more, some less and historic data utilised • Yes – viable option in sites with excellent quality • Focus on the underperforming sites • Risk-Based Approach • Less sampling is a viable option • Less sampling could be viable. RBA is viable • Use science advice • Rapid tests could be used by public to supplement • Risk-based approach e.g. higher risk, more samples • Need better picture/data of when bathers are e.g. Newcastle bathing is not at the sample point • Rea's wood – poor with limit re-sampling no need to sample if visible BGA? • Potentially more effective resource through technical/risk-based sampling
Monitoring	• Look at external factors: ◦ Temp users / historic data ◦ Land use / infrastructure – Waste Water Treatment (WWT) / Combined Sewage Overflow (CSO) /Event Duration Monitors (EDM) • Linking with River Basin management • Possible different testing at different times of the year/historic data adopts • Citizen Science approach to help stretch resources • Blue Green (BG) Algae • Frequency should increase out of season • Sewage outfall monitoring can be used too • Swim NI app is also a great way to add info to public domain • Less monitoring for risk-based sampling • Impact on statistical data for short-term and long-term trends
Impact and Messaging	• Be communicated positively • Testing is still appropriate • Benefit to user highlighted • Pre-education - more info explaining why it's happening this way • Continual Comms – the right message, the right way and social media

Content	Responses
	• Community engagement would be key – understanding • Engage with community prior to implementation • Good comms strategy • Community engagement – stretch resources • Source to sea Messaging • Assessment of the users at each site • Standardised messaging – delivery • Additional costs of BG Algae • Educational risks – change in seasons, visibility of algae and no algae present but toxins present • Need to educate the public if considering RBA • Clear messages • Don't flood people with too much info • Use consultation to find out what info public want • Activity providers need to assess water quality • How do we explain clearly to the public reason for less sampling • Clear communication requirements – priority • Water Quality (WQ) importance needs to be seen as DAERA, Government • Lack/reduced data in risk-based sampling may affect messaging/evidence to support policy development and comms. • Bathing Water dashboard expands information and publicises link to central messaging hub • Multi-media approach to target more • Reactive/proactive prep for monitoring comms

Table 3 summarises the key findings from the group discussions, highlighting a strong emphasis on incorporating historical data into both sampling and monitoring decisions. The groups consistently recognised the importance of using past trends and site-specific information to inform future approaches.

Resource efficiency emerged as a shared priority, with innovative solutions such as citizen science, rapid testing, and seasonal flexibility identified as practical ways to optimise capacity without compromising standards.

2.4 Exercise 3: Part A - What should the criteria be for the identification of bathing water?

A DAERA official shared the Department's current criteria used for identifying bathing waters. The groups were asked to consider what could stay the same and why; and then what potentially could be different and why. Each group was also given the opportunity to discuss and collect their thoughts on post it notes. There was evidence collected in response to why and what needs to be **different**. Feedback is captured in **Table 4**.

Table 4: Responses to what needs to be different for the identification of bathing waters

Content	Responses
Data	• Regular event data – e.g. dippers group • Collective application data • Cumulative numbers rather than one off • Review of users in existing bathing waters – for baseline numbers for reference • No number vs frequency e.g. uses at a site • Can we factor in historical use? i.e. places that were once used that had poor water quality
Evidence	• How are sites numbers sampled – members of the public could submit photos of usage. – usage evidence • Photographic support • Usage and evidence swim group information • On site surveys via Quick Response (QR) code
Access	• Flexibility on number of users to allow checking in other things (in consultation with BWO) • User access – should be cleared • What facilities or public access is available – BWO management
Timing	• Counting should be at high tide • Sampling should be on club days/weekends • Survey outside office hours – e.g. 6am to 6pm
Users	• Better definition of users • Site users' definition extended • Usage assessment change – ○ Regular users ○ Seasonal users (annual average)
Site Specific	• Appropriateness of sites ahead of safety • Site right next to existing sites could be ruled out • Can we consider site use for amateur quality assurance ever “access points” and facilities
Risk	• Risk assessment to impact assessment including environmental impact from increased use or intrusion for residents. • BWO/private companies public health risks

2.5 Exercise 3: Part B - views on the definition of bathers?

The second part of the exercise was to collect views on who the Regulations should apply to and what should stay the same and what should be different. In advance of this exercise commencing a DAERA official shared with the group the current definition of ‘Bathers’ as **‘a person swimming or spending time in the water’**. They then went on to provide a context for the current definition advising that the probability of ingestion of water is greater for whole-body contact activities and therefore are categorised as high risk. Inhalation can be important where there is a significant

amount of spray, such as in waterskiing and jet-skiing. Activities such as sailing, fishing, or wading usually involve incidental water contact and minimal water ingestion and are deemed low risk. The feedback is shown in **Figure 5**. There were no insights provided for the definition to stay the same.

Figure 5: Definition of bathers' feedback

- A person swimming or spending time **in** or **on** the water with a higher likelihood of water contact
- Change and reclassify 'bathers' to '**recreational users**' to/and include the entirety of users: from swimmers to beach visitors to capture all uses
- Consider commercial activity providers – operating at non-bathing water sites
- To include paddle boards, jet skis (high) canoe and kayaking (high)
- **Water activity definition** – people who **immersed** in water fell into water and spray inhalation
- Broader definition of bathers and water activities
- Highly used sites should be monitored if water recreation is high either on or in water
- Separate kayakers from paddle boarders due to ingestion risk
- Triage risk based on **percentage time spent** with face/head in water
- Current Blue Green Algae (BGA) and Public Health Agency (PHA) guidance review or risk/activity should line up with Bathing Water (BW) users/risk update
- Should include high and medium risk at least
- Extend to include high risk



2.6 Exercise 4: What approach should be taken to the use of candidate sites to test water quality?

A DAERA official provided an overview of the previous approach of using candidate sites to test water quality of potential future bathing sites before making them official. Each table was asked to consider the following and provide insights as a group: –

- The benefits of the candidate site approach
- The drawbacks of the candidate site approach
- What should the criteria for approach to candidate sites be?

The responses, captured in **Table 5** below, showed a balance between the potential advantages of increased flexibility and awareness, and the challenges associated with managing expectations,

resource implications, and long-term planning. The criteria proposed aim to ensure a risk-based, evidence-led approach that supports proactive water quality management while considering environmental and biodiversity factors.

Table 5: Responses to the approach that should be taken to the use of candidate sites to test water quality

Content	Responses
Benefits	• Raises awareness of more sites of water quality status • Gives clear picture for opportunity to improve • Identify issues Long-term trends of usage – opportunity to improve water quality, independent evidence, social benefits • Provides an option if there is no executive again • Benefit – avoids black and white cut off • Benefit – more flexibility, no budget and shorter commitments • Benefit – enable assessment prior to full identification (ID) as designated bathing water • Benefit – enables commitment and build up testing, knowledge & less time commitment • Good – cost effective – better idea of site quality – raising awareness
Neutral	• Difference seems to be in name – ‘candidate’ or ‘designated’ but all requirements followed
Drawbacks	• Disadvantage – managing expectations – resource implications • What happens after if poor quality, if dropped as BW could be incorporated into river basin management plan • Too polluted to protect! We need to stop polluting sites before texting - which then shows it's too polluted to be able to protect – and therefore stop polluting.....the system is wrong • Disbenefit – some expectations may not be fulfilled • Difficult to drop a site once identified as candidate • Uncertainty for financial planning • What is the timescale for Northern Ireland Water (NIW) to increase standards if candidate site
Criteria for approach to candidate sites – anything different?	• General Criteria Risk-based approach to sampling – and review sample site annually • Better picture of water quality – proactive • Recommend 4 years as a candidate site then reviewed before designation or not • Include environmental & biodiversity into criteria standards • Based on 4-year period • Could be reduced for sampling ○ Good 2 years ○ Poor 4 years some sites are sufficient • Mainly considering – coast – needs to consider rivers/loughs – blue flag development • Does bathing water operator notify do not bathe after 3 years of failing? • Change criteria to the water quality and NOT having to pass, so it can become a bathing water to get adequate protection • Once a site reaches candidate status it will be very difficult for the public to accept removal from the list

Content	Responses
	• Very difficult to create as one size fits all procedure for assessing candidate sites that regularly fail.

Overall, the feedback highlighted strong support for a structured, phased approach to candidate site designation, underpinned by transparent criteria and clear communication. While the benefits of raising awareness and enabling gradual commitment were widely recognised, concerns around resource demands, financial uncertainty, and public expectations underscore the need for robust governance and engagement strategies.

2.7 Exercise 5: Consider alternative recommendations which have not been included in the remit of the exercises

For the final exercise, attendees were asked to provide any other recommendations that they felt should be considered as part of a new bathing waters policy, that had not been covered throughout the earlier exercises using Mentimeter. **Table 6** below sets out the recommendations and associated themes. Attendees provided 40 comments with each stakeholder having the opportunity to provide multiple answers. These comments were grouped into themes. Recommendations reflected a strong desire for clearer definitions, improved transparency, and sustainable resource allocation. They also emphasised the importance of leveraging technology, expanding monitoring capabilities, and fostering collaboration with communities to enhance water quality management.

Table 6: Recommendations reported by theme

Category	Recommendations made including questions raised
Criteria and Standards	• Should we consider a wider criterion to consider benefits to the locality? For example, the blue flag beach criteria • Clearer criteria/definitions • Broader definitions throughout to remove ambiguity or "wriggle room" • A limit on how many sites can be a bathing water and a limit on candidate sites to use the resources in a sustainable way
Monitoring and Data	• Consider new Event Duration Monitors (EDM) data sharing in conjunction with increased testing? • Greater incorporation of Event Duration Monitoring across Northern Ireland to increase available data for use with the public. This will require long-term investment to ensure adequate monitoring • Live sewage dashboard similar to the model in England where event duration monitors are broadcast live or events recorded within last 48 hrs. Allows users to make decision https://www.sewagemap.co.uk/ • Can we also consider expanding what we test for? For example, harmful chemicals present in water bodies. • Extend modelling • Public education around blue spaces

Category	Recommendations made including questions raised
	• In situ monitoring and live and accessible data • Surrogate, innovative quick tests to augment risk-based sampling • Investigate new ways of testing
Community Engagement and Citizen Science	• Grow the interaction between The Bathing Water team and the community of bathers • Citizen science projects - using communities to test water quality and creating a checklist communities can follow to submit their bathing waters as potential candidate sites • Importance of the use of citizen science projects to support monitoring programmes and empowering society to get more involved and have ownership. DAERA would need to outline requirements for data • Connecting with and empowering local water users / community to feel involved. Perhaps using them as a resource for sampling / monitoring. • Establishment of a proactive working group including reps from both inland and coastal water areas
Communication and Education	• Better communication to and education of the public • Effectiveness and impact tourism industry etc • Communication - contact with water sports bodies, fishing groups • More stakeholder engagement with the implementation process • Better education to the public to increase effectiveness • Informing policy on nutrient policy • Cohesive and effective communication for all of this is vital considering all the different users and their requirements. Public perception needs to change! • Better education around the Bathing Water programme • Feedback from public • Need for high level of clarity re what the alerts do and don't to temper people's expectations • Better communication to the public that open water carries inherent risk compared to managed waters like a pool • How to educate the public and get the information to the public • Better and faster communication to users and more focus on education
Policy and Governance	• Feedback and audit • Consideration on how spills from wastewater assets will be regulated, in event of extension to bathing season. Currently assets are designed and upgraded with storage to meet 3 spills/ bathing season • Make other user groups aware of the different criteria in testing for coastal waters and inland waters • Better beaches forum, what is it and does it lead to an exclusion of freshwater locations? • Are we looking at best practice elsewhere?
Other	• No further recommendations • N/A • Effect and impact on tourism industry. Social and economic benefit

Collectively, these recommendations highlight the need for a holistic approach that integrates robust criteria, advanced monitoring systems, and proactive engagement strategies. Clear and

consistent communication, coupled with education initiatives, will be essential to manage expectations and build public confidence.

2.8 Closing Exercise

A closing Mentimeter exercise repeated the question asked at the start of the workshop (Figure 1) asking:

‘Having considered and contributed to the workshop today please describe in single words what bathing waters means to you?’

Figure 6: Word Cloud on the results of the answer from describe in single words what bathing waters mean to you



The words that are larger, in **Figure 6**, are common words where more than one person has provided an answer. **Table 7** provides the top five answers in order of most common responses for the first exercise and compares to the last exercise. All other single word responses (not listed in Table 7) returned a single response. The word cloud at the end provided a more diverse response and illustrates that attendees are considering the complexities and the health and well-being of bathing waters.

Table 7: Response in order of popularity to the question of what bathing waters mean to you after the workshop

Ref	Single word response at start	Number of responses at start	Single word response at end	Number of responses at end
1	Swimming	8	Complex	5
2	Clean	6	Fun	5
3	Summer	6	Health	3
4	Fun	4	Escape	2
5	Health	4	Freedom	2

At the **start of the workshop**, responses were dominated by practical and activity-related terms such as *swimming* (8 mentions), *clean* (6), and *summer* (6). These suggest an initial focus on the physical experience and environmental quality.

However, at the **end of the workshop**, responses shifted towards more abstract and experiential concepts like *complex* (5), *fun* (5), and *health* (3). This indicates a move from tangible attributes to broader lifestyle and wellbeing considerations.

The presence of ***fun*** in both lists (start and end) shows consistency in valuing enjoyment, while terms like *escape* and *freedom* emerging later suggest growing emphasis on emotional and psychological benefits.

3. Conclusion and Next Steps

3.1 Conclusion

The Bathing Waters Review workshop successfully brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, including DAERA officials, bathing water operators, water sports representatives, and other water users.

The collaborative discussions provided valuable insights into key issues such as the length of the bathing season, risk-based monitoring approaches, criteria for identifying bathing waters, and the role of candidate sites.

The engagement highlighted strong interest in improving water quality management, enhancing communication with the public and exploring innovative approaches such as citizen science and event duration monitoring. It also reinforced the importance of aligning resources and governance structures to deliver sustainable outcomes.

There are a considerable number of insights provided that will enable DAERA to progress the Bathing Waters Review towards consultation in 2026.

3.2 Next Steps

This report will be provided to DAERA for consideration. It provides a factual account of the 1-day workshop and summarises all the key information gained from the work of the group.

Appendix I: List of Attendee Organisations

1. Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council
2. Ards and North Down Borough Council
3. Brompton Belles and Beaus Dippers
4. Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
5. Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
6. Department of Health
7. Department for Infrastructure
8. Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
9. Helen's Baywatch
10. Keeping Northern Ireland Beautiful
11. Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council
12. Mid and East Antrim Borough Council
13. Mid Ulster District Council
14. NI Marine task force
15. NI Water
16. National Coarse Fishing Federation of Ireland
17. National Trust
18. Newry Mourne and Down District Council
19. Outscape
20. Paddle NI
21. Public Health Agency
22. Surfers Against Sewage
23. Swim Ulster
24. Tourism NI
25. Triathlon Ireland
26. Ulster Angling Federation

Appendix II: List of abbreviations, tables and figures

List of abbreviations

Abbreviation	In Full
AYR	All Year Round
BG	Blue Green (Algae)
BGA	Blue Green (Algae)
BW	Bathing Waters
BWO	Bathing Water Operators
CSO	Combined Sewer Overflow
DAERA	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
DoF	Department of Finance
EDM	Event Duration Monitor
E.g.	For Example
ICS	Innovation and Consultancy Services
ID	Identification
NBWO	Non-bathing water operators
NI	Northern Ireland
NIW	Northern Ireland Water
PHA	Public Health Agency
QR	Quick Response
RBA	Risk Based Approach
St	Saint
WQ	Water Quality
WWT	Waste Water Treatment

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Appendix III: Workshop Evidence

Picture of Minister Muir opening workshop



Group Working



Group discussion feedback on the bathing water season from Exercise 1

Exercise 1: Bathing Water Season Feedback All year round: There is all year round swimming (Health/Wellness) but better control on 40ms AYR: One user - year round too Encourage water management: water management is a long-term strategic change + link to risk. Risk management of the water with coastal, because information for Tailor history to usage + risk	Exercise 2: Bathing Water Season Feedback April - October: Water usage + temperature (Seasonal change) April - October: All year round: Water usage + temperature (Seasonal change) March - June: Water usage + temperature (Seasonal change) April - October: Water usage + temperature (Seasonal change) April - October: Water usage + temperature (Seasonal change)	Exercise 3: Bathing Water Season Feedback April - October: Water usage + temperature (Seasonal change) April - October: Water usage + temperature (Seasonal change) April - October: Water usage + temperature (Seasonal change) April - October: Water usage + temperature (Seasonal change) April - October: Water usage + temperature (Seasonal change)
Exercise 4: Bathing Water Season Feedback Not Sure: March - Oct 2018: Water usage + temperature (Seasonal change) Open Water: All year round: Water usage + temperature (Seasonal change) Easter - end of Oct: Water usage + temperature (Seasonal change) Easter - end of Sept: Water usage + temperature (Seasonal change) Stay the same: Water usage + temperature (Seasonal change) Apr - Oct: Water usage + temperature (Seasonal change)	Exercise 5: Bathing Water Season Feedback Open Apr year (1111): Water usage + temperature (Seasonal change) April - October: Water usage + temperature (Seasonal change) April - October: Water usage + temperature (Seasonal change) April - October: Water usage + temperature (Seasonal change) April - October: Water usage + temperature (Seasonal change)	Exercise 6: Bathing Water Season Feedback April - October: Water usage + temperature (Seasonal change) April - October: Water usage + temperature (Seasonal change) April - October: Water usage + temperature (Seasonal change) April - October: Water usage + temperature (Seasonal change) April - October: Water usage + temperature (Seasonal change)

Group discussion feedback on sampling, monitoring and impact on messaging from Exercise 2

Exercise 1: Sampling, Monitoring and Impact on Messaging Feedback SAMPLING Could be reduced frequency of sampling sites Could be more frequent to help reduce Could be more frequent to help reduce Could be more frequent to help reduce	Exercise 2: Sampling, Monitoring and Impact on Messaging Feedback MONITORING Could be reduced frequency of sampling sites Could be more frequent to help reduce Could be more frequent to help reduce Could be more frequent to help reduce	Exercise 3: Sampling, Monitoring and Impact on Messaging Feedback SAMPLING Could be reduced frequency of sampling sites Could be more frequent to help reduce Could be more frequent to help reduce Could be more frequent to help reduce	Exercise 4: Sampling, Monitoring and Impact on Messaging Feedback MONITORING Could be reduced frequency of sampling sites Could be more frequent to help reduce Could be more frequent to help reduce Could be more frequent to help reduce
Exercise 5: Sampling, Monitoring and Impact on Messaging Feedback SAMPLING Could be reduced frequency of sampling sites Could be more frequent to help reduce Could be more frequent to help reduce Could be more frequent to help reduce	Exercise 6: Sampling, Monitoring and Impact on Messaging Feedback MONITORING Could be reduced frequency of sampling sites Could be more frequent to help reduce Could be more frequent to help reduce Could be more frequent to help reduce	Exercise 7: Sampling, Monitoring and Impact on Messaging Feedback SAMPLING Could be reduced frequency of sampling sites Could be more frequent to help reduce Could be more frequent to help reduce Could be more frequent to help reduce	Exercise 8: Sampling, Monitoring and Impact on Messaging Feedback MONITORING Could be reduced frequency of sampling sites Could be more frequent to help reduce Could be more frequent to help reduce Could be more frequent to help reduce

CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFICATION OF BATHING LOCATIONS		CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFICATION OF BATHING LOCATIONS	
SAME (WHY)	DIFFERENT (WHY + WHY)	SAME (WHY)	DIFFERENT (WHY + WHY)
Stay Same covers risks Risk of sites being lost to the change. Agree with site Safety	Site users definition extends Usage Access should be clear - on site surveys via Q&A cards - Photographic support - Regular event data e.g. after - Collective App data - Surveys outside office hours e.g. 6am and after 6 pm - Cumulative numbers rather than 1-off Usage + Evidence swim group info Review of users in existing bathing waters - for both time periods for reference Flexibility on no OP users to allow. Acknowledge in other plans (in consultation with WBO) How are sites sampled? - members of the public could submit photos of usage NO 'business' should involve all the water users 'in or on the water' Good / Private Companies Public health risk?	Which location or public access is available B&O Managed Costing should be at high tide Better det of a user Appreciation of SITE AREA'S OF SAFETY No number of frequency of use at a site.	Sites right next to existing sites could be ruled out. Sampling should be done on club days / weekends Risk Assessment a hazard? Assessment not necessary before we introduce use of product in the assessment? Detail can be considered site use for water quality monitoring over 'access points' provided. Can we factor in historic use? i.e. places that were once used but have poor water quality

CANDIDATE SITES

- BENEFITS**
 - Attracts Awareness on these areas of water quality issues
 - Conveys clear picture & opportunity to improve
 - Shows avoids black + white cut off
 - Don't benefit - some expectations may not be fulfilled
 - Benefits more flexibility re budgets & shorter commitment
 - Benefit - Enable account prior to full bid as designer backing water
 - Benefit - enables commitment and build up trust, knowledge & build this commitment
 - Good - Cost effective - better idea of site quality - passes ownership
 - Neutral - differentiate "sites" to see if the owner's commitment and understanding built all the way through
- DRAWBACKS / CHALLENGES**
 - Disadvantages - Managing Expectations - Clearance implications
 - Difficult to drop a site once identified as candidate
 - Uncertainty for financial planning - what - DISADVANTAGE - timecourse for NRW & release standards if candidate site
 - When happens after a poor quality - could be compromised management plan
- CRITERIA FOR APPROACH TO CANDIDATE SITES (ANALYSIS OVERVIEW)**
 - General Criteria
 - Risk based approach to Sampling & Analysis, sample size normally
 - Lower priority of water quality - Processes
 - Recommend to "test" as a candidate. Site then removed before designation or not.
 - Could be reduced for sampling
 - Ground Eings
 - Rpwr - in water suit
 - brand on to your record
 - Include Environmental Responsibility into Criteria & Standards
 - Heavy Contaminating - Cost - need to Consider them / Length - taking closer
 - Does drilling water operator really also risk pollution after 3 years of drilling
 - More difficult to create an overview. FID all problematic for winning a candidate (but client regularly fail).



Clare House,
303 Airport Road West,
Belfast, BT3 9ED

Email: ics@finance-ni.gov.uk

Consultation on the Bathing Waters Policy Review for Northern Ireland 21 August 2026

About you

1. What is your name?

Name

2. What is your e-mail address? (Please complete if you wish to receive a copy of your response)

E-mail

3. Are the views and opinions in your response personal or expressed on behalf of an organisation?

(Required)

Personal ☐

Organisation ☒

If the views and opinions expressed are on behalf of an organisation, please provide the name of the organisation below.

Ards and North Down Borough Council

City Hall

Bangor

BT20 4BT

There is a limit of 200 characters

4. Please indicate if you are happy for your response to be published.

(Required)

Yes ☒

No ☐

5. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please indicate if you are content for the name of the organisation to be associated with your response.

(Required)

Yes ☒

No ☐

Not applicable ☐

Consultation – Policy Proposals

To achieve the aims of the Bathing Waters Policy Review, your views on the following areas are sought through this consultation:

1. How information is communicated to bathing water users
2. Length of the bathing season
3. A risk-based approach to bathing water monitoring
4. Criteria for identification of bathing waters
5. Monitoring of candidate sites
6. Removal of automatic de-identification
7. Ensuring monitored locations match usage
8. Other stakeholder recommendations

1: How information is communicated to bathing water users

We want your views on whether the current communication of bathing water quality information is sufficient and accessible for bathing water users.

Current position

Bathing water operators are required to display public information during the bathing season in an easily accessible location near identified bathing waters. This is typically provided through a bathing water poster displayed on a site information board.

DAERA is also required to disseminate bathing water information actively and promptly using appropriate media and technologies. In July 2025, DAERA launched an interactive Bathing Water Quality Dashboard, bringing together information for all 33 identified bathing waters in Northern Ireland on a single online platform.

The dashboard provides weekly bathing water quality results, with updates issued as soon as possible and typically within 24 hours where a poor result or pollution incident occurs. It includes an interactive map, search and filter functions, and clear presentation of sampling results, with links to detailed Bathing Water Profiles. Temporary Advice Against Bathing notices are published as soon as information is available.

To support transparency, the dashboard includes clear information explaining that results are not provided in real time. Overall, the dashboard represents an important step in improving public access to bathing water information and supporting informed decision-making. ([NI Bathing Water Quality Dashboard](#))

Proposal

DAERA and bathing water operators are exploring options to improve how information is made available. It has been proposed that new signage could include a Quick Response (QR) code linking users directly to online water quality information, consistent with approaches used elsewhere in the UK. Where a bathing water is classified as 'poor', a clear symbol would be displayed advising against bathing, along with information on sources of pollution and actions being taken to address this.

Risk forecasting is currently available for six 'at-risk' bathing waters via the SWIM NI app. Forecasting is precautionary in nature, and results broadly align with advice to avoid bathing for 48 hours after rainfall and at sites not classified as 'Excellent'. DAERA is

continuing to improve its risk forecasting and is working with NI Water on a trial using Event and Duration Monitors at two vulnerable bathing water sites.

Q1. Have you used the DAERA Bathing Water Quality Dashboard to make informed decisions about where and when to swim at identified bathing waters?

(Required)

Yes ☒

No ☐

Not aware of dashboard ☐

Q2. If yes, did you find the dashboard easy to use and understand? Please include any suggestions for how this could be further improved

Yes ☒

No ☐

There is a limit of 200 characters

Q3. When do you usually check the water quality information for your preferred identified bathing water site? (Select all that apply)

(Required)

☐ Option 1 I check the information displayed at the site (e.g., notice boards, signage).

☐ Option 2 I check the DAERA Bathing Water Quality Dashboard before deciding which bathing site to visit.

☐ Option 3 I do not usually check water quality information.

☒ Option 4 Other

If "Other", please specify

We are the local authority and check water quality information as part of our normal business in addition to maintaining the signage at bathing sites.

Q4. How would you prefer bathing water quality information to be communicated at an identified bathing water? (Select one option)

(Required)

- ☐ Scan a QR code to obtain up to date information.
- ☐ I would prefer the notice board to be updated regularly with a poster as it is now.
- ☒ I would accept the notice board only being updated when a pollution incident or public health concern is identified, with a QR displayed to obtain the most recent results
- ☐ Not sure.

Please explain your answer (Required)

There is a limit of 200 characters

This is from the perspective of a visitor to NI who wishes to swim in the relevant areas – as adopted elsewhere in the UK may be familiar to some visitors already, but also ensures that unsafe waters are clearly marked on site should any issues arise with QR code readability or access to a phone.

ANDBC has an established procedure of placing a QR Code sign at each bathing site which links to the weekly updated version of the Bathing Water Quality Poster distributed by DEARA on our Website.

Q5. Do you have any suggestions on how risk forecasting could be improved?

Please explain your answer

Local factors (Hydrology, Topography, Land Use, Industry, Historical Land Use, Weather Conditions, Seasonal Influences) at each bathing site must be included into any predictive modelling. Numerous statutory bodies will be involved in this ie. NIEA, Met Office, NI Water, DAERA, Env Health LA's, in order for the resulting predictive data to be as accurate as possible.

A link to the SWIM NI App should be positioned on the Dashboard.

2: Length of the bathing season

DAERA is seeking views on whether the current bathing season, which runs from 1 June to 15 September, should be changed. The bathing season determines when bathing water monitoring and associated public health protections are put in place.

Current position

Northern Ireland's current bathing season aligns with that currently operating in Ireland and Scotland. England and Wales have a longer bathing season running from 15 May to 30 September.

There is evidence that bathing activity increasingly takes place outside the current season, particularly in late spring and early autumn. Extending the bathing season could therefore better reflect current patterns of use and provide more comprehensive protection for public health during periods when bathing activity remains high.

Since the completion of the 2022-23 Bathing Water Review in 2024, DAERA has been monitoring outside of the bathing season on a monthly basis. This is to inform the discussion on lengthening the season. To date, the data gathered has been displayed on the web but has not been used for classification purposes. A move to year-round monitoring may have implications for classification as wetter weather conditions and less sunlight may increase bacterial counts.

Proposal

The options being considered for extending the bathing season are:

- No change – keep as 1 June to 15 September
- All year round
- 1 April to 31 October
- 1 November to 31 March (winter season only, ie, potentially at a selection of sites that are vulnerable to blue-green algae blooms during the period 1 April to 31 October)

DAERA is also exploring the potential for a more flexible approach to bathing season length, whereby different sites could have different season durations. This approach

would allow bathing seasons to be tailored to local circumstances, taking account of site-specific usage patterns, environmental conditions, and risk factors. The proposal for bathing waters that are only monitored in the winter season is to explore whether waters that have algal blooms in warmer weather could still be safe for bathing during the winter season. We welcome your feedback to the questions that follow.

Q6. Of the following options please indicate your preference for the bathing water season. (Select one option)

(Required)

- ☐ Option 1 No change – keep as 1 June to 15 September
- ☐ Option 2 All year round/no set dates for bathing season
- ☒ Option 3 1 April to 31 October

Q7. Do you think it would be useful to incorporate a winter-season only, i.e. from 1 November to 31 March, at a selection of sites that are vulnerable to blue-green algae blooms in the spring / summer / autumn?

(Required)

Yes ☐

No ☐

Not sure ☒

Please explain your answer

There is a limit of 200 characters

This may reduce availability of sampling resource for other sites which have more frequent use, even when out of season.

Winter weather conditions pose a difficulty for staff maintenance of signage at exposed coastal locations. This will impact LA staffing and maintenance budgets.

Q8. If you selected, all year round as your response to Question 11, i.e. there will be

no set dates for the bathing season. Are you content with DAERA adopting a more flexible, site-specific monitoring timetable based on usage and risk throughout the year?

(Required)

Yes ☐

No ☐

Not applicable ☒



3: Bathing Water Monitoring

The Department is seeking your views on the potential to move towards a risk-based approach to bathing water monitoring.

Current approach

At present, DAERA monitors all identified bathing waters on twenty occasions during each bathing season. This approach ensures a robust dataset for classification purposes and public health protection.

Proposed approach

Evidence indicates that the current level of sampling may not be necessary to adequately assess water quality at all sites, particularly those that have demonstrated long-term stability and consistently high-quality classification results.

The Department is therefore seeking your views on whether monitoring could move towards a risk-based sampling model, whereby stable, consistently 'Excellent' bathing waters are monitored less frequently, but no less than the minimum legal requirement of one sample per month. While sites that are more variable or higher risk receive greater monitoring focus. Sampling effort would continue to be linked to bathing water classifications and risk profiles, ensuring that public health protection remains central to the approach.

Adopting this proposed risk-based approach could enable more strategic use of resources across both existing and potential new bathing water sites, while maintaining confidence in the monitoring programme and the information provided to the public. It could also support the proposed extension of the bathing season, as a risk-based approach would permit monitoring effort to be adjusted in a way that ensures resources are focused where they are most needed to protect public health, while maintaining appropriate coverage across the bathing water network.

Q9. Do you agree with the proposal set out above to introduce a risk-based sampling approach?

(Required)

Yes ☒

No ☐

Not sure ☐

This would be viewed as a good use of sampling resources if that resource can support better predictive modelling.

4: Criteria for identification of Bathing Waters

DAERA is seeking your views on whether the criteria used to determine if a site qualifies for identification as a bathing water should be reviewed, to ensure these remain appropriate and reflect current patterns of recreational water use.

How bathing waters are currently identified

Sites nominated for consideration as bathing waters are assessed through a staged evaluation process. Progression through this process depends on a number of factors, including whether there is a Bathing Water Operator willing to manage the site, whether the location is safe and accessible for monitoring, and whether there is sufficient evidence the site is used by a large number of bathers. The guide value used in Northern Ireland to define a “large” number of bathers at a site is 45 bathers on at least one occasion or 100 site users on at least two occasions.

Where nominated sites meet these criteria, these have been identified under the Bathing Water Regulations. Sites that do not fully meet the criteria, or which are assessed as lower priority at a particular point in time, may be retained for future consideration, allowing the Department to take account of changes in usage, management arrangements, or other relevant factors over time.

Proposed approach

The Department is seeking views on whether the existing criteria and assessment process remain fit for purpose, or whether changes could improve transparency, consistency, or the ability to reflect evolving recreational use of waters, while continuing to ensure effective public health protection.

Currently, sites are formally identified by an amendment to Schedule 1 of The Quality of Bathing Water (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008. An alternative approach used in the rest of the UK is to publish a list of sites to be monitored each year. This would allow for a more flexible approach to identification and de-identification of Northern Ireland bathing waters.

Under this proposal, DAERA would continue to seek applications for new bathing waters, but the identification would only require an updated publication and no longer

require legislative amendments to Schedule 1.

DAERA is also considering whether the scope of the Bathing Waters programme should be expanded to reflect the wide variety of people who spend time on or near the water, including paddleboarders, kayakers, and others engaged in recreational activities.

This was discussed specifically at the stakeholder workshop in November 2025, along with the concept of risk and targeting resources towards the highest risk activities.

The World Health Organisation recognises that risks to health will depend on the degree of water contact and these may be classified as follows:

- No contact
- Incidental contact – recreational activity in which only the limbs are regularly wetted and greater contact (including swallowing water) is unusual (e.g. boating, fishing, wading).
- Whole-body contact – recreational activity in which the whole body or the face and trunk are frequently immersed, or the face is frequently wetted by spray, and where it is likely that some water will be swallowed (e.g. swimming, diving, surfing, sailboarding, kiteboarding, whitewater canoeing).

The Bathing Water Directive was introduced to manage public health risks associated with bathing and this has been the focus of the Bathing Waters programme to date. However, there are other recreational activities that take place at existing bathing waters which benefit indirectly from the water quality monitoring and public information that is provided for bathers e.g. our most popular surf beaches on the North Antrim coast are also monitored as bathing waters and all 33 sites have had year-round monitoring since 2024.

DAERA has very limited information on other recreational activities that take place in waters that are not currently identified as bathing waters. DAERA is requesting information to understand the scale of the activities and whether they are taking place in waters where there may be a risk to public health.

Q10. Do you think the current criteria used to determine whether a site qualifies for identification as a bathing water remains appropriate? (Criteria include evidence of high numbers of bathers, site safety and accessibility, and the presence of an operator.)

(Required)

Yes ☐

No ☒

Not sure ☐

Please explain the reasons for your answer.

There is a limit of 200 characters

The increase in cold water swimming as an activity means the criteria should be reassessed and should reflect current and predicted leisure trends.

Many popular sea swimming/bathing events such as those that take place on Christmas Day at a number of beaches in Northern Ireland, take place out of the bathing season and may not be captured in the current method of assessment.

Q11. Should Northern Ireland adopt an approach similar to other UK regions where the list of bathing waters is published annually rather than amended through legislation?

(Required)

Yes ☒

No ☐

Not sure ☐

Please explain your answer.

There is a limit of 200 characters

This reduces administrative burden and makes the scheme more flexible.

Q12. Should the bathing water programme be extended to include other recreational activities that involve whole-body contact such as diving, surfing, sailboarding, kiteboarding, whitewater canoeing?

Yes ☒

No ☐

Not sure ☐

Please explain your answer.

There is a limit of 200 characters

This makes sense as these categories of water users are at as much risk of poor bathing water quality, as swimmers.

Q13. Are you aware of any locations where recreational whole-body water contact activities occur that are not currently identified bathing waters?

(Required)

Yes ☒

No ☐

Not sure ☐

If yes, please list these locations and describe the activities taking place.

Ballyhalbert (Burr Point), Portavogie (North beach), Skippingstone Beach (Bangor), Orlock, Portavo.

Beaches at caravan parks.

Inland Coastal beaches in areas such as Strangford Lough.

5: Monitoring of Candidate Sites

DAERA is seeking your views on whether the introduction of a more structured ‘pre-identification’ or ‘candidate site’ stage would be a useful approach for managing the identification of new bathing waters in the future.

How candidate sites have been monitored

Historically, bathing waters were formally identified before routine monitoring was initiated. However, during the 2022–23 Bathing Waters Review, a different approach was taken, whereby a number of sites were monitored in advance of formal identification. This provided additional evidence on water quality and site characteristics helping to inform subsequent decisions on identification.

Proposed approach

Building on this experience, DAERA is interested in views on whether the introduction of a more structured ‘pre-application’ or ‘candidate site’ stage would be a useful approach for managing bathing waters in the future. Under such an approach, selected sites could be monitored for a defined period before any decision is taken on formal identification.

This proposal would enable DAERA to take an evidence-based decision on whether it is feasible and affordable to achieve at least “sufficient” bathing water quality. If DAERA assessed that it would be infeasible or disproportionately expensive, permanent advice against bathing would be provided rather than identifying the site as a bathing water.

It is important to emphasise that, where permanent advice against bathing is applied, the requirements of the Water Framework Regulations would continue to apply to the water body. In such cases, River Basin Management Plans must still include appropriate measures aimed at achieving at least good surface water status in line with statutory objectives.

The potential benefits of this approach could include:

- ensures that public health information is available at popular sites that may meet the criteria for identification as bathing waters;

- avoids identifying sites where water quality presents a persistent or unacceptable risk, ensuring that public health messaging is accurate, proportionate and evidence-based;
- targets formal identification on sites where improvement is feasible and helps ensure that monitoring, regulatory and investment resources are focused where they can deliver the greatest public health and environmental benefit.
- provides evidence to support river basin management planning, including the identification of measures that may be needed to support the achievement of Good or Excellent water quality status at a site.

The Department is seeking views on whether this approach would improve transparency, support evidence-based decision-making and strengthen public health protection, as well as any challenges or risks that should be considered in adopting such a model.

The Department is seeking views on whether this approach would improve transparency, support evidence-based decision-making and strengthen public health protection, as well as any challenges or risks that should be considered in adopting such a model. Your views are also sought on whether water quality testing should take place at sites that are being considered as candidate bathing waters, prior to any formal identification decision.

Q14. Do you think DAERA should introduce a more structured ‘pre application’ or ‘candidate site’ stage for sites being considered as bathing waters? (This would allow selected sites to be monitored for a defined period before decisions on formal identification.)

(Required)

Yes ☒

No ☐

Not sure ☐

Please explain the reasons for your answer.

There is a limit of 400 characters

This is a sensible approach and will provide good structure, criteria and transparency to the process – which will feed into the predictive modelling.

It is essential that issues such as site safety and water quality are appropriately and uniformly defined and assessed.

Q15. Do you agree that monitoring candidate sites in advance of formal identification would improve transparency and public confidence in the decision making process?

(Required)

Yes ☒

No ☐

Not Sure ☐

6: Removal of automatic de-identification

The Department is seeking your views on whether poor-performing identified bathing water sites should be reviewed on an individual basis rather than being automatically de-identified after five years.

Current Position

The Bathing Water Regulations provide that if an identified bathing water site is assessed as one for which it would be infeasible or disproportionately expensive to achieve at least “sufficient” bathing water status, a decision could be taken before the end of the 5-year period to de-identify the site and issue permanent advice against bathing.

In 2024, Defra and the Welsh Government consulted on reforms to the Bathing Water Regulations 2013 covering England and Wales, including proposals to remove the provision for automatic de-designation of bathing waters following five consecutive years of ‘poor’ classification. The consultation recognised that improvements in bathing water quality often depend on complex environmental factors and infrastructure investment, which may require longer timeframes to deliver measurable outcomes.

As a result of that consultation, the Bathing Water (Amendment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2025 came into force in November 2025. These reforms replaced automatic de-designation with a case-by-case assessment by the relevant regulators, with decisions informed by evidence on whether it is feasible and proportionate to improve water quality at a site. This approach allows continued focus on improvement measures where there is a reasonable prospect of achieving better outcomes, rather than automatically removing identification status after a fixed period of poor classification.

Proposal

The automatic de-identification provision for an identified bathing water site has never been used in Northern Ireland, as no identified bathing water site has been classified as ‘poor’ for five consecutive years. The Department is however considering whether a similar case by case approach as set out above should be adopted in Northern Ireland. This would require the removal of the automatic de-identification following five consecutive years of ‘poor’ classification and potentially replacing this with an option to

extend the bathing water identification for a specified period to allow a bathing water to achieve at least “sufficient” classification.

This proposal recognises that the River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) and NI Water investment planning operate in 6-year cycles, with the 3rd cycle RBMP covering 2021-27 and NI Water’s PC21 covering up to March 2028. The Department and NI Water are already preparing for the fourth Cycle RBMP and PC28 respectively.

It would be highly unlikely for the necessary RBMP measures, including wastewater treatment infrastructure improvements, to be identified, developed and delivered for newly identified bathing waters within the period 2028–2033. In such circumstances, it may be preferable to allow additional time for the development and implementation of improvement measures through the next RBMP and price control cycles, rather than requiring automatic de-identification of the bathing water after five years.

This proposal would introduce greater flexibility and enable better alignment with RBMP and PC cycles. It would allow a bathing water site to remain identified beyond five years where an evidence-based assessment shows that it is feasible and affordable to implement appropriate measures to achieve effective improvements in bathing water quality.

Your views are sought on whether a more flexible, evidence-based decision-making process would better support long-term water quality improvements and public health protection, while maintaining transparency and confidence in the bathing waters programme.

Q16. Do you agree that the automatic de identification of bathing waters after five consecutive years of ‘poor’ classification should be changed?

(Required)

Yes ☒

No ☐

Not Sure ☐

Q17. Do you agree that poor performing bathing waters should instead be reviewed on a case by case basis rather than automatically de identified after five years?

(Required)

Yes ☒

No ☐

Not Sure ☐

Q18. Do you think a more flexible, evidence based decision making process would better support long term water quality improvements?

(Required)

Yes ☒

No ☐

Not Sure ☐

Q19. Do you think this approach would strengthen or maintain public health protection at poor performing sites?

(Required)

Yes ☒

No ☐

Not sure ☐

Additional comments

We believe it would strengthen public health protection and improve transparency.

7: Ensuring monitored locations match actual usage

DAERA is seeking your views on whether the current bathing water monitoring locations

accurately reflect where people are swimming at each identified bathing water site.

Current Position

The Department currently monitors 33 identified bathing water sites across Northern Ireland. Details of these sites and their monitoring locations are available at: **see Annex A** of the Consultation Document for Map of Identified Bathing Waters.

The Department recognises that the popularity and use of bathing waters can change over time. Changes in access arrangements, the provision of new facilities, local coastal processes, or evolving recreational trends may result in bathers using different parts of a beach, river or shoreline than those originally identified for monitoring.

Proposal

We are therefore inviting respondents to review their local identified bathing water site and consider whether the current monitoring location reflects where most people now enter the water and swim. The information you provide will help ensure that monitoring remains representative, robust, and continues to provide accurate public health advice.

Q20. Are the current monitoring locations for the 33 identified bathing waters appropriate?

(Required)

Yes ☒

No ☐

Not sure ☐

If not, please tell us the swimming location for your identified bathing water site.

8: Other stakeholder recommendations

The Department welcomes **any additional stakeholder recommendations** that could help to improve the effectiveness, transparency and long-term sustainability of the

bathing water programme.

You are invited to provide **any additional recommendations** you believe could support improvements to bathing water management, public health protection, environmental outcomes or user engagement. These may relate to operational practices, communication and information provision, monitoring approaches, partnership working, or any other relevant aspect of the bathing waters programme.

All responses will be considered as part of the overall review, alongside evidence gathered through earlier engagement and policy development work.

Q21. Do you have any other recommendations for improving the bathing water programme that have not been raised in this consultation?

Other Recommendations

We would welcome the return of predicted water quality data at popular locations, similar to that previously provided by the SWIM NI App.

We support improvements to scientific data and modelling for bathing sites, but note that Local Authorities will face increased demands on staffing, operational planning and public engagement. Greater scrutiny of bathing water quality must not adversely affect normal day-to-day operations.

We would welcome better engagement with landowners and site operators prior to designation. We would also request that funding be made available to beach operators to provide or upgrade facilities at newly designated sites.

While DAERA will control sampling and analysis, LA staff are required to attend sites, warn of immediate dangers, respond to information requests and liaise with communities on emerging issues. This creates additional staffing and public relations costs for councils, who may have limited control over contributing factors.

Water quality sample results taken out of season by DAERA should be routinely shared with beach operators. We would also welcome the sharing of results from non-designated beaches where bathing and other aquatic recreational activities are popular.

When you submit your response, you give us permission to analyse and include your responses in our results.

Information provided by respondents will be held and used for the purposes of the administration of this current exercise and subsequently disposed of in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation.

Unclassified

ITEM 12.1

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
	If multiple:
Meeting	Council
Date of Meeting	29 July 2026
Responsible Director	Director of Corporate Services
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Strategic Change
Report title	Invitation to APSE Annual Seminar 2026
Attachments	Appendix 1: Invitation to APSE Annual Seminar 2026
File Reference (if applicable)	26051 - Performance Management
Legislation	Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014
Resource Implications	None Narrative: Costs for flights and accomodation are not included as part of invitation and therefore will be a cost to Council
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: As this invitation falls within the Corporate Performance Improvement function, it will link to all Corporate Plan priorities and outcomes.

Background

The Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) is owned by its members and working on their behalf, maintains and develops a network of local government officers, managers and councillors from local authorities across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Working on a not-for-profit basis, APSE is dedicated to promoting excellence in the delivery of frontline services to local communities around the UK. Through the extensive APSE network, more than 300 local authorities and organisations can share information and expertise on vital frontline services, ask for advice and innovative solutions, and develop new, viable ways forward in an effort to help one another.

APSE provides a united national voice for these authorities, supporting them in the development of strong and sustainable public services.

Members of APSE have access to many excellent benefits that help local authorities to grow. These include regular briefings on the latest policy developments and operational issues, access to groups and forums that allow authorities to come together to share information and collaborate, and the ability to anonymously ask for and give advice on a range of service issues.

One of the most important benefits APSE membership offers is the opportunity for local authority service providers to have their views voiced and represented at a national level. APSE carefully develops this voice by collaborating with members, and supports it using research, extensive campaigns and consistent media activities.

APSE conducts research, publishes reports, and campaigns to create a positive role for local government, helping them to deliver high quality, effective and efficient public services. APSE's targeted training programme, regular briefings and inclusive events strive to keep council officers and elected members constantly updated on the latest public service issues. There is also APSE Solutions, an in-house team that works closely with individual authorities, offering high quality consultancy and interim management support for members and other relevant organisations. APSE has also developed the innovative Performance Networks service, which is the largest national voluntary local government benchmarking service.

Each year APSE also hosts the National Service Awards, celebrating outstanding achievement and innovation in local government service delivery, alongside an evening awards dinner and networking opportunities that bring together councils from across the UK.

As an APSE member, Council are invited to attend the ***APSE Annual Seminar 2026: Local Government on the Frontline, Meeting Challenges and Supporting Communities***, with a free full delegate package for Council's main APSE officer contact and a councillor, including the prestigious APSE Service Awards Dinner, to be held at the Crowne Plaza, Liverpool in September 2026.

Alderman Alan McDowell will also be attending the annual seminar in his capacity as APSE Northern Ireland Regional Chair.

Key Issues

This offer recognises the extraordinary efforts of APSE member councils over the past year and gives members the chance to connect, learn and celebrate excellence in local government.

What's included for both delegates:

- Tuesday 15 September - Welcome Reception
- Wednesday 16 September - Day One of the Seminar, APSE's AGM and a Civic Reception
- Thursday 17 September - Day Two of the Seminar, APSE'S Service Awards and 2 free places to annual Charity Dinner

Costs for flights and accommodation are not included as part of the invitation and therefore will be a cost to Council.

This year's seminar, *Local Government on the Frontline, Meeting Challenges and Supporting Communities*, will bring together leading voices across local government to discuss how we can deliver for our communities. The seminar will cover key topics, such as waste and recycling, housing, parks, workforce challenges, clean energy and more.

APSE will also celebrate the exceptional work taking place in councils across the UK at the APSE Service Awards 2026, featuring the prestigious Overall Council of the Year Award.

Next Steps and Summary

The Council is invited to consider the invitation and, if deemed appropriate, nominate a Councillor to attend on its behalf.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council **Considers** this invitation.

From: Matthew Ellis <MEllis@apse.org.uk>

Sent: 30 June 2026 10:34

To: Watson, Siobhan <Siobhan.Watson@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk>

Cc: Debbie Johns <DJohns@apse.org.uk>

Subject: FREE Annual Seminar Package for APSE Main Contacts and a Councillor from your authority including attendance at the APSE Service Awards 2026

FAO: Siobhan Watson

As an APSE main contact, you are invited to attend the **APSE Annual Seminar 2026: *Local Government on the Frontline, Meeting Challenges and Supporting Communities*, with a FREE full delegate package** for you and a councillor from your authority, including the prestigious APSE Service Awards Dinner, to be held at the Crowne Plaza, Liverpool.

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We will also celebrate the exceptional work taking place in councils across the UK at the **APSE Service Awards 2026**, featuring the prestigious **Overall Council of the Year Award**.

We look forward to welcoming you to our Annual Seminar 2026, offering valuable insights into public service delivery and opportunities to connect with colleagues across the sector.

Click here to book your **FREE** place now.

Click here for accommodation details and terms and conditions.

Regards

Matt Ellis

Principal Advisor

Association for Public Service Excellence

Unclassified

ITEM 12.1

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
	If multiple:
Meeting	Council
Date of Meeting	29 July 2026
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	
Report title	Invitation to La Touche Legacy Seminar
Attachments	Appendix 1: 2026 La Touche Legacy Programme Appendix 2: 2026 La Touche Legacy Seminar Details Appendix 3: 2026 La Touche Legacy Speaker Details
File Reference (if applicable)	
Legislation	Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014
Resource Implications	None Narrative: Costs for travel and accomodation (if required) are not included as part of invitation and therefore will be a cost to Council
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:

	If multiple:
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Ards and North Down Borough Council has received an invitation from Wicklow County Council to attend the 36th La Touche Legacy Seminar and 11th Festival of History, which will take place on Saturday 19 September 2026 at Greystones Golf Club, County Wicklow.

The seminar will feature presentations by Professor Frank Barry, David McCullagh (RTÉ) and Stephen Collins, covering aspects of Ireland's economic, political and social history.

The cost of attendance is €50 per person, which includes all lectures, refreshments and lunch.

Council is requested to consider whether it wishes to be represented at the event and, if so, to nominate Member(s) to attend on its behalf. Further details of the programme and speakers are attached for Members' information.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council **Considers** this invitation.



La Touche Legacy
in association with
Greystones Archaeological and Historical Society

11th Festival of History – 36th La Touche Legacy Weekend



Saturday 19th September 2026

Greystones Golf Club, Whitshed Road, Greystones

10.00 Official Opening and welcome by
Mr. George Jones, Chairman of the La Touche Legacy Committee

Welcome by
Councillor Dr. Caroline Winstanley, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council
and
Councillor Mark Barry, Cathaoirleach of Greystones Municipal District

10.15
Mr. Frank Barry, Professor Emeritus Trinity Business School
'Industry and Policy – Independent Ireland 1922 – 1972'
Chairperson:

11.00 Coffee

11.15
Mr. David McCullagh, RTE
'From Crown to Harp: How the Treaty was undone, 1922-49'
Chairperson:

12.30
Stephen Collins, Journalist & Author (ex Irish Times) Guest Speaker
Followed by lunch

Fee: €50 **Bookings:** Kay Coughlan **Tel:** 01 2878448 **Email:** Kcoughla@wicklowcoco.ie
Further Info: George Jones **Email:** george.anthony.jones@gmail.com **Tel:** 086 821 7357

Details for the 36th La Touche Legacy Seminar & 11th Festival of History.

The Chair of the La Touche Legacy Committee, Mr. George Jones, said he was delighted on behalf of the committee to formally announce details of this year's La Touche Legacy Seminar/11th Festival of History to be held on Saturday 19th September in Greystones Golf Club.

Mr. Jones indicated that following the 2025 seminar, the committee were considering its options for going forward, and, after consulting with our many stakeholders, it was decided to go ahead this year with a revised formula for the seminar.

The revised seminar will take place on the Saturday September 19th with three top class talks followed by a lunch in the superb surroundings of Greystones Golf Club.

As usual there will be a warm welcome to all our attendees by the Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council Cllr. Dr. Caroline Winstanley and Cathaoirleach of Greystones Municipal District Cllr. Mark Barry.

This year's lectures will be provided by Mr. Frank Barry Professor Emeritus Trinity Business School, Mr David McCullagh, RTE, & Mr. Stephen Collins former Political Editor of the Irish Times.

Biographies for the speakers are attached.

Mr. George Jones said he was once again delighted that the La Touche Legacy has the Greystones Archaeological and Historical Society as partners for the Seminar and thanked the Society Chair, Dr. Cormac Moore, for recently nominating the La Touche Legacy for the Cultural Award in the 'People of Year Awards' held by Greystones Municipal District.

To register /book for this year's event, please contact Kay Coughlan 01 2878448 or Email Kcoughla@wicklowcoco.ie.

The Seminar fee is €50 and will include all lectures, coffee and lunch.

Further information is available from

Mr. George Jones 086 821 7357 or Email george.anthony.jones@gmail.com

Frank Barry Professor Emeritus Trinity Business School

Title of First Lecture

Industry and policy independent Ireland, 1922-1972

Frank Barry is Professor of International Business & Economic Development at the Trinity Business School and a member of the Royal Irish Academy.

He has held positions at the Universities of Stockholm, California, and New South Wales, and with the Harvard Institute for International Development.

He has acted as a consultant for the World Bank, the European Commission, the African Economic Research Consortium, and various Irish and UK government agencies.

His current research interests are in the fields of foreign direct investment and economic and business history.

Publications

Barry Frank, The Evolution of the Irish 12.5 Percent Corporate Tax Rate: An Oral History, *Enterprise and Society*, 2025, p1 - 25Journal Article, 2025

Barry, Frank, and Michael Scholz, The Regional Location of Indigenous and Foreign Manufacturing Establishments, 1929-1975, *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland*, 53, 2024, p34 - 56Journal Article, 2024

Barry, Frank, A reappraisal of Cumann na nGaedheal economic policy, *Irish Political Studies*, 39, (2), 2024, p139 - 161Journal Article, 2024

David McCullagh RTE

Title of Second Lecture

From Crown to Harp: how the Treaty was undone, 1922-49

David began his journalistic career working for the *Evening Press* in 2001.

In August 2025, McCullagh was named as the successor to Claire Byrne as the presenter for *Today With...* on RTÉ Radio 1, and began in November. He signed off from the *Six One News* on 31 October 2025.

In September 2025, he hosted a series on Éamon de Valera.

His most recent book is called *From Crown to Harp: how the Treaty was undone, 1922-49*, which tells the tale of how Ireland escaped from the Treaty.

Stephen Collins, Lunch Speaker

Title of Lecture

"Current Political Climate"

Journalist and author, former Political Correspondent with *The Irish Times*.

In 1983-84 Collins sat on the New Ireland Forum, a body designed to establish common ground amongst Irish nationalist political parties. His later criticisms of Charles Haughey, who also sat on the Forum, were, it has been said, primarily moulded by the complacency with which he had seen Jack Lynch's handling of the Arms Crisis of 1970. Collins has published books on the Cosgrave political dynasty and, more recently, on the foundation of the Progressive Democrats political party, called *Breaking the Mould*. His father Willie Collins (1916-2006) was a journalist with the Irish Press and was deputy editor of *The Sunday Press*, and Stephen is the older brother of *Sunday Independent* News Editor Liam Collins.

Unclassified

ITEM 15

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
	If multiple:
Meeting	Council
Date of Meeting	29 July 2026
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	
Report title	Notice of Motion Status Report
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Notice of Motion Tracker
File Reference (if applicable)	
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	Multiple Multiple If multiple: all

Background

Please find attached a Status Report in respect of Notices of Motion.

This is a standing item on the Council agenda each month and its aim is to keep Members updated on the outcome of Motions. It should be noted that as each Motion is dealt with it will be removed from the report.

RECOMMENDATION

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

To	Responsible Committee	Date Received	Submitted by	Notice (Original and any amendment)	Council & Committee Meetings (Date & Item)	Status (Most recent status update at the top followed by detail of what has been accomplished to date)	Responsible Officer	Final Outcome
11	Active & Healthy Communities	31.05.15	Councillor Muir & Alderman Keery	Rory McIlroy Recognition	Council June 2015 Corporate Services Committee October 2015	Officers discussing options with McIlroy Organisation. Proposal currently being drafted related to supporting young people in sport for their consideration and then will be reported to Council. The Chief Executive has now met with the Rory McIlroy Foundation and a proposal has been presented to them. Council is awaiting their decision, which will be brought back to Council as soon as it is available.	Adele Faulkner (Director of Active & Healthy Communities)	
370	Active & Healthy Communities	13.09.19	Councillor Cathcart & Alderman Gibson	That this Council acknowledges that Council byelaws are in need of review. Many of our Council byelaws are now outdated and do not cover new housing developments and playparks in the Borough. The Council therefore will carry out a comprehensive review of Council byelaws to create a modern system to assist the Council in meeting the outcomes identified within the Community Plan	Council - September 2019 Referred to Environment Committee - October 2019 Environment Committee 02.09.20 Item 12 Council - April 2025 Item 14	Report to be brought back on the possible strengthening of no alcohol consumption byelaws on Council land and at the Borough's beaches and parks. Report to also explore options on possible restrictions of open fires and the use of disposable BBQs at beaches and parks. Review of the byelaws to commence and be undertaken in three stages. Phase 1 - Scope, Phase 2 - Council Review and Phase 3 - Recommendation and Decision Financial provision 2026/27. Update to September A&HC Committee.	Gareth Kinnear Head of Environmental Health & Regulatory Services	
514	Environment	19.05.22	Councillor Cummings & Councillor Johnson	Business case for redesign of the parallel sports pitches and facilities at Park Way, Comber	Council June 2022 Community & Wellbeing Committee September 2022 and deferred to October 2022	Report back after rates set for 2027/28 Feasibility study agreed. Linked to Muckers Dog Park proposal. NOM assigned to EC 01.10.2025 following transformation Council agreed Comber 3G pitch is ranked 21st in project prioritisation. Stakeholder engagement to commence at the appropriate time. Leasing application has been received from Comber Rec.	Stephen Daye (Head of Parks and Cemeteries)	
522	Corporate Services	05.07.22	Alderman Irvine and Alderman Keery Amendment received from Councillor Cathcart	That this Council changes the name of Queen's Parade to Queen's Platinum Jubilee Parade in honour and recognition of the 70th anniversary of the Queen's accession to the throne. *** Amendment - That this Council, in recognition of Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee and her conferment of City Status upon Bangor, agrees to name an appropriate place or building within Bangor in her honour and that future Council Bangor entrance signs make reference to Bangor being a Platinum Jubilee City.	Council July 2022 Environment Committee September 2022 Corporate Services January 2024	April 2023 - Letter requesting permission to use the Royal Name sent to the Cabinet Office and awaiting response January 2024 - Report brought to Corporate Committee Amendment Agreed and advice sought from Cabinet Office December 2024 - Advice still outstanding July 2026 - Advice now received, update report to be presented to Corporate Committee	Alison Curtis (Head of Corporate Governance)	

564	Environment	08.02.23	Alderman Irvine and Alderman Keery	That this Council tasks officers to begin discussions with the Education Authority with regards to the Future of Bloomfield playing fields, Bangor. This is to include the lease and the exploring of the possibility of bringing the facility up to intermediate level for football. A report to be brought back to Council following said discussions.	Council February 2023 Community & Wellbeing Committee March 2023	Report back when EA confirms its intentions Officers still awaiting response from EA at June 2026 NOM assigned to EC 01.10.2025 following transformation Officers awaiting response from EA in order for report to be brought back to future Environment Committee. EA has responded to say they '...would be in contact when they are ready to progress...' several chasers have been sent. 26.02.25 Email received from Virginia Lowe of the EA confirming there is no further update at this time. Compliance section continues to chase.	Stephen Daye (Head of Parks and Cemeteries)	
567	Corporate Services	14.02.23	Councillor Adair & Councillor Edmund	This Council rename the square at Portavogie War Memorial Queen Elizabeth Square in memory of our late Sovereign Queen Elizabeth II.	Council February 2023 Corporate Services Committee March 2023	A response has been received from the Cabinet Office and a report went back to Committee 30/5/24 - follow up letter sent to Cabinet Office for update. Letters sent to the Cabinet Office requesting use of the Royal Name July 2024 - Advice now received - Report presented at September CSC. Agreed that combined EQIA more appropriate. A further report to be brought to CSC when EQIA ready to go. July 2026 - Advice now received on other requests, update report to be presented to Corporate Committee	Alison Curtis (Head of Corporate Governance)	
586	Corporate Services	16.10.23	Councillor Cathcart & Councillor Martin	That this Council, further to recent positive discussions with landowners, agrees to reexamine the April 2014 decision of North Down Borough Council to accept a gift of open space at Ambleside, Bangor, which was never completed and tasks Council Officers to bring back a report looking at (i) acquiring the land and (ii) options around future uses for the land.	Council October 2023 Corporate Services Committee November 2023 Corporate Services Committee September 2024	Dec 2026 - The sellers' solicitors have confirmed that they were not willing to undertake first registration. Officers sought further legal advice and CLT agreed to refer the matter to Arthur Moir - the former Registrar of the Land Registry would be asked to provide advice on the various issues in the title and provide an indication of the likelihood of achieving Good Leasehold title. This will allow the Council to make a better informed decision on the purchase. This project is continuing to incur costs to the Council. January 2026 update : The former registrar of the Land Registry has just provided a report to Council's solicitor on the likelihood of Council achieving Good Title on the land at Ambleside and this looks positive. We are waiting for the Council's solicitor to provide advice on the Council's next steps and this will be in the next few weeks. March 2026 update : The Council's solicitor has advised that they are happy to rely upon the expertise of the former Registrar of the Land Registry, in that the risk to The Council is much lower than previously anticipated and the former Registrar's positive view on The Council achieving Good Title on the land at Ambleside. Officers shared this view and have instructed the solicitor to contact the sellers' solicitor to move this towards completion as soon as possible. April 2026 update: Officers received an update that one of the two landowners is still considering the matter (to dispose of the land to the Council), whilst one is ready to proceed. The Council's solicitor has given them a one-month deadline to move matters forward or the Council will withdraw. To date £1,700 of legal costs have been incurred on the matter and we await an up-to-date bill which will include the advice from the former Registrar of the Land Registry.	Alison Curtis (Head of Corporate Governance)	

595	Environment	16.11.23	Councillor McCracken & Councillor Blaney	This Council recognises the importance of Bangor's early Christian heritage in the story of our city, and its role in local tourism strategies. This Council requests that officers bring back a report which evaluates how the physical link between two main sites, Bangor Abbey and the North Down Museum, could be improved, to include the renovation and potential remodelling of Bell's Walk, with consideration for improved wayfinding and lighting. The motion also requests that officers consider how Bangor Castle Gardens and The Walled Garden could be better incorporated into the walking route, and how the overall attraction could be packaged to create a more complete tourism and placemaking experience.	Council 29.11.2023	Update report brought to June 2026 EC noted. NOM assigned to EC 01.10.2025 following transformation Initial report to December 2024 C&W Committee Second report to June 2025 C&W Committee.	Stephen Daye (Head of Parks and Cemeteries)	To be removed following June Council meeting
599	Active & Healthy Communities	21.11.23	Councillor Cathcart & Councillor Gilmour	"That this Council recognises the invaluable work undertaken by community/voluntary groups and organisations in this Borough in identifying and tackling the needs of communities and residents. The Council therefore, commits to undertaking a root and branch review of community development funding, arts and heritage, sports development and all other funding streams to ensure that it provides the most efficient, effective and responsive service to our community, thus maximising impact, accessibility and equitable allocation of resources. The review should examine the following 4 categories: (see further wording on agenda)	Council 20.12.23 Community & Wellbeing Committee January 2024 and April 2024 and June 2024 and September 2024 Corporate Committee September 2024	Project ongoing for 24 months with reports brought to C&W Committee as necessary. First working group was on 10th May 2024. Grants transformation project already underway. Regular Updates will be brought. Update to September A&HC Committee	Arlene Barton (Head of Community and Culture)	
619	Environment	29.05.24	Councillor Cochrane and Councillor Thompson	That this Council notes with concern the temporary closure of Groomsport Tennis Courts due to issues around the safety of the playing surface. Further to this Council tasks officers to bring back a report on Tennis Court maintenance throughout the Borough and will commit to ensuring all our Tennis Court facilities are properly maintained and are fully accessible to all. Council will also promote the use of Tennis facilities in the Borough as we approach the spring/summer season.	Council 29.05.24 Item 20.1 Community & Wellbeing 15.01.25 Item 5 Environment Committee 07.01.26 Item 8	Parks and Regeneration have met to discuss - alternative funding streams being investigated. Report back when further information is available. Agreed at EC 07.01.26: That the Development of the Greyabbey MUGA Project be delivered as a joint Village Renewal and Parks Project with progress report coming to the Council. Agreed at C&W 15.01.25: That the Council agree the recommendation of the Committee but further tasks officers to explore the feasibility of incorporating a MUGA as part of the redevelopment of Greyabbey Tennis Courts including engagement with current users, sports clubs and community groups to ensure use for all sports and maximum investment and sport participation for the community of Greyabbey. Assigned to January 2025 C&W Agenda. Moved to EC due to restructure.	Stephen Daye (Head of Parks and Cemeteries)	

624	Corporate Services	20.05.24	Councillor Kendall, Alderman McRandal and Alderman Graham	This Council notes that, subsequent to submission of a Notice of Motion in 2017, Council agreed to provide funding to assist in the building of a new war memorial in Conlig village; and to liaise with, and assist, the Conlig War Memorial Project Group in their efforts to build a monument to the seventeen men who are known to have lost their lives in World War I.	Council - May 2024 Corporate Services Committee June	January 2026: This matter is progressing in line with the actions agreed by both The Council and Conlig Community Regeneration Group. The NIHE has agreed to the sale of the land and it is with LPS for a valuation. March 2026 update: This matter is progressing in line with the actions agreed by both The Council and Conlig Community Regeneration Group. The NIHE has agreed to the sale of the land, and it is with LPS for a valuation. A site meeting took place in early March with representatives of the group and the Estates team to discuss the next steps for the construction of the Memorial and landscaping of the site. April 2026 update: As March update - The group has fundraised £8,000 towards the project, but the balance, which the Council agreed to pay, is likely to be in the region of £30,000. July 2026: Update report at July Council meeting	Alison Curtis (Head of Corporate Governance) & Peter Caldwell (Head of Estates)	
632	Environment	21.08.24	Councillor Irwin and Alderman McRandal	That this Council tasks officers with producing a report outlining how pedestrian access to Household Recycling Centres in the Borough could be facilitated. This report should include consideration of health and safety requirements, the HRC booking system and the ability to provide pedestrian access in other council areas in Northern Ireland.	Council September 2024 (Item 13.2) Environment Committee 2 October 2024 (Item 11.1) Environment Committee 7 May 2025 (Item 3) Environment Committee 3 December 2025 (Item 4) 8 April 2026 (Item 6)	Report to September 2026 in advance of Business Case Agreed at April 2026 EC - based on Option 1: That the Committee notes the report and tasks Officers to prepare a business case for the investment that would be required to introduce pedestrian access at Holywood and Millisle HRCs. A further report, including analysis of demand, is to be presented to Committee in advance of the business case being considered during the 2027/2028 rates setting process. Agreed not to continue with the pedestrian access arrangements in their current form. Furthermore, officers to investigate other means of safely providing pedestrian access to HRC sites alongside vehicular access and report the outcome of this to a future meeting. Agreed at EC 7 May 2025 to proceed with a three-month trial at Holywood and Donaghadee HRCs Agreed at April 2025 Environment Committee to proceed with Option 3 for a pilot scheme in Holywood and Donaghadee HRCs in order to obtain a proper evidence basis for demand; and that consideration of pedestrian access is included in the work around the future of the HRC estate as outlined in Option 1. Further report to follow. Agreed at Environment Committee 2 October 2024	Keith Patterson (Head of Waste and Cleansing)	

638	Place & Prosperity	22.10.2024	Councillors Harbinson & McCracken	That this Council should: 1. Prepare a visual map for all public sector land in Bangor City Centre and Ards Town Centre and colour code holdings that are potentially connected with future developments (even if not yet fully agreed), including Bangor Waterfront, Queen's Parade, Newtownards Citizen's Hub and the Council's Car Park Strategy. This includes public land belonging to the Council and NI Executive Departments. 2. To further identify public sector land that is currently unproductive and outside the scope of wider strategies, which could be made available for future private sector development. This includes land that is either vacant, contains empty or derelict buildings, or contains buildings that are under-utilised or dated to the point that redevelopment is required. The map should also include land that is facilitating meanwhile use. 3. Prepare a summary report to highlight how unproductive public sector land could be re-purposed and how such a process could be progressed within the bounds of current planning considerations and Council/Executive disposal policies.	Place & Prosperity Committee November 2024 (Item 14.2) Council October 2024 (Item 23.5)	Report brought to 7 May P&P Committee 2026 and ratified by May Council Strategic Development, Lands, and the GIS officer met 16.10.25 to discuss how to get the information from GIS. Update to be provided to Elected Members by 17.10.25 Update report to P&P in the first quarter of 2026 Agreed at 7 Nov 2024 P&P and ratified by 27 Nov Council 2024 - initial report to be brought back to future P&P Committee	Director of Place and Prosperity	
640		05.11.2024	Councillor Cochrane and Alderman Adair	That this Council condemns the failure by the UK Government to prioritise farming families and the rural economy as part of the Autumn Budget; notes with deep concern the decisions to introduce new thresholds for Inheritance Tax and Agricultural Property Relief, which will jeopardise succession planning on farms and discourage investment in many farm businesses. Further to this, Council calls on the Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to bring forward proposals to mitigate the impact of these damaging policies on local farms, as well as avoid significant increases in food prices; further commits to engage with the Chancellor at the earliest opportunity and demonstrate his absolute support for farmers affected by this budget and further calls on the Minister to work with the Minister of Finance to deliver an early and firm commitment to farming families that current levels of financial support will not only be maintained but increased in the next financial year.	Council meeting 27.11.2024 - Heard and agreed.	Letter sent to Minister on 9 December and response received 13 January. Report to go to January Council.		

657	Environment	18.02.2025	Alderman Adair & Councillor Edmund	That Council task officers to bring forward a report on options and potential funding opportunities to enhance and improve Council Football Pitches at Islandview Road Greyabbey to ensure future intermediate football standards by the local sporting clubs and community of Greyabbey.	Council 26.02.2025 - Community & Wellbeing Committee March 2025	Options agreed with stakeholders – report to EC after 27/28 rates agreed NOM assigned to EC 01.10.2025 following transformation Agreed that Council task officers to bring forward a report on options and potential funding opportunities to enhance and improve Council Football Pitches at Islandview Road Greyabbey to ensure future intermediate football standards by the local sporting clubs and community of Greyabbey	Stephen Daye (Head of Parks and Cemeteries)	
658	Place & Prosperity	03.03.2025	Councillor McClean & Councillor Cathcart	That Council notes the tired and inconsistent presentation of Christmas lights and illuminations in Bangor City Centre, particularly during the Christmas period, and considers potential festive lighting improvements for Christmas 2025. Further, that Council tasks officers to bring back a report presenting options that draw on successful practice and displays elsewhere, including the use of festoon lighting over Main Street. The report should look at the feasibility of the future expansion of these concepts to the remainder of the Borough, if proven successful in Bangor.	Council 26.03.2025 Environment Committee 02.04.2025 Environment Committee 11.06.25 Council 25.06.25	Further report to July Council 2026 Update brought to P&P 11.6.26 as part of LAG Minutes Place and Prosperity Committee now progressing this Update report to be brought to EC May 2026 Agreed the proposals in the update report in relation to Christmas Lighting in Bangor, utilising DfC funding wherever possible, with any shortfall coming from existing Christmas Lighting maintenance budgets. Agreed to adopt Notice of Motion - Environment Committee 02.04.2025. Report to future EC.	Director of Place & Prosperity	
671	Active & Healthy Communities	20.05.25	Councillor Kendall and Councillor McKee	Responsible Dog Walking in Public Spaces. This Council, as a 'Dog Friendly Borough' recognises the increasing use of public parks and footpaths by professional and recreational dog walkers, and the need to balance animal welfare, public safety, and the enjoyment of public spaces for all of our Borough's residents. This Council notes that: Multiple dogs under the control of a single individual may pose challenges to effective management and public safety. Excessive numbers of dogs being walked simultaneously can lead to increased risk of dog fights, interference with other park users, fouling, and uncontrolled behaviour; There has been an increasing number of professional dog walkers, offering services within the Borough and there is a lack of licencing, registration or other requirements which may lead to inadequate insurance, training and experience, adding further potential risks to people and pets; and - Many local authorities across the UK, including our neighbour Belfast City Council, have introduced limits on the number of dogs that may be walked at one time. The Council therefore resolves to: 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. Mandating that professional dog walkers must have dogs on leads at all times to ensure dog control and accountability for dog behaviours. 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. 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.	Council 25.06.25 Environment Committee - September Item 20.1	Agreed to adopt NOM at September EC Assigned to September 2025 EC Agenda. Moved to A&HC due to restructure. Update to March 2026 A&HC Committee. Letter sent to Andrew Muir 12.02.26 by CE. Update to May A&HC Committee. Consultation published June 2026. Report to September A&HC Committee.	Gareth Kinnear Head of Environmental Health & Regulatory Services	

672	Place & Prosperity	20.05.25	Councillor McCracken and Councillor Harbinson	Amendment to Notice of Motion 672 submitted by Councillor McCracken and Councillor Harbinson “This Council welcomes the update on Marine Gardens provided by Bangor Marine on 13 August 2025 and agrees that: 1. Council officers should work alongside Bangor Marine to support public communication around this project. This includes inviting Bangor Marine to the next meeting of the Bangor CAG to update stakeholders, supporting the proposed public consultation hub led by Bangor Marine, and by holding regular meetings with Bangor Marine to ensure accurate and complementary messaging on respective websites, newsletters and social media. 2. Council should also work with Bangor Marine to support a commercial marketing plan with the aim of attracting investment for the further phases of Queen's Parade along with complementary investment that will support the ambitions of the wider City Deal. An initial outline should be brought to Committee in Q1 2026 with a view to approve draft marketing collateral that can be used at future property investment conferences in the UK and abroad.”	P&P 4.9.25 Council 25.06.25	Report to be brought to future Committee 1. BM to be invited to next CAG (soon to be relaunched as LAG, likely Jan/Feb 2026 whilst the C/TAG to LAG process is formalised 2. Re: commercial marketing plan, update report to P&P in first quarter of 2026. Agreed to adopt NOM at Sept 2025 P&P - ratified at Sept 2025 Council	Director of Place and Prosperity	
673	Environment	21.05.25	Alderman Graham and Councillor Cochrane	That this Council notes the popularity of public spaces such as beaches during the summer months. Further to this Council will task officers to bring back a report to explore options for the extension of public toilet opening hours during the summer months to 9pm near beaches and other busy areas. Council Officers will further bring back a report on expanding baby changing facilities within our Borough at public toilets.	Council 25.06.25 Environment Committee - September Item 20.2 Environment Committee 03.12.2025 Item 3 Environment Committee 04.02.26 Item 4	Update report to be brought in 2027 Agreed at EC 04.02.26: AMENDMENT AGREED. That we accept officer proposal with the addition of a review in one year's time to ascertain usage and value for money Report brought to December 2025 EC: ALTERNATIVE RECOMMENDATION AGREED to note the report and bring back a report on costs and options on extending the summer opening hours to cover April and September as well as May to August, to redevelop and relaunch a community scheme to increase provisions for the public during the summer months and review its impacts in order to bring a report back to Council after a period of review. Agreed to adopt NOM at September EC Assigned to September 2025 EC Agenda	Keith Patterson (Head of Waste and Cleansing)	
680	Active & Healthy Communities	05.09.25	Councillor Cochrane and Councillor Edmund	That this Council recognises the importance of every child having the opportunity to learn to swim - a vital life skill that supports physical health, mental wellbeing, and water safety. Swimming is not only one of the most effective forms of exercise, but also a key activity for building confidence and resilience in young people. Further to this Council agrees to- 1. An Audit of current indoor swimming lesson provision and also open water safety awareness programmes across the Borough against local demand; and 2. The development of a strategy to ensure that no child is denied access to swimming lessons or safety awareness programmes due to cost or capacity.	Council 24.09.25 - October Active and Healthy Communities Committee	Leisure Officers to progress. Report to September Committee	Anton Cozzo Head of Leisure	
681	Corporate Services	09.09.25	Alderman McIlveen and Councillor Cathcart	That this Council expresses its deep disappointment at the correspondence sent to each councillor in Northern Ireland by NAC NI dated 2 September 2025 recommending that councillors take “industrial” action and considers the balloting of members to take any form of strike action is inappropriate, ill-judged and unlawful. Notes that the eleven Councils in Northern Ireland pay a corporate rate to fund the NAC NI in Northern Ireland and that individual councillors are by default members of NAC NI rather than by choice. Is further of the view that if the NAC NI wishes to act like a union then it should be governed by the same laws as any other union and that membership should be voluntary and a matter for individual councillors rather than funded by the ratepayer. As such, this Council agrees to withdraw its corporate funding from the NAC NI, writes to inform the NAC NI of this decision and calls on the executive members of the NAC NI to resign their positions given the gross over-reach of this correspondence and how it has brought the role of hard-working councillors into disrepute.	Council 24.09.25 - October Corporate Services Committee	Added to the agenda for CS 14/10, 14/11 letter sent to NAC NI by CEX. NAC NI have confirmed that this will be discussed at the meeting of their Executive Committee in December and that they will respond after this. NAC attended March Council for Deputation. Remove from tracker after ratification by April Council.	CEX Office	

682	Corporate Services	17.09.25	Alderman Graham and Councillor Gilmour	Council recognising the importance of Holywood as a Garrison town, seeks in conjunction with the Craigavad and Helen's Bay Branch of the Royal British Legion, to bring a military event to Holywood.	Council 24.09.25. Corporate Services Committee	December update : Meeting to take place in Jan 2026 to work up proposal. Once there is a proposal a report will be presented to Committee. January 2026 update : Meeting has taken place, draft plan proposed, facilitator to confirm with relevant parties . Further meeting to confirm arrangements in March and report will be brought back then. July 2026 update: Report will be brought to Committee as soon as possible.	Alison Curtis (Head of Corporate Governance)	
684	Environment	10.10.25	Councillor Hennessy and Alderman Brooks	That this Council brings back a report, with associated costs, detailing the possible road safety and lighting improvements that could be made between Donaghadee harbour and Donaghadee Community Centre.	Council 29.10.25 Environment Committee	Report to be brought to September 2026 EC Agreed to adopt NOM at November EC 2025 - ratified at November 2025 Council Assigned to November 2025 EC Agenda	Peter Caldwell (Head of Estates)	
685	Active & Healthy Communities	14.10.25	Councillor Kendall and Councillor S Irvine	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 UK, 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. 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. 3. Promote public awareness of the connection between domestic abuse, coercive control and animal abuse, in collaboration with statutory agencies and animal welfare organisations. 4. 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.	Council 29.10.25 AHC	Report to March 2026 A&HC Committee. Update to September A&HC Committee	Gareth Kinnear (Head of Environmental Health and Regulatory Services)	
686	Corporate Services	15.10.25	Councillor Cochrane and Councillor Gilmour	That this Council is deeply alarmed that the definition of victim in the Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 does not distinguish between those who perpetrated wrongdoing during the Troubles and the innocent victims they harmed, injured, killed or bereaved; believes that innocent victims should not have to interact with terrorists and their supporters when accessing victim support services; asserts that there is no moral equivalence between victim-makers and innocent victims; welcomes the fact that the victims pension legislation makes a clear distinction between perpetrator and victim; condemns the Alliance Party's decision to intentionally blur this line by removing the word "innocent" from the description of a victim in a recent Assembly motion addressing the legacy of the past; and resolves to write to the Justice Minister requesting that she personally apologise for suggesting that victim makers could also be considered victims.	Council 29.10.25 Corporate Services Committee	Reply received from Justice Minister and report to CS Feb 2026. Further response from the Chief Executive sent following meeting. Letter from Justice Minister reported and agreed at April Corporate Services Committee. To be removed following ratification after April Council meeting.	CEX Office	

687	Active & Healthy Communities	16.10.25	Councillor McCollum and Councillor Wray	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.	Council 29.10.25. AHC	Deferred to December A&HC Committee. Report to March A&HC Committee. Further report on completion of re-structure. Update to December 2026 A&HC Committee.	Arlene Barton (Head of Community and Culture)	
692	Active & Healthy Communities	12.11.25	Councillor McKee and Councillor Kendall	This Council notes with deep concern the recent deaths of two-family dogs in our Borough, linked to panic caused by fireworks and the many other animals that suffer year on year. We recognise the severe distress fireworks cause to people, pets, livestock, and wildlife, and the growing public concern over unregulated use. We express our sympathies to the affected families and commend local animal welfare groups for their ongoing support. This Council writes to The Department of Justice to request the commission of an urgent review of Northern Ireland's fireworks legislation, to include: Further that Council works with AND PCSP to explore how we can effectively tackle the antisocial behaviour associated with fireworks.	Council November 26.11.25 Active and Healthy Communities Committee	Officers to progress. Letter to go to DoJ when Call in expires after Jan 2026 Council. To go to next PCSP Committee (ND to action). Update to September 2026 A&HC Committee).	Gareth Kinnear Head of Environmental Health & Regulatory Services & Nikki Dorrian (Interim Head of Community)	
693	Corporate Services	26.11.25	Alderman McRandal and Alderman McAlpine	That this Council notes with concern the signs of erosion which have arisen on Station Road, Craigavon in recent years and that this Council recognises that Station Road, Craigavon is an integral section of the North Down coastal path and the Ulster Way. That this Council reassess whether it has responsibility for maintaining the road and for strengthening the sea wall and sea defences along the North Down coastal path section of Station Road, in view of: the fact that Council was prepared to assume responsibility for the road and sea defences under the failed Greenway project; the fact that this is a right of way as asserted by Council. That a report is brought back to the relevant Committee, to include assessment of who owns or is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the sea wall and sea defences along Station Road.	Council December 2025 Environment Committee 7 January 2026 Item 9.2	Report to be brought to a future meeting of the Corporate Services Committee to include legal advice regarding responsibility for the sea defence wall. NOM reassigned to Corporate Services Committee 11.02.2026 April 2026 update : Seeking legal advice, report will be brought back as soon as possible. Agreed to adopt NOM at January 2026 Environment Committee July 2026 update - Investigations ongoing	Peter Caldwell (Head of Estates) Alison Curtis (Head of Administration)	
694	Corporate Services	27.11.25	Councillor Ashe and Councillor McBurney	That this Council returns a report researching paternity leave provision for council employees including, but not limited to: benchmarking of paternity leave provision against appropriate organisations; options to improve paternity leave policy for council employees; projected costings of these options; and anything else officers deem prudent.	Council December 2025 and Corporate Services Committee January 2026	Corporate Committee decision 13 January 2026 decision to defer. On CS February 2026 agenda. 9.3.2026 - Ratified minute sent to Head of HR.	Head of HR	

697	Active & Healthy Communities	08.12.25	Councillor Douglas and Alderman Cummings	That this council is deeply concerned regarding the length of time that people battling with Motor Neurone Disease must wait to receive help through the Northern Ireland Housing Executive Disabled Facilities Grant. To write to the Chief Executive of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and the Minister for Communities to ask what the current length of time is for MND sufferers to have home adaptations completed and to ask them to implement a scheme to fast track these vital and much needed home adaptations.	Council December 2025 and Active and Healthy Communities Committee Jan 2026	Deferred to February A&HC Committee and adopted. Letter sent 21 May 2026. Response to September A&HC Committee.	Arlene Barton (Head of Community and Culture)	
698	Active & Healthy Communities	09.12.25	Councillor Wray and Councillor Chambers	Council acknowledges the vital role that our voluntary community groups play across the borough. Through our grants programmes these groups deliver initiatives such as community events, sporting activities, and festivals promoting tourism. As we rely on these groups to continue this important work across the borough, we must ensure they are supported, and that the management of these grants is easy to navigate. Advance payments are essential for small organisations who don't have large reserve sums of money in their bank accounts. Another complication for groups is being passed across various council departments during the delivery of their initiative. In order to improve this process, Officers will bring back a report considering the implications of making the following changes: • The advance payments available to groups is extended to 80%. • If a group is successful in a funding application they will be allocated an officer within council who will act as the only point of contact between the group and Council.	Council December 2025 and Active and Healthy Communities Committee Jan 2026	Report to June A&HC Committee & Head of Finance to attend committee meeting. Report to September 2026 A&HC Committee.	Arlene Barton (Head of Community and Culture)	
699	Corporate Services	09.12.25	Councillor McBurney and Councillor McCollum	That this Council notes with concern the increased cost of living and the impact this has upon families and individuals within the Borough; further notes that the absence of a clear Anti-Poverty Strategy makes it challenging to understand and strengthen our role in alleviating poverty and reducing inequality and therefore tasks Officers with bringing forward proposals to enhance the effectiveness of Council's contribution to poverty alleviation, including but not limited to, funding allocated to volunteer led community groups involved in poverty alleviation work. This work should complement, and not duplicate, any borough-wide Anti-Poverty action planning being undertaken by external partners.	Council December 2025 and Corporate Services Committee Jan 2026	Methodology to identify ANDBC's anti-poverty levers across all council services has been developed and is currently being tested. Workshops will be used across all services areas to gather additional information. Final ratified minute sent to Community Planning Manager	Community Planning Manager	
700	Environment	10.12.25	Councillor Cochrane and councillor Thompson	That this Council notes the growing popularity of Linear Park in Bangor East as a hub for the local community. Further to this, officers will bring back a report exploring options for providing path markings in both Upper and Lower Linear Park for runners, such as distance indicators eg. 1 km, 2 km, along with appropriate signage to assist those who wish to keep fit in the Park. Officers will also examine options for upgrading the path and accompanying drainage system in Lower Linear Park between the bridge and the Ring Road, in light of persistent flooding and drainage issues.	Council January 2026 Environment Committee 04.02.26 Item 9.1	Report to be brought in Autum 2026 Assigned to February 2026 EC Agenda	Stephen Daye (Head of Parks and Cemeteries)	
702	Environment	20.01.26	Councillor Cathcart and Councillor McClean	That this Council recognises its responsibility to ensure that our city, towns and villages are looking the best that they can be, to be welcoming places for visitors and our residents. It is therefore essential that the correct structures and policies are in place to ensure that within the resources made available all expected maintenance is being carried out efficiently and effectively. A proactive maintenance regime was agreed when this Council was created and has worked well in some areas but has not had the desired impact in other areas. Basic maintenance and upkeep of our public realm particularly in our centres and prominent areas can and should be improved. The Council therefore commits to reporting on a review of its current proactive maintenance and cleansing regimes, highlighting options and opportunities for improvement and associated budgetary requirements, so as to allow members to consider potential improvements in outcomes concerning the maintenance of Council property and the public realms.	Council January 2026 Environment Committee 04.02.26 Item 9.3	Report brought to June 2026 EC: Agreed to note the significant amount of proactive cleaning and maintenance activity already undertaken in public areas and the additional activity and resources planned to be continued with or introduced during 2026 and 2027. Assigned to February EC Agenda	Stephen Daye (Head of Parks and Cemeteries) Peter Caldwell (Head of Estates) Keith Patterson (Head of Waste & Cleansing)	

707	Environment	17.02.2026	Councillor Cochrane and Alderman Brooks	That this Council notes with deep concern the recent destruction caused to bushes, trees and wild grass in The Commons, Donaghadee. Further to this, Council agrees to write to the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, calling upon him to designate The Commons, Donaghadee as either an Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI), or another appropriate form of protected status, in order to help safeguard this important green space.	Council February 2026 Environment Committee 04.03.26 Item 14.2	Report to be brought to November 2026 EC Agreed at May 2026 EC to note the report and response from DAERA Council wrote to DfI 08.04.26 - response received 21.04.26 Agreed to adopt NOM at March 2026 EC Assigned to March 2026 EC Agenda	Stephen Daye (Head of Parks and Cemeteries)	
708	Corporate Services	18.02.2026 and amended sent 11.03.2026	Alderman Smith and Councillor Chambers	Council aims to reduce its level of rates increases in future years by introducing a zero based budgeting process, completing the ongoing review of planned capital expenditure and undertaking an in-depth engagement process with ratepayers/residents to explain our current strategy and to obtain feedback and input to the next rates process.	Council March 2026 Corporate Committee	Report update heard at June Corporate Committee. Remove from tracker after July Council	Head of Finance	To be removed following July Council meeting
709	Corporate Services	10.03.2026	Councillor McClean and Councillor Gilmour	That this Council, mindful of our close connections to the United States and our role in their history, commits to mark and celebrate the United States Semiquincentennial. Officers should consider options for events of different scales, including the theming of an existing event in the calendar, as well as exploring options to collaborate on an event of an appropriate level that complements the proposals of other councils (Causeway Coast and Glens, Antrim and Newtownabbey, Lisburn and Castlereagh) and would run in the latter half of this year.	Council March 2026 Corporate Committee	On Council agenda for July meeting.	Director of Corporate Services	
710	Place & Prosperity	11.03.2026	Councillor W Irvine and Councillor S Irvine	This Council commends the continued work and dedication of the South East Fermanagh Foundation (SEFF). For many years, the organisation has provided invaluable support, advocacy, and practical assistance to victims and survivors across Northern Ireland ensuring that their voices are heard and their needs are not forgotten. We agree to display the SEFF memorial quilt at a suitable location in the borough to honour innocent victims, educate the public about the impact of the Troubles, and ensure the legacy and memory of those lost continues to be recognised.	Council 25 March 2026 April Place & Prosperity Committee	Agreed at April P&P and ratified at April Council Ratified by March 2026 Council and referred to April P&P	Director of Place and Prosperity	
711	Active & Healthy Communities	13.03.2026	Alderman Cummings and Councillor Douglas	That this council recognises the Invictus Games, Birmingham 2027, a multi sports event, for wounded, injured and sick military service personnel, both serving and veterans, is being hosted in the UK for the first time since the inaugural games. Further, that we task officers to engage with Invictus Games to explore how we might facilitate additional training for Northern Ireland competitors in advance of the games, offering the best opportunity for local veterans and participants to attain the peak level of fitness, and to identify potential funding sources to assist in minimising the cost attributed to commuting to and from the mandatory national training camps, as required by all registered participants.	Council March 2026 Active and Healthy Communities Committee	Report to September 2026 A&HC Committee.	Anton Cozzo Head of Leisure	
713	Environment	17.03.2026	Councillor McCollum and Councillor Wray	That this Council notes the profound impact on the Clandeboye Community of the tragic death of 16 year old DICE leader and Army Cadet Jaidyn Rice on the 8th July 2025 and further notes the terrible loss of seven other lives on roads in our Borough during 2025, the highest of any Council area. Further that this Council tasks officers to work with the Rice family to create a bench honouring Jaidyn's contribution to her community, such bench to be a place of reflection, connection and outreach, in an agreed location and incorporating Council's Here to Help app for signposting to vital support services around the Borough.	Council March 2026 Environment Committee	Report to be brought to September 2026 EC NOM agreed at April 2026 EC Agreed to refer NOM to April 2026 EC	Stephen Daye (Head of Parks and Cemeteries)	
714	Environment	25.03.2026	Alderman Graham and Councillor Gilmour	Council notes the extension to the platform at Helen's Bay Station to enhance the safety of high numbers of visitors at peak times. To cope with such influxes of visitors, Council writes to Translink and requests that it provides toilet facilities at the railway station.	Council April 2026 Referred to Environment Committee May 2026	CX Letter sent to Translink 05.06.26 - acknowledgement rec'd 08.06.26 Agreed at May 2026 EC Referred to EC at April 2026 Council	Graeme Bannister (Director of Environmental Services)	
715	Active & Healthy Communities	1.04.2026	Alderman McRandal and Councillor McCollum	This Council acknowledges that the decision taken in January 2026 to adopt Queen's community centre as the preferred site of the proposed Hollywood screen industries innovation hub has the potential to remove an important community asset from Hollywood. Council therefore resolves to undertake an exercise to assess the need for community space in Hollywood, with a report assessing need to be brought back to the relevant Committee.	Council April 2026 - Referred to Active & Healthy Communities Committee May 2026	Report to September 2026 A&HC Committee.	Arlene Barton (Head of Community and Culture)	

716	Environment	2.04.2026	Councillor Cochrane and Councillor Thompson	That this Council notes the need for adequate coastal defences and the ongoing issues affecting Donaghadee Harbour. Council further acknowledges the continued work and contribution of Donaghadee Sailing Club and Donaghadee Community Development Association in seeking solutions to these challenges. It further notes that significant engagement has already taken place with some public representatives and government bodies to this regard. Council therefore agrees to instruct officers to engage with counterparts in Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown County Council to explore the potential for Shared Island Funding as a means of supporting the delivery of necessary coastal defence infrastructure	Council April 2026 - Referred to Environment Committee May 2026	Agreed at May 2026 EC Referred to EC at April 2026 Council	Peter Caldwell (Head of Estates)	
717	Planning	13.04.2026	Councillor Moore and Alderman McDowell	This Council notes the findings of the recent report presented to Planning Committee Members in March 2026 on wastewater capacity constraints, including the identification of closed catchments within parts of the Borough, the impact on planning and regeneration activity, and the wider challenges arising from longstanding underinvestment in wastewater infrastructure. Council further recognises that, while the report establishes the existence and significance of these constraints, further detailed evidence is required to fully understand the borough-wide impact and to support effective engagement with relevant agencies and the Department for Infrastructure, and to identify potential council-led solutions. Council agrees: •To task Council officers to prepare a detailed, borough-wide assessment identifying all locations affected by wastewater and sewage capacity constraints, including mapping of closed catchments, constrained wastewater treatment works and network limitations. •To quantify the impact of these constraints on Council priorities, including town centre regeneration, the Empty to Energised programme, business development, housing delivery and the non-domestic rate base. •To compile evidence, in consultation with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and Northern Ireland Water, on the frequency and location of wastewater system failures, including out-of-sewer flooding and Unsatisfactory Discharges, and the associated environmental and ecological impacts across the Borough over the past ten years. •To write to SOLACE seeking information on how other councils are evidencing and responding to wastewater capacity constraints, including approaches taken in Belfast City Council, Newry, Mourne and Down, and Mid and East Antrim.	Council April 2026 - Referred to Planning Committee May 2026	Agreed at May Planning and ratified at May Council	Director of Place and Prosperity	
718	Corporate Services	14.04.2026	Councillor Morgan and Alderman McAlpine	That this council strongly condemns the blocking of the establishment of an Independent Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) by the DUP in the Assembly and Executive; further condemns the hypocrisy of those who express concern over the Lough Neagh crisis, the illegal dump at Mobuoy and wider environmental degradation, but refuse to support plans to enhance environmental accountability and safeguards; notes that a commitment to an IEPA was contained within the New Decade, New Approach Deal; agrees that it is undemocratic for an IEPA to be unilaterally vetoed by one party which represents a minority in the Assembly as a whole; agrees to write to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to ask him to urgently convene a process of institutional reform, in consultation with the Irish Government and local parties, to remove blockages and vetoes from Stormont's system of government; and to ask the Secretary of State to take meaningful steps to ensure that commitments in New Decade, New Approach are implemented.	Council April 2026 - Referred to Corporate Services Committee May 2026			
719	Active & Healthy Communities	21.04.2026	Councillor McClean and Councillor Cathcart	That Council acknowledges the significant reduction in fixed penalty notices issued for dog fouling offences since the service was brought in-house; sets out the reasons for this performance and commits to an improvement plan; that this plan be reviewed in six months following its presentation; and that, following this review, considers any further options for improvement including different service model delivery. The improvement plan should seek as a minimum to achieve previous enforcement levels for FPNs issued, ensure cost control (including the option of penalty reductions for swift payment), drawing upon best practice elsewhere to include prevention and communication.	Council April 2026 - Referred to Active & Healthy Communities Committee May 2026	Report to November 2026 A&HC Committee.	Gareth Kinnear (Head of Environmental Health and Regulatory Services)	
720	Environment	24.04.2026	Councillor Edmund and Alderman Adair	That this Council task officers to bring forward a costed programme of works to bring slipways and harbours in Council ownership or control up to an appropriate standard in order that they can be utilised by leisure users as part of our wider tourism offering and to investigate appropriate funding streams to deliver this.	Council May 2026 referred to Environment Committee June 2026	Agreed at June 2026 EC Referred to EC at May 2026 Council	Peter Caldwell (Head of Estates)	

721	Environment	14.05.2026	Councillor W Irvine and Councillor S Irvine	This Council recognises the service and sacrifice of members of the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR), including those from the Borough and surrounding areas who served with dedication during a difficult period in Northern Ireland's history. Accordingly, tasks officers to bring back a report this Council on providing a memorial bench within Clandeboyne Cemetery, Bangor, dedicated to the memory and service of members of the Ulster Defence Regiment. The proposed bench should provide a dignified place for remembrance and reflection for families, veterans, and members of the wider community.	Council May 2026 referred to Environment Committee June 2026	Agreed at June 2026 EC Referred to EC at May 2026 Council	Stephen Daye (Head of Parks and Cemeteries)	
722	Corporate Services	17.05.2026	Councillor McBurney and Councillor McCollum	Following the deputation from pupils of Rathmore Primary School and Strangford College, which highlighted the importance of ensuring children and young people are included in decisions that affect them, this Council recognises that political literacy is fundamental to a healthy democracy and to preparing the next generation for active civic participation. Accordingly, Council requests that Officers bring forward a report setting out options for the development of a children's political literacy project to be delivered in advance of the May 2027 election, including, but not limited to: support available from the Electoral Commission; opportunities for Council to deliver the project alongside identified suitable partners; a workshop explaining how government works in Northern Ireland; and the organisation of a mock election to enable children and young people to express their views on the issues that matter most to them.	Council May 2026 - Referred to Corporate Services Committee June 2026	Agreed at June 2026 CS		
723	Active & Healthy Communities	18.05.2026	Councillor Wray and Councillor Newman	That this Council acknowledges increased demand for service experienced by North Down and Ards Women's Aid. Over the last three years referrals for floating support have increased by over 33% and referrals for refuge have increased by over 186%. This council is committed to the campaign of ending violence against women and girls, and to providing the best possible support service to victims, therefore officers will be tasked to: -Writes to the Minister for Communities requesting a review into the funding provided to Women's Aid through the Northern Ireland Housing Executive Supporting People Grant. -Writes to the Northern Ireland Executive welcoming the funding provided, but expressing concerns that the (EVAWG) programme is primarily resourced to support prevention activity, rather than provision of services. While investment in prevention is essential, it is already resulting in increased disclosures and referrals, particularly to Women's Aid services. The letter should also highlight the need for multiyear funding, and increased funding allocation for the Tier 3 EVAWG programme, which currently doesn't cover the cost of one additional member of staff. Secondly to letter should propose the establishment of a dedicated Emergency Fund in Northern Ireland to support women who are fleeing domestic abuse but face immediate financial barriers to accessing safety. Many women, particularly those who are working or have limited access to benefits, are unable to afford refuge accommodation costs or secure private rental housing due to high upfront expenses such as deposits and rent in advance. As a result, they are often forced to remain in unsafe environments or face homelessness. This fund would provide flexible, rapid financial assistance to cover emergency costs, refuge stays, and access to long-term housing, ensuring that no woman is prevented from leaving an abusive situation due to a lack of financial resources.	Council May 2026 - Referred to Active & Healthy Communities Committee June 2026	Agreed at June 2026 AHC		
724	Active & Healthy Communities		Councillors Cathcart and Gilmour	That this Council condemns recent anti-social behaviour witnessed in Bangor and the North Down coast and commits to reviewing our own resources, as well as working with relevant agencies to tackle this problem. Whilst grateful for police action taken, this Council recognises that the officers need additional powers to tackle anti-social behaviour and expresses disappointment that the Justice Minister has ruled out passing relevant legislation during this Assembly mandate. This Council therefore agrees to write to the Justice Minister, calling for action on anti-social behaviour legislation, more police officers for the Borough, the reopening of Bangor custody suite and the rejection of any lowering of the age of criminal responsibility.	Council - June 2026 - Referred to the Active and Healthy Communities Committee			

725	Environment		Councillor Cochrane and Bangor East and Donaghadee EM	That this Council notes the publication of NICCAP3 and recognises the need for practical measures to address coastal erosion, flooding and infrastructure resilience in Northern Ireland. Further to this, Council notes that the delivery of the associated Adaptation Delivery Plan would 'designate responsibility to a NICS department to oversee coastal management and bring forward policy and legislation on managing coastal change' and believes this designation must be supported with associated Executive funding. Recognises that coastal councils, including Ards and North Down Borough Council, are increasingly exposed to the impacts to coastal change, while lacking the statutory powers and resources to respond effectively; Further notes that Ards and North Down has the longest coastline of any council area in Northern Ireland and is therefore particularly affected by these risks, further notes that the coast and coastal walks are arguably the 'jewel in the crown' of our community and tourism assets; acknowledges the increasing evidence of coastal impacts within the Borough, including flooding, storm damage, and pressure on public infrastructure. Accordingly, this Council calls on the Northern Ireland Executive to: 1. Designate a lead department or agency with statutory responsibility for both coastal flooding and coastal erosion and clarify its relationship with Councils in delivering improved intelligence, monitoring and protection; 2. Introduce a framework for long-term coastal planning, such as Shoreline Management Plans or a Northern Ireland equivalent; 3. Establish a dedicated coastal protection and resilience funding to support councils and relevant agencies in delivering necessary infrastructure and adaptation measures; 4. Bring forward proposals, within a defined timeframe, to address governance, funding, and delivery of coastal protection in Northern Ireland. The Council further agrees to: Write to the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, and relevant Executive Ministers, outlining this position; Engage with the NI Local Government Association (NILGA) and other coastal councils to seek a coordinated, regional approach to this issue; Support efforts to ensure that coastal communities are adequately protected from flooding, coastal erosion and other environmental pressures.	Council - June 2026 Referred to the Environment Committee	Tabled on September 2026 EC Agenda Referred to EC at June 2026 Council		
726	Place & Prosperity		Alderman Smith and Councillor Chambers	That Council writes to the Department for Communities requesting a review of their current policy that stops businesses located outside of town centre core boundaries from applying for grant support.	Council - June 2026 Referred to the Place and Prosperity Committee			
727	Active & Healthy Communities		Alderman McRandal and Councillor Harbinson	That this Council acknowledges the financial costs that it incurs in dealing with and disposing of litter and in seeking to take enforcement action. That this Council acknowledges that it needs to take further action to positively influence the attitude of some people towards littering. This Council therefore resolves to consider what additional actions it can reasonably take both to inform the public about the various harms that result from littering and to seek to change people's attitudes towards littering.	Council - June 2026 Referred to the Active and Healthy Communities Committee			
728	Corporate Services		Councillor Brady and Councillor McKee	That Council reverse its decision of 29th October 2025 to withdraw funding from the NAC NI Region and reinstates its membership, in line with the other ten councils in Northern Ireland.	Council - June 2026 Referred to the Corporate Services Committee			