# ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

2 September 2026

Dear Sir/Madam

You are hereby invited to attend a hybrid meeting (in person and via zoom) of the Active and Healthy Communities Committee of Ards and North Down Borough in the Council Chamber, 2 Church Street, Newtownards and via Zoom on **Wednesday 9 September 2026 commencing at 7pm**.

Yours faithfully

Susie McCullough
Chief Executive
Ards and North Down Borough Council

## A G E N D A

1. Apologies

2. Declarations of Interest

3. Deputation – Northern Community Leisure Trust

**Reports for Approval**

4. Community Strategy (Report attached)

5. Consultation Response - Flags and Emblems Bill (Report attached)

6. Food Control Service Plan 2026-2027 Update (Report attached)

7. Response to Notice of Motion 671- Public Consultation Findings (Report attached)

8. UK Wide Fireworks Consultation (Report attached)

9. Consultation on Restricting Promotions of Products High in Fat, Sugar and Salt (Report attached)

**Reports for Noting**

10. Portaferry Sports Hall Floor Update (Report attached)

11. Response to Notice of Motion 711- Invictus Games (Report attached)

12. Sports Forum Grants Q1 2026 & 2027 (Report attached)

13. Good Relations Annual Report 2025/26 (Report attached)

14. District Good Relations Plan 2026/27 (Report attached)

15. Response to Notice of Motion 703 - Femicide (Report to attached)

16. Drinking Water Quality Report 2025 (Report attached)

17. Response to Notice of Motion 685 – Ruby's Law Correspondence (Report attached)

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.

18.2 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.

19. Any Other Notified Business

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

**Reports for Approval**

20. Bangor and Newtownards Markets (Report attached)

**MEMBERSHIP OF ACTIVE & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE (16 MEMBERS)**

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

Ards and North Down Borough Council

ITEM 4

**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

| | |
|---|---|
| Report Classification | Unclassified |
| Exemption Reason | Not Applicable |
| | If multiple: |
| Meeting | Active and Healthy Communities Committee |
| Date of Meeting | 09 September 2026 |
| Responsible Director | Director of Active and Healthy Communities |
| Responsible Head of Service | Head of Community |
| Report title | Community Strategy |
| Attachments | Appendix 1 Community strategy and three-year action plan.<br>Appendix 2 Review of Community Centres and Halls Provision and Operating Models.<br>Appendix 3 Review of Community Development Direct Provision |
| File Reference (if applicable) | CDV58 |
| Legislation | Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 |
| Resource Implications | None<br>Narrative: |
| Screening Requirements | *The Council will commit to consider the implication of all reports under the categories of Section 75, Rural Needs, Data Protection, Climate and Sustainability:*<br><br>Screening carried out – Screened out |
| Link to Corporate Plan Priority and Outcome | Priority 3: Social<br>Multiple<br>If multiple: 5 and 6 |

**Background**

Members are aware that Council commenced the development of a Community Strategy for the Borough in June 2025. Following a procurement process, Sector 3 Solutions was appointed in July 2025 to undertake the development of the Strategy and supporting evidence base. As part of this process, an extensive programme of engagement and research was undertaken to assess current community services provision, community development activity and the operation of Council-owned community centres and halls.

The consultation and engagement programme included:

- 14 public drop-in engagement sessions.
- 6 semi-structured focus groups.
- 2 Online surveys.
- 25 stakeholder interviews

This work resulted in the production of three interrelated documents:

- Building Stronger Communities Together: Community Strategy 2026-2035.
- Review of Community Development Direct Provision.
- Review of Community Centres and Halls Provision and Operating Models.

The Community Strategy provides the overarching strategic framework for Community Services over the next ten years, while the two review documents provide the evidence base, analysis and recommendations which informed the Strategy and accompanying three-year Action Plan. Together, the documents establish a clear line of sight from consultation and research through to strategic priorities and future actions

**Context**

The Community Strategy, Building Stronger Communities Together: Community Strategy 2026-2035, sets out Council's long-term vision for Community Services and aims to improve wellbeing through social inclusion, reduce inequality and ensure equitable access to community services and facilities across the Borough.

The Strategy **vision** is:
*To improve wellbeing through social inclusion and reduced inequality and to ensure that all people have equitable access to community services.*

The Strategy mission is:
*To connect communities by working in partnership to provide accessible, inclusive and sustainable community services and welcoming community spaces that improve wellbeing, build local capacity and enable people to thrive.*

To achieve this, **five strategic themes** have been identified:

1. Strengthen our Connections to Communities.
2. Improve Access to Existing Community Services and Opportunities for All.
3. Develop a Sustainable, Skilled and Empowered Community Sector.
4. Improve Partnership, Collaboration and Whole-System Working.
5. Create a Fit-for-Purpose Community Centres and Halls Estate.

**Summary**

**Community Strategy**

The Community Strategy 2026-2035 establishes Council's strategic direction for Community Services over the next decade. Consultation highlighted a range of challenges including declining volunteer capacity, funding pressures, increasing operating costs, uneven awareness of Council services and facilities, and the need for more consistent access to support across the Borough. The Strategy provides a framework to address these issues through improved partnership working, service accessibility, community capacity building and sustainable service delivery.

**Review of Community Centres and Halls Provision and Operating Models**

The review confirms that community centres and halls are important community assets which contribute significantly to health, wellbeing, inclusion and local community development. The review identified opportunities to improve marketing, awareness, booking systems, performance monitoring, accessibility, maintenance planning and utilisation of facilities. The long-term ambition is to develop centres as inclusive community wellbeing hubs which respond to local need and maximise community benefit.

**Review of Community Development Direct Provision**

The review found that Community Development Direct Provision delivers significant value for local communities and contributes positively to prevention, inclusion and wellbeing. However, pressures relating to ageing demographics, rural accessibility, social isolation, volunteer recruitment and financial sustainability were identified. The review recommends that future provision should be evidence-led, targeted towards need and focused on achieving measurable outcomes for residents.

**Next Steps**

Subject to Council approval, the Community Strategy and Three-Year Action Plan will move into implementation. Key actions will include:

- Establishment of a Community Strategy Implementation Group to oversee delivery, monitor progress and coordinate activity across Community Services and relevant partners.
- Development of annual delivery plans and performance measures aligned to the Strategy's five strategic themes.
- Delivery of priority actions within the Three-Year Action Plan.
- Progression of the recommendations arising from the Community Centres and Halls Review, including improvements to promotion, booking systems, performance monitoring, trusted-user arrangements and partnership opportunities.
- Progression of recommendations arising from the Community Development Direct Provision Review to ensure services are targeted, evidence-led and focused on improving wellbeing outcomes.
- Strengthening partnership working with statutory, community and voluntary sector organisations to maximise resources and improve service delivery.
- Development of a comprehensive communications programme to increase awareness of community services, facilities, grants and support opportunities across the Borough.
- Identification and pursuit of external funding and investment opportunities to support implementation of priority actions.

- Regular monitoring and reporting to Members on progress against the Community Strategy and Three-Year Action Plan.

The Implementation Group will review progress annually and oversee the formal review of the Three-Year Action Plan to ensure delivery remains aligned to emerging community needs and Council priorities.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council Approves Building Stronger Communities Together: Community Strategy 2026-2035; the Review of Community Development Direct Provision and the Review of Community Centres and Halls Provision and Operating Models.

APPENDIX 1



# BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

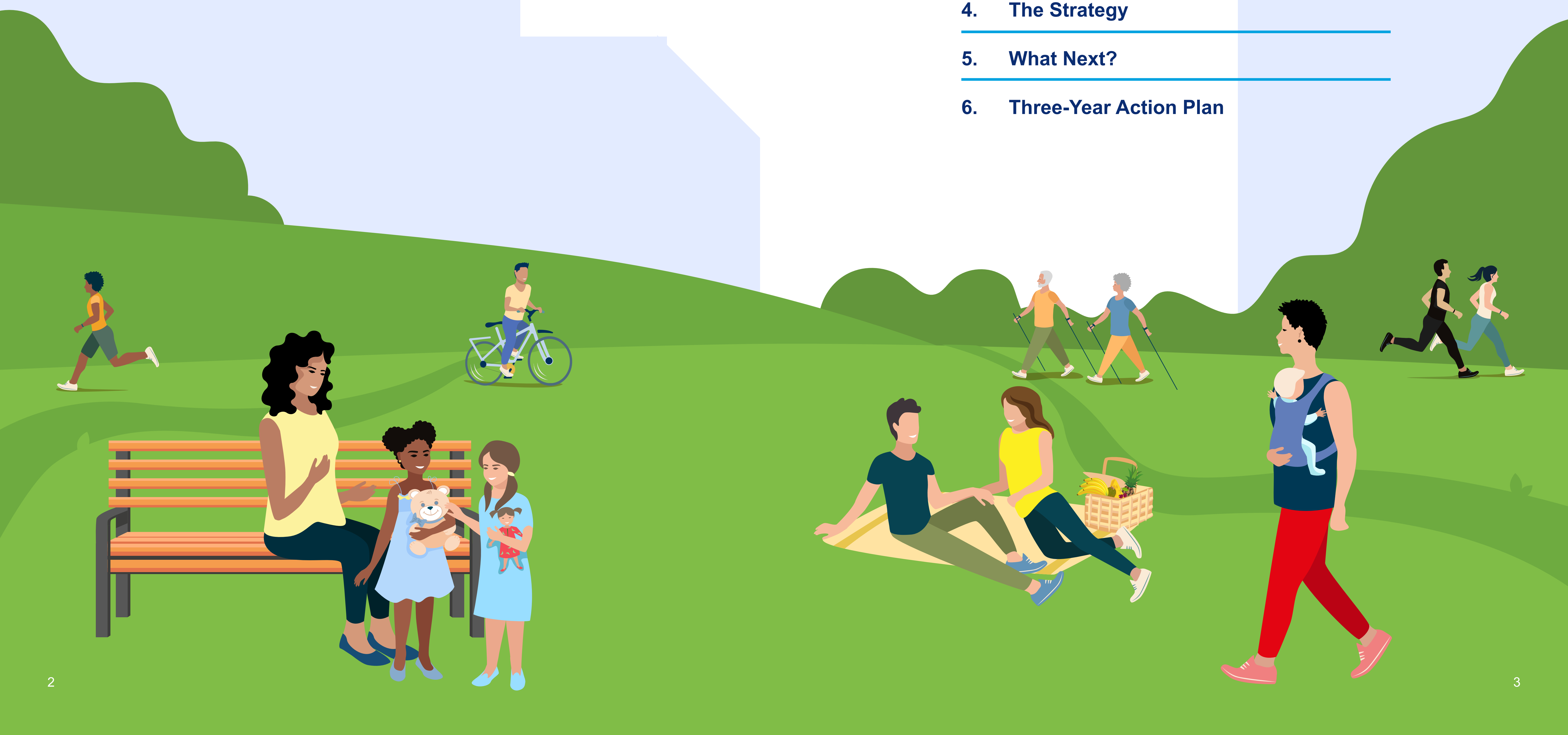
## COMMUNITY STRATEGY 2026 - 2035

Ards and North Down Borough Council

www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Setting the Scene
2. Strategic Alignment
3. What You Told Us
4. The Strategy
5. What Next?
6. Three-Year Action Plan



# 1. Setting the Scene

The Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 places a statutory duty on Ards and North Down Borough Council to initiate, maintain, facilitate, and participate in Community Planning across the Borough. In line with the Council's Corporate Plan, the provision of CD Services and Community Centres and Halls play a vital role in enhancing the wellbeing of residents. These services support community participation, inclusion, and connectedness by providing opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to engage in a wide range of social, recreational, cultural, and educational activities, helping to build strong, resilient, and thriving communities.

## Purpose of the Community Strategy

The Council is committed to delivering services, so they are accessible, responsive and focused on the needs of residents and visitors. This strategy supports that approach by setting out how Community Services will work with communities and partners to strengthen local participation, inclusion and wellbeing. It reflects the purpose and vision of the Corporate Plan 2024–2028:

## Our Purpose

*Our purpose is to make Ards and North Down the best place to work and live*

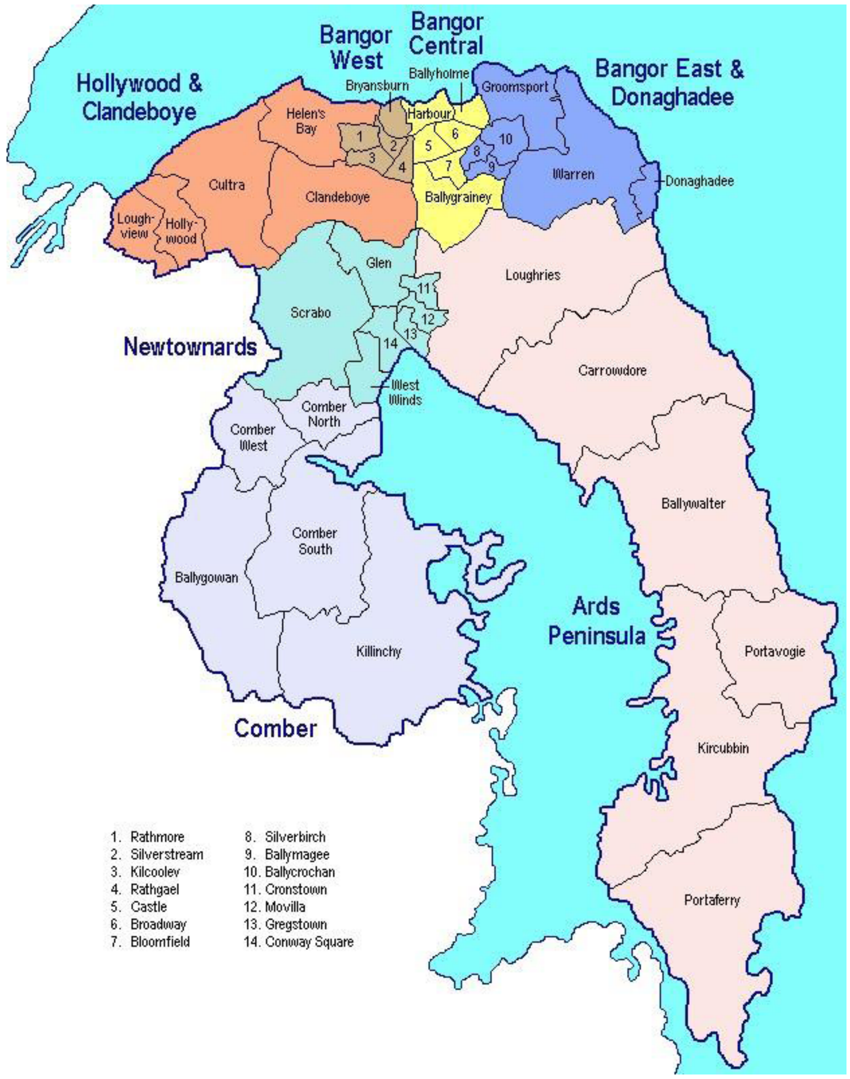
## Our Vision

*Our vision is that Ards and North Down will be a place to be proud of which is more prosperous, vibrant, healthy, and sustainable and where people enjoy an excellent quality of life.*

Our Vision is for a Sustainable Borough has been informed by a comprehensive review of Community Development direct provision, Community Centres and Halls provision, and the operating models that support them.

## An introduction to the Council

Ards and North Down is a local government district (LGD) in the east of Northern Ireland. It includes the city of Bangor, and the towns of Comber, Donaghadee, Holywood and Newtownards. The Borough spans an area of 228 square miles and boasts natural landscapes and seascapes with 115 miles of scenic coastline winding along the edge of Belfast Lough, on to the Ards Peninsula and Strangford Lough.




Ards and North Down has a population of 164,223, making it the fourth most populated of the 11 Council areas in Northern Ireland. The area has a population density of 359.8 people per square kilometre, approximately three times the Northern Ireland average. The area presents a balanced demographic composition, with females comprising 51% and males 49%. Since 2013, the area has witnessed a population increase of 4.4% just below the Northern Ireland average of 4.8%.

Compared to the Northern Ireland median age of 40 years, Ards and North Down maintains an older demographic, with a median age in mid-2023 of 45.2 years, giving it the highest median age at local government district level. More than one in five people (23%) living in Ards and North Down in mid-2023 were estimated to be aged 65 and over, the highest proportion compared to other council areas, compared with 18% on a NI level. Conversely, the Borough has the lowest proportion of children (i.e. people aged 0 to 15 years) at 17.8% compared to 20% on a NI level. Additionally, the Borough has the lowest proportion of the working age population (i.e. people aged 16 to 64 years) among its population 59.2% compared to 62% nationally.

# Community Services

Community Services is part of the Active and Healthy Communities Directorate and includes Community Development, Community Centres and Halls, and Externally Funded Programmes.

Community Services works to support community cohesion, celebrate culture and heritage, and empower communities through capacity building, peace building and local pride.

The service contributes to all three Council corporate priorities, with a particular focus on improving wellbeing through social inclusion and reducing inequality.

## Community Development

The Community Development Services Unit supports communities directly and through partnership working with community and voluntary organisations, helping local groups build confidence, capacity and resilience.

# Direct provision vs Development Services

The Council currently delivers a range of Community Development activities in line with its previous Community Strategy – The Game Plan 2018 - 2023.

The Game Plan's vision was:

***"To have every community in our Borough bustling with community led activities and initiatives for all"***

The Game Plan identifies six desired outcomes:

**Outcome 1 - Partnership Solutions**
Through the development of a collaborative process processes our communities are able to work with us, and each other, to identify solutions that address local needs.

**Outcome 2 - Start-Up/Sustainable**
Local groups are sustainable and able to meet their own needs due to an empowering start-up and support process.

**Outcome 3 – Volunteering**
Communities are happy and healthy due to the opportunities available for people to maximise their skills and talents.

**Outcome 4 - Training & Development**
Our communities are skilled, engaged and empowered through training and development opportunities.

**Outcome 5 - Clubs & Community Summer Schemes**
Needs are addressed through the delivery of quality programmes with relevant partners in shared spaces.

**Outcome 6 – Grants**
Our communities have capacity to avail of Council funds to address locally identified needs.



# Community Development Services

The full extent of the Community Development Service Unit is outlined in the following table:

### Partnerships

- SLA with Community Networks
- Neighbourhood Renewal
- Community Advice Ards and North Down (CAAND)

### Support and Facilitation

- Community Planning working groups
- Interagency meetings
- Grant application support
- Delivery of Safeguarding
- Training
- Community Group AGM's
- Community Meetings
- Cross Council Reading Groups
- Volunteer development
- Education Projects
- Peer working
- Networking events
- Community Consultations
- Weekly direct (ezine) communication to groups

### Initiatives

- Youth Voice
- Mae Murray Accessible Beach
- Tea Dances
- Reading Borough
- Connecting Families
- Stay Connected, Stay Active

### Direct Provision

- Play Clubs
- Young Leaders Programme
- Additional Needs Club
- Over 50's Club
- Summer schemes direct provision plus support of Community Partners

### Annual Grants

- Community Development running costs
- Community festival fund
- Seeding grants
- Christmas festival grants
- Community support initiatives (Social Supermarket)
- Community Advice Ards and North Down (CAAND)
- One off grants, VE Day, Coronation, hardship.

## Community Development Values

The Service Unit's current delivery is based on the following Community Development Values and Principles:

| Our Values | Our Promise |
|---|---|
| Honesty | We will always operate with integrity through our honest and transparent actions |
| Championing Empowerment | We will work with, and support, local communities to build their capacity to address their specific needs |
| Openness | We will publish our yearly performance against agreed targets |
| Fairness | We will address imbalances and bring about positive change founded on social justice and inclusion |
| Efficiency | We will work with other statutory and non-statutory organisations, together with the community, to ensure common goals are targeted and co-ordinated effectively |

## Purpose and Scope of Community Centres and Halls Provision

The Council's community centres and halls provide multi-use/flexible spaces in communities. Typically, these support a range of services and activities including:

- Play and summer schemes
- Outreach service provision (by statutory and voluntary agencies)
- Family events and celebrations
- Advice clinics
- Training

The Council operates 20 community centre and hall facilities as outlined below:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. The Alderman George Green Community Centre | 11. Carrowdore Community Centre |
| 2. Conlig Community Centre | 12. Comber Adult Learning Centre |
| 3. Green Road Community Centre | 13. Donaghadee Community Centre |
| 4. Groomsport Boathouse | 14. Kircubbin Community Centre |
| 5. Hamilton Road Community Hub | 15. Manor Court Community Centre |
| 6. Kilcooley Community Centre | 16. Portaferry Market House |
| 7. Marquis Hall | 17. Portavogie Community Centre |
| 8. Redburn Community Centre | 18. The Glen Community Centre |
| 9. Skipperstone Community Centre | 19. West Winds Community Centre |
| 10. Ballygowan Village Hall | 20. Kiltonga Hall |

The following map provides locational context for Council's 20 Community Centres and Halls:


# 2. Strategic Alignment

Community Services activity is closely aligned with national, regional and local strategies that share a focus on wellbeing, inclusion, partnership and sustainable places.

| National Strategies |
|---|
| NI Assembly's Programme for Government - Doing What Matters Most 2024-2027 |
| Department for Communities, Active Living; Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2024 - 2034 |
| Executive Office's Together: Building a United Community (T:BUC) Strategy, published in 2013 |
| People & Place; A Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal Under Review 2003-2013 |
| Making Life Better - A Whole Systems Strategic Framework for Public Health 2013-2023 |
| Children & Young Peoples Strategy 2020 - 2030 |
| Active Aging Strategy 2016-2022 |

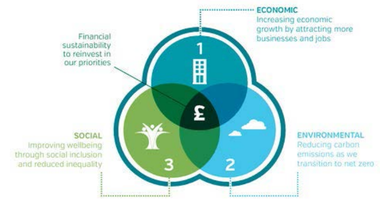
| Council Strategies |
|---|
| AND Community Plan - The Big Plan 2017-2032 |
| Corporate Plan 2024-28 |
| Current Community Development Strategy "The Game Plan" - 2018 - 2023 |
| Good Relations Strategy 2025 - 2028 |
| The Policing and Community Safety Partnership Strategy 2025 - 2028 |
| The Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership Action Plan 2027 |
| Annual Service Plans |
| Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan 2023–2028 |

### Community Plan - The Big Plan 2017-2032


The Big Plan is focused on creating positive outcomes for everyone across the Borough, the five outcomes are:

Outcome 1: Opportunities to fulfil the lifelong potential of residents.
Outcome 2: Being equipped to enjoy good health and wellbeing.
Outcome 3: Communities where they are respected, are safe and feel secure.
Outcome 4: A prosperous and inclusive economy.
Outcome 5: An environment that is valued, well-managed and accessible.
Community Services specifically contributes to Outcomes 1, 2 and 3.

### Council's Corporate Plan 2024-2028




The Community Development provision contributes directly to outcomes:
1. An engaged Borough with citizens and businesses who have opportunities to influence the delivery of services, plans, and investment.
5. Safe, welcoming, and inclusive communities that are flourishing.
6. Opportunities for people to be active and healthy.

# 3. What You Told Us

## Engagement Overview

We carried out an extensive consultation exercise to inform the wider review and development of this strategy. Engagement took place in two phases:

1. The first phase took place during October and November 2025.
2. The second phase took place in March 2026 and focused on the draft consultation and actions framework.

### Phase One Engagement – October / November 2025

**7** Walk-in engagement sessions
49 attendees

**3** Semi-structured focus groups
58 participants

**5** Week online community survey
233 respondents

**25** Stakeholder interviews
27 participants

### Phase Two Engagement – March 2026

**7** Walk-in engagement sessions
36 attendees

**5** Semi-structured focus groups
50 participants

**4** Week online community survey
10 respondents



### Online Community Survey

An online community survey was launched on 7th October 2025. A paper version was provided at community centres across the Borough and used during public walk-in sessions. Completed copies could be returned via freepost to the Council.

The community survey closed on 10th November 2025. In total, 233 people responded to the survey. Of those respondents, 73% were female and 26% were male.

### Stakeholder Engagements

We also carried out 25 semi-structured interviews with external organisations working in community development, health and wellbeing, education and training, housing and support, and advice and advocacy.

## Key Insights – Community Development Direct Provision

### Support required by community groups and organisations in order of importance:

| | |
|---|---|
| 57% | 1. Applying for funding |
| 20% | 2. Advice on governance, safeguarding and insurance issues |
| 18% | 3. Advice on volunteer recruitment and retention |
| 5% | 4. Advice on marketing, strategic planning & measuring impact |

### Operational cost challenge areas for community groups and organisations in order of importance:

| | |
|---|---|
| 52% | 1. Overhead costs |
| 16% | 2. Project & programme costs |
| 13% | 3. Government costs (accountants, Access NI etc.) |
| 13% | 4. Volunteer expenses |
| 6% | 5. Training/staff costs/other |

The following challenges faced are by the voluntary and community sector in Ards and North Down:

- Grant awards for running costs are reducing year on year as more groups are applying
- Desire to see a more visible connection between residents and Council services
- Community groups are facing increased competition to draw down external funding
- Equity in the provision of community development direct support across the Borough
- Competition for funding leads to lack of collaboration
- Requests to review support models for rural areas
- Experienced staff in the Community & Voluntary Sector are not being retained due to fixed term contracts expiring
- Desire for more initiatives based on social connection and health and wellbeing
- A decline in volunteerism, especially post COVID
- Low awareness of the Council Community Centres and Halls offer and its potential

Priority groups identified for future Community Development Direct Provision intervention include:

**Young People**

**Older People**

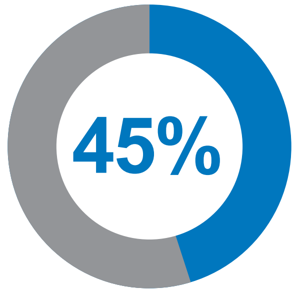
**People with Disabilities**

**Woman and girls facing domestic abuse**

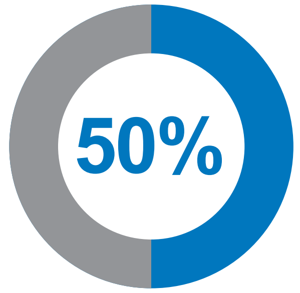
**Deprived Communities**

## Key Insights – Community Centres and Halls Provision:

Consultations revealed the following in terms of Community Centres and Halls provision experiences:




**45% of those who responded have NEVER used a Council owned community centre/hall**




**50% of those who responded did not know how to book a community centre/hall**

The table below outlines positive views in terms of the standard of Community Centres and Halls Provision:

| Positive Feedback | Standard Met | Good – Excellent |
|---|---|---|
| Quality and standard of Community Centres and Halls | 30% | 45% |
| Size of Community Centres and Halls for multipurpose use | 27% | 46% |
| Accessibility of Community Centres and Halls | 27% | 53% |
| Maintenance of Community Centres and Halls | 29% | 55% |
| Safety of Community Centres and Halls | 27% | 63% |
| Affordability of Community Centres and Halls | 38% | 44% |

The table below outlines negative views in terms of the standard of Community Centres and Halls Provision:

| Negative Feedback | Standard Met | Below Average – Poor |
|---|---|---|
| Marketing and awareness of Community Centres and Halls offer | 31% | 55% |
| Variety of Community Centres and Halls offer for multipurpose use | 30% | 39% |
| Flexibility in opening hours of Community Centres and Halls | 32% | 35% |

The following challenges highlighted in terms of the Community Centres and Halls offer:

- Lack of knowledge as to what community centres/halls are used for
- Lack of awareness of the activities that are run in community centres/ halls
- Community centres/halls are underutilised but there is so much potential to rejuvenate use
- Some community centres/halls are viewed as 'venue hires' rather than 'active community hubs
- The process for booking community centres & halls takes too long and there is no online booking option

# 4. The Strategy

## Vision

Our vision is to improve wellbeing through social inclusion and reduced inequality and to ensure that all people have equitable access to community services.

## Mission

Our mission is to connect communities by working in partnership to provide accessible, inclusive and sustainable community services and welcoming community spaces that improve wellbeing, build local capacity and enable people to thrive.

## Five Strategic Themes

The Strategy sets out five interconnected themes that will shape investment, partnership and action over the next decade, ensuring every initiative contributes to stronger, more resilient and more connected communities across Ards and North Down.

| Theme | Outcome |
|---|---|
| **1. Strengthen our Connections to Communities** | People of all ages and backgrounds have equitable access to quality community development opportunities that improve participation, wellbeing and social inclusion, regardless of where they live |
| **2. Improve Access to Community Development Opportunities for All** | More communities can access inclusive, high quality community development opportunities that improve participation, wellbeing and community connectedness |
| **3. Develop a Sustainable, Skilled and Empowered Community Sector** | Community organisations are resilient, well governed and financially sustainable, with the skills, leadership and resources required to deliver lasting benefits for local communities |
| **4. Improve Partnership, Collaboration and Whole-System Working** | Council, statutory agencies and community partners work collaboratively to deliver joined-up, evidence-led solutions that maximise community impact and make the best use of collective resources |
| **5. Create a Fit-for-Purpose Community Centres and Halls Estate** | A modern, accessible and well-used network of Community Centres and Halls provides welcoming community hubs that support participation, service delivery and stronger, more connected communities |

Delivery of the Strategy will be supported by a rolling programme of action plans. The first action plan will span three years to allow the establishment of a Strategy Implementation Group responsible for overseeing implementation and developing future annual action plans. This approach provides the flexibility to review progress, evaluate impact, respond to emerging needs and continuously refine delivery. Monitoring and reporting arrangements will broadly follow the framework set out below.


# Five Strategic Themes

## Theme 1: Strengthen our Connections to Communities

Residents and stakeholders told us there is a clear need to strengthen communication and engagement between the Council and local communities. Some people said they were not fully aware of Community Development services or the Community Centres and Halls offer, including what support is available, how it could benefit them and how to access it.

Improving communication emerged as one of the strongest priorities for future action. People asked for a more coordinated approach that uses both digital and traditional communication methods so that information reaches a wider range of audiences across the Borough.

There was strong support for clearer information on the Council's website, better signposting, continued use of existing channels such as the weekly funding email, and accessible printed materials that can be shared through community venues and partner organisations.

The consultation also identified barriers to accessing Community Centres and Halls. Nearly 45% of respondents had never used a Council community facility, while nearly 50% did not know how to book one.

People also raised concerns about lengthy booking processes and the lack of an online booking system. This highlights the need for a simpler, clearer and more customer-focused experience.

Stakeholders also emphasised the importance of strengthening relationships between Community Development staff, local community organisations and residents. They highlighted the value of increasing the visibility of Community Development Officers within communities and making better use of existing community networks to promote opportunities and encourage collaboration.

| Key Success Factors | Strategic Actions |
|---|---|
| **Communities are more aware of services** | Develop and implement a communications plan to increase awareness of Community Development and Community Centres and Halls Provision |
| **Information is clear and accessible** | Improve how residents and community groups access and navigate information about Community Development Provision and Community Centres and Halls |
| **Effective relationships with communities** | Continue collaboration between Community Services and Communities |

## Theme 2: Improve Access to Existing Community Services opportunities for all

Residents and stakeholders told us that Community Development provision should be more inclusive and should better reflect the needs of people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds across the Borough. Particular priority groups identified through consultation included young people, especially older teenagers; older people; people with disabilities; women and girls experiencing domestic abuse; and people living in areas of social deprivation.

There was strong support for sustaining and strengthening existing programmes such as Summer Schemes, Play Clubs and Over 50's Clubs, recognising their contribution to wellbeing, reduced social isolation and stronger community connections. Consultees also asked that future provision responds to changing community needs and improves equitable access across the Borough, particularly in rural areas. Future delivery should consider social deprivation, strategic fit with Council priorities, balanced investment, affordability and capacity to deliver within available budgets.

Stakeholders highlighted that participation can be limited by transport difficulties, disability access issues, lack of local provision in areas of social deprivation, cultural differences and low awareness of available opportunities. Suggested responses included pilot outreach schemes using the Community Centres and Halls estate, transport solutions and hybrid programme options.

| Key Success Factors | Strategic Actions |
|---|---|
| **Participation is inclusive and diverse** | Enhance inclusive participation opportunities for all, ensuring activities are planned to reflect a broad range of ages, abilities and groups |
| **Programmes remain sustainable and responsive** | Improve sustainability and responsiveness to needs of people including Summer Schemes, Play Clubs, and over 50's etc and consider areas for expansion |
| **Access barriers are significantly reduced** | Improve community development participation opportunities in communities where access to opportunities is limited |



## Theme 3: Develop a Sustainable, Skilled and Empowered Community Sector

Feedback highlighted the need to strengthen the capacity, resilience and long-term sustainability of community and voluntary organisations across the Borough. Community groups identified challenges around governance, committee succession, safeguarding, volunteer recruitment, financial sustainability and organisational capacity. Many asked for practical, accessible support from the Council and specialist partner organisations.

Stakeholders also highlighted the need to identify gaps in community development delivery in priority areas and provide targeted guidance, coordination and enabling support where additional help is needed.

Access to grant funding remains one of the greatest support needs for community organisations. Rising operational costs, increased competition for limited resources and growing demand are placing additional pressure on the sector. Stakeholders emphasised the importance of a transparent, fair and consistent grants process, supported by clear guidance, accessible applications and timely communication.

Stakeholders identified the need for additional support for community organisations that will use the proposed online grant application system from 2027 onwards. Some organisations also asked the Council to consider the feasibility of a tiered grant award and allocation process, with set allocations for eligible groups based on size and consideration of groups that own or lease community venues.

Securing external funding was also identified as a significant challenge for community organisations, with many groups reporting increased competition for funding alongside reduced availability of core financial support. Community organisations highlighted the need for greater awareness of funding opportunities, improved access to timely information and practical assistance to develop high-quality funding applications.

Consultees identified a significant decline in volunteering across the Borough, particularly since COVID-19. Community organisations reported increasing difficulty recruiting, retaining and supporting volunteers. Many highlighted the need for a more coordinated approach that raises awareness of volunteering opportunities, provides clearer guidance and recognises the valuable contribution volunteers make to local communities.

| Key Success Factors | Strategic Actions |
|---|---|
| **Community organisations are more sustainable and resilient** | Support community groups to build their capacity and operate sustainably |
| **Support reaches communities effectively** | Provide support and where required, direct provision, to strengthen local delivery |
| **Grant funding is responsive to community need** | Deliver Community Development grant funding in line with Council's grants policy |
| **External funding success is increased** | Strengthen support for community groups to access external funding |
| **Volunteering is valued and sustained** | Strengthen volunteer recruitment, retention, and recognition to support a sustainable volunteering environment |

## Theme 4: Improve Partnership, Collaboration and Whole-System working

Feedback highlighted the need for stronger collaboration across Council services so that community needs receive a more joined-up response. Stakeholders noted that community issues often involve several service areas, requiring better communication, shared planning and clearer internal referral routes.

Stakeholders also asked for greater collaboration between the Council, statutory agencies, community organisations and wider partnership networks. They highlighted the importance of Community Development sharing local intelligence, influencing partnership priorities and ensuring community voices inform multi-agency planning and decision-making.

Feedback also highlighted the need for closer working between Community Development and Community Centres and Halls teams. This will help ensure information is shared consistently, services are better coordinated and local knowledge from day-to-day engagement is used to inform programme planning and service delivery.

| Key Success Factors | Strategic Actions |
|---|---|
| **Staff collaborate across Council services** | To improve staff collaboration to enhance council's response to community need |
| **Community voices inform partnership planning** | To strengthen communities roles  in influencing multi-agency and external partner work plans |


## Theme 5: Create a Fit-for-Purpose Community Centres and Halls Estate

Feedback identified that awareness and visibility of the Council's Community Centres and Halls estate is currently low. Many residents are not aware of the facilities available, the activities taking place or how to access and hire centres and halls.

Stakeholders reported that many halls in particular were perceived as 'venues for hire' rather than active community hubs, while inconsistent promotion, limited online information and insufficient signage were seen as barriers to greater use.

Respondents highlighted the need for clearer and more accessible information, stronger online and offline promotion, better coordination of communications and regular user feedback. This will help ensure the Community Centres and Halls offer is better understood, more widely used and responsive to community needs.

Feedback also identified dissatisfaction with the current booking process. Many respondents said they did not know how to make a booking or found the process slow, unclear and dependent on manual enquiries. Users asked for a more transparent and accessible booking experience, including clearer information on availability, hire arrangements and costs, alongside an online self-service booking system.

Continued investment in the Community Centres and Halls estate will be important to ensure facilities remain fit for purpose, accessible and aligned with community needs. While many users were positive about the quality, safety and maintenance of existing facilities, feedback highlighted differences in functionality, accessibility and the ability of some venues to support a wider range of community activities.

Respondents emphasised the importance of using evidence and user feedback to prioritise maintenance, refurbishment and modernisation. Future investment should reflect local demand and be supported by flexible budgets and procurement processes so that priority maintenance and condition issues can be resolved in a timely way.

A recent review of Community Centres and Halls operating models recommended that the Council consider the following actions to ensure the estate continues to provide an efficient, flexible and equitable offer to residents:

- Annually review the pricing policy for use of the Community Centres and Halls Estate.
- Develop and implement an online booking system for Community Centres and Halls that is user friendly and compatible with Council's Digital Services.

The Community Centres and Halls review also highlighted the need for Council to put in place policies and support processes for community organisations or public bodies that express interest in taking on management responsibility for Community Centres and Halls if opportunities arise.

The Community Centre and Halls estate will be reviewed in partnership with all relevant Service Units to ensure community needs and maintenance are addressed.

The review also recommended that the Council should:

- Consider the adoption of a Community Planning or co-design approach with statutory bodies to examine partnership models for the provision of community centre space where there is an underutilised public building or a building that could be repurposed for community use.
- Encourage and support other external organisations (community groups/external stakeholders) to better utilise the Community Centres and Halls Estate to provide flexible and inclusive community spaces for events, meetings and consultations.

| Key Success Factors | Strategic Actions |
|---|---|
| **Booking opportunities are simplified and online** | Develop and implement an online booking system for Community Centres and Halls |
| **Community Centres and Halls are modernised** | Review and prioritise areas for modernisation and improvements across the Community Centres and Halls Estate |
| **Community Centres and Halls are managed efficiently** | Ensure our centres are managed efficiently and effectively |
| **Community capacity in place for managing assets** | Council has the policies and procedures in place to support communities in managing Community Centres and Halls |

# 5. What Next?

This Community Strategy establishes five strategic themes and a series of high-level actions shaped by the views of residents, community organisations, Elected Members and key stakeholders. Together, they provide a clear framework for strengthening Community Services and enhancing the Community Centres and Halls offer across the Borough. The strategy's success will be measured by the positive difference it makes to local people and communities over the next ten years.

Delivering this vision will require clear implementation, monitoring and review. The Council will oversee delivery through governance arrangements, regular performance monitoring and periodic review so that progress is visible, outcomes are understood and priorities remain responsive to emerging needs and opportunities.

While the Council will provide leadership, this is a Borough-wide strategy rather than a Council-only plan. Its success will depend on strong partnerships between statutory organisations, community and voluntary groups, residents and other partners. By working together, the Borough can make best use of resources, strengthen communities and ensure community services and facilities continue to meet the needs of current and future generations.

## Delivery of the Strategy

Successful delivery of the strategy will be supported through three implementation and performance management arrangements:

**Strategic and Thematic Implementation** – Establish governance structures, partnership arrangements and thematic working groups to coordinate delivery of the five strategic themes and support collaborative action across the Borough.

**Monitoring and Reporting of the Ten-Year Strategy** – Monitor progress towards the long-term vision and strategic outcomes through regular reporting, review and evaluation, ensuring the strategy remains relevant and responsive to changing community needs.

**Monitoring and Reporting of the Three -Year Action Plan** – Track delivery of short-term actions, milestones and performance indicators, with progress reports used to inform future annual action plans and refine priorities as implementation progresses.

# 6. Three-Year Action Plan

## Key Success Factors:
## Theme 1 – Strengthen our Connections to Communities

| Action 1.1: Develop and implement a communications plan to increase awareness of Community Development and Community Centres and Halls Provision | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Outputs** | **Outcomes** | **Year/s** |
| Staff will implement a marketing and promotions work plan of Community services including activities in each of the Community Centres and Halls<br><br>Develop and implement a communications plan that includes digital and offline channels, recognising the need to reach different audiences in different ways across the Borough<br><br>Increase the profile of the work that Community Development and Community Centres & Halls offer utilising a shared communications and messaging approach, comprising of clear, consistent information on services, programmes, and points of contact<br><br>Annually review and when necessary, update communications to ensure information remains current, accurate and aligned with evolving changes to Community Development and Community Centres and Halls provision | • 5% increase of awareness in Community Service with the development and implementation of a Communication Plan aligned to corporate branding<br>• 5% increase percentage of people who access information and website traffic<br>• Increased online engagement. (community centre bookings and community grants)<br>• Baseline of hard-to-reach groups established<br>• 5% Increase engagement with hard-to-reach groups | **Review Annually**<br><br>2026 - 2027<br><br>2027 – 2028<br><br>2027 – 2028<br><br>2026 - 2027 |

| Action 1.2: Improve how residents and community groups access and navigate information about Community Development and Community Centres and Halls | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Outputs** | **Outcomes** | **Year/s** |
| Review and improve customer experience on website of Community Development and Community Centres and Halls information on the Council website<br><br>Implement online booking & enquiry system for Community Centres and Halls<br><br>Enhance communication channels to improve how information is shared to communities and groups<br><br>Continue to ensure key information is available in printed versions throughout the Council and associated partner facilities<br><br>Continue to provide community information sessions and practical workshops on how to access Community Development services<br><br>Review of how services and activities are promoted in community centres and halls | • An online customer experience survey carried out<br>• An online booking process implemented that will lead to increase accessibility and usage<br>• 5% Increased use of Community Centres and Halls<br>• 5% increase in the number of community groups accessing support<br>• Customer experience survey for community centres and halls introduced<br>• Increase in community workshops by 5% | **Review Annually**<br><br>2026 - 2027<br><br>2027 – 2028<br><br>2027 – 2028<br><br>2027 – 2028<br><br>2027 – 2028<br><br>2027 – 2028 |

| Action 1.3: Continue collaboration between communities | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Outputs** | **Outcomes** | **Year/s** |
| Continue scoping opportunities for contact between Community services<br><br>Better utilise existing networks and informal connections to share information on Community services<br><br>Continue partnership working between Community Services and community planning outcomes | A stakeholder gap analysis developed<br>• Information reviewed and shared with existing networks<br>• Stronger relationships between Community Services Officers, communities, and peer networks | **Review Annually**<br><br>2028 - 2029<br><br>2027 – 2028<br><br>2026 - 2027 |

# Key Success Factors: Theme 2 - Improve Access to Existing Community Services Opportunities for All

**Action 2.1: Enhance inclusive participation opportunities for all, ensuring activities are planned to reflect a broad range of ages, abilities and groups**

| Outputs | Outcomes | Year/s |
|---|---|---|
| Enhance opportunities for inclusive community programmes and activities<br><br>Work with an array of partners and organisations to deliver inclusive activities and programmes. Continue to improve signposting to inclusive and accessible activities delivered by community, statutory or voluntary organisations<br><br>Expand and adapt existing inclusive provision | • 5% Increase in engagement across all age groups and communities<br>• Baseline signposting information<br>• 5% increase in signposting opportunities<br>• 5% Increase in inclusive programmes and activities | **Review Annually**<br><br>2027 – 2028<br><br>2027 – 2028<br><br>2028 - 2029 |

**Action 2.2: Improve sustainability and responsiveness to need of existing programmes including Summer Schemes, Play Clubs, and over 50's Clubs and consider areas for expansion**

| Outputs | Outcomes | Year/s |
|---|---|---|
| Map existing programmes, services, identify overlaps, and gaps Council wide<br><br>Assess sustainability and requirements of programmes, including partnership arrangements<br><br>Review the current delivery models for Summer Schemes, Play Clubs and over 50's Clubs<br><br>Continue to work with partners to deliver options that could enhance programme sustainability | • A baseline survey of all programmes and services across Council carried out to evidence duplications and gaps in provision<br>• Baseline survey utilised to identify sustainability and partners<br>• Baseline survey utilised to identify programmes and delivery models<br>• Partners included in baseline and gaps identified | **Review Annually**<br><br>2027 – 2028<br><br>2027 – 2028<br><br>2027 – 2028<br><br>2027 – 2028 |

**Action 2.3: Improve community development participation in communities where access to opportunities is limited**

| Outputs | Outcomes | Year/s |
|---|---|---|
| Continue to obtain community feedback through surveys, focus groups, and community consultations to better understand barriers to participation<br><br>Continue partnership working with a range of organisations across statutory organisations, schools, voluntary, and community organisations<br><br>Community services to effectively work with actions set out in the Leisure Strategy and continue to work with relevant council services and external organisations<br><br>Ensure facilities are accessible for people with disabilities | • Baseline feedback surveys carried out to identify barriers to participation<br>• Gaps identified and new partnerships developed<br>• Collaboration at all relevant internal working groups to deliver on actions identified in leisure strategy<br>• Accessibility audit of all community centres and halls carried out | **Review Annually**<br><br>2026 – 2027<br><br>2026 – 2027<br><br>2027 – 2028<br><br>2027 – 2028 |

# Key Success Factors: Theme 3 – Develop a Sustainable, Skilled and Empowered Community Sector

| Action 3.1: Support community groups to build their capacity and operate sustainably | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Outputs** | **Outcomes** | **Year/s** |
| Continue to support and advise community groups on all governance administrative and compliance requirements<br><br>Build on and promote existing Community Development toolkits and resources<br><br>Signpost groups to appropriate internal and external support to enhance their capacity and sustainability<br><br>Use engagement and existing data to identify recurring capacity challenges across community groups, and use this insight to shape future guidance, training, and support | • At least 1 governance advice session included in annual funding workshop<br>• An updated Community Development toolkit carried out in in partnership with community groups<br>• A review of support and signposting carried out in partnership with groups<br>• 5% increase of support and signposting<br>• Greater long-term sustainability | **Review Annually**<br><br>2026 – 2027<br><br>2026 – 2027<br><br>2027 – 2028<br><br>2028 – 2029 |

| Action 3.2: Provide support and where required, direct provision to strengthen local delivery | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Outputs** | **Outcomes** | **Year/s** |
| Identify community groups, networks, and local delivery gap areas where additional support or intervention is required<br><br>Provide guidance, coordination and enabling support to community organisations to strengthen local delivery<br><br>Review learning from support and direct provision to inform future capacity-building, partnership working, engagement, and decisions about delivery models | • To identify gaps in urban and rural areas by way of review of community provision<br>• Annual community development programmes delivered to support the community<br>• Learning reviewed to inform future direct provision including inequalities in areas across Council | **Review Annually**<br><br>2027 – 2028<br><br>2027 – 2028<br><br>2027 – 2028 |

| Action 3.3: Deliver Community Development grant funding in line with Council grants policy | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Outputs** | **Outcomes** | **Year/s** |
| Continue to clearly set out grant processes, timelines, eligibility criteria, and assessment requirements for each funding program in line with Council's grants policy<br><br>Continue to review grant processes in line with the council's policy based on feedback from applicants<br><br>Develop training workshops for staff and applicants on proposed online grant applications system<br><br>Continue to consider options for a tiered grant award and allocation process for eligible community groups | • Streamline grant schemes in place for community groups<br>• Review of the grant schemes carried out annually or as required<br>• 3 workshops provided for staff and community groups to have a more informed community on the online system<br>• Tiered grant schemes and options reviewed and implemented | **Review Annually**<br><br>2027 – 2028<br><br>2027 – 2028<br><br>2027 – 2028<br><br>2027 – 2028 |

| Action 3.4: Strengthen support for community groups to access external funding | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Outputs** | **Outcomes** | **Year/s** |
| Support community groups to be aware of external funding and identify barriers to accessing<br><br>Support community groups to apply for external funding and address barriers to applying | • 2 Information sessions delivered to community groups on accessing external funding<br>• Continued training and support provided to community groups to improve capacity for applying for external funding<br>• Feedback survey carried out with community groups to establish if confidence has improved in applying and accessing funding | **Review Annually**<br><br>2026 – 2027<br><br>2026 – 2027 |

| Action 3.5: Strengthen volunteer recruitment, retention, and recognition to support a sustainable volunteering environment | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Outputs** | **Outcomes** | **Year/s** |
| Review and update the Council's volunteer policy<br><br>Develop an awareness of community volunteering roles across the Borough<br><br>Offer community groups support and training for their volunteers | • Updated volunteer policy<br>• Increased awareness of community volunteer opportunities<br>• Volunteers have increased skills and confidence to carry out their roles effectively | **Review Annually**<br><br>2027 – 2028<br><br>2027 – 2028<br><br>2028 – 2029 |

## Key Success Factors: Theme 4 – Improve Partnership, Collaboration and Whole-System Working

| Action 4.1: To improve staff collaboration to enhance council response to community need | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Outputs** | **Outcomes** | **Year/s** |
| Improve internal working partnerships across all services to enhance collective response and whole system approach to community need and issues<br><br>Continue to contribute to all partner organisations service plans, projects and initiatives | • 5% increase in shared knowledge resulting in better community service delivery<br>• Relationships strengthened between all relevant multi agency partners and stakeholders | **Review Annually**<br><br>2027 – 2028<br><br>2027 – 2028 |

| Action 4.2: To strengthen Communities role in influencing multi-agency and external partner work plans | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Outputs** | **Outcomes** | **Year/s** |
| Ensure Community voices are represented at relevant working groups to support and deliver community facing actions and initiatives<br><br>Ensure agreed actions from partnership engagement are considered within Community Services and future planning<br><br>Promote the Community Centres and Halls estate as viable locations to host interagency/external partnership meetings | • A stronger, joined-up Council response to community needs through active community voices involvement in key working groups<br>• 90% attendance at interagency meetings<br>• 90% attendance at cross council working groups to bring community voices to working groups<br>• Actions are coordinated to reduce duplication and better meet community needs<br>• Increased awareness of community centres and halls locations to all partners and stakeholders | **Review Annually**<br><br>2026 – 2027<br><br>2026 – 2027<br><br>2026 – 2027 |

# Key Success Factors: Theme 5 – Create a Fit-For-Purpose Community Centres and Halls Estate

| Action 5.1: Develop and implement an online booking system for Community Centres and Halls | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Outputs** | **Outcomes** | **Year/s** |
| Develop an online booking system solution based on engagement and learning from other Council/Public Sector online booking interventions and market testing software solutions | • Online booking system implemented | **Review Annually**<br><br>2027 – 2028 |

| Action 5.2: Review and prioritise areas for modernisation and improvements across the Community Centres and Halls Estate | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Outputs** | **Outcomes** | **Year/s** |
| Review functionality, suitability, and user experience alongside physical condition, to understand how well facilities support current and future community use<br><br>Identify and agree priority maintenance, refurbishment, and modernisation needs across the estate, informed by the review findings | • Review carried out of all assets in community centres and halls in partnership with advice and guidance from councils' estates team and other relevant departments ensuring community needs are addressed<br>• Working in partnership with the Council's estates team to prioritise and plan maintenance issues to reduce backlog and enhance accessibility | **Review Annually**<br><br>2026 – 2027<br><br>2026 – 2027 |

| Action 5.3: Ensure our centres are managed efficiently and effectively | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Outputs** | **Outcomes** | **Year/s** |
| Review of the pricing policy for use of the Community Centres and Halls Estate to ensure it continues to be affordable and equitable for all residents<br><br>Develop an opening hours policy for the Community Centres and Halls Estates<br><br>Continue partnership working with internal and external stakeholders for new opportunities to increase usage for community centre and halls | • Pricing policy reviewed annually to inform evidence-based recommendations to the Council<br>• Opening hours policy for community centres and halls an admissions policy implemented<br>• Work ongoing to continue to explore opportunities for increased usage | **Review Annually**<br><br>2026 – 2027<br><br>2027 – 2028<br><br>2027 – 2028 |

| Action 5.4: Council has the policies and procedures in place to support communities in managing Community Centres and Halls. | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Outputs** | **Outcomes** | **Year/s** |
| Develop a framework of procedures and processes to support community groups in developing and managing a community centre or hall<br><br>Enhance community capacity building programme to include framework of procedures and processes to support community groups in managing council community centres and halls<br><br>Continue to work with Community Planning in a co-design approach with other agencies to examine partnership models for utilisation of community centre and hall inclusive spaces<br><br>Implement the Community Centres and Halls delivery model review recommendations | • Policies and procedures designed and implemented to enable community groups to apply to manage a council community centre or hall Community capacity<br>• Programme delivered to include a framework of procedures and processes to support community groups in managing community centres and halls<br>• Continued collaborative partnerships, and work and with new and existing agencies to maximise the use of community centres and halls<br>• Delivery models review recommendations implemented | **Review Annually**<br><br>2027 – 2028<br><br>2027 – 2028<br><br>2027 – 2028<br><br>2027 – 2028 |

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Ards and North Down Borough Council

# Review of Community Centres and Halls Provision and Operating Models

## To read in conjunction with the Community Strategy

**September 2026**

Supporting Organisations Enabling Social Change

# Contents

1. Introduction ........................................................................................................ 2

2. Community Centre Review Process ..................................................................... 3

3. Context for the Review ........................................................................................ 5

4. Mapping and Summary of Council Community Centre Provision .......................... 7

5. Citizen and User Feedback ................................................................................ 16

6. Benchmarking with Peer Local Authorities ......................................................... 24

7. 2026 Baseline: SCOT Analysis ........................................................................... 31

8. Consideration of Management Options .............................................................. 36

9. Performance Review and Internal Benchmarking ................................................ 43

10. Community Centres and Halls Centre Specific Provisional Recommendations . 53

11. Community Centre Review Conclusions and Recommendations ....................... 68

12. Vision for Community Centre/Halls Provision by 2035 ...................................... 71

# 1. Introduction

Ards and North Down is a local government district (LGD) in the east of Northern Ireland. It is one of 11 local councils and includes the larger settlements of Bangor, Comber, Donaghadee, Holywood and Newtownards.

S3 Consulting has been appointed by Ards and North Down Borough Council (ANDBC) to:

1. Develop a Community Strategy and Action Plan.
2. Carry out a review of Community Development Direct Provision and make recommendations of future provision.
3. Carry out a review of Community Centres and Halls provision and operating model in ANDBC and make recommendations of future provision.

This report focuses on requirement 3, the review of Community Centres and Halls provision and operating model in ANDBC and makes recommendations of future provision for 2026 – 2035.

## 2. Community Centre Review Process

The Community Centre review process developed by S3 Solutions and agreed with ANDBC was based on the Terms of Reference which identified that the review and recommendations must include:

- Stakeholder needs and expectations of Community Centres and Halls provision, taking account of the Corporate Plan 2024 – 2028.
- Review and provide recommendations for opening hours across 20 centres taking into consideration other organisations provision and their delivery within the Borough.
- Investigate how Community Centres and Halls can be utilised to help meet physical activity and wellbeing objectives set out in the ANDBC Corporate Plan. Provide site specific recommendations for this provision based on local demographics, demand and consideration of other providers. Site specific plans must consider proposals within the new Council Leisure Strategy. Consideration should be given as to how Council can add Social Value by creating better opportunities for stakeholders with the aim of determining what's important and how to improve the lives and wellbeing of stakeholders.
- Recommendations on areas of improvement based on needs and expectations including current operating model efficiency, potential alternative operative models, and a ten-year plan

The following table sets out the independent review process that was implemented by S3 Solutions to provide Council with an independent review of its Community Centres and Halls provision and the operating models which underpin them:

*Table 1: Independent Review Process*

| Stage | Activities |
|---|---|
| One: Baseline Assessment | A baseline performance assessment was developed for all of the centres based on the information made available by the Council. Subject to information available the baseline assessment details the following for each centre:<br>• Age<br>• Size and mix of spaces<br>• Condition of the centre<br>• Performance (booking of available spaces as a percentage of available time)<br>• Financial performance (level of annual subvention)<br>• Pricing policy<br>• Management arrangements |
| Two: Location and Context | The review establishes the context for each of the centres against the following factors:<br>• Rural/urban<br>• Ward and DEA<br>• Population and demography |

| | |
|---|---|
| | • Adjacent centres in the catchment<br>• Other public provision (Libraries, HSCT and Leisure centres) |
| Three: Benchmarking and Peer Review | The review is informed by the approach taken by peer local authorities across NI in respect of their strategies for provision and management of community centres. The S3 team engaged with a range of community centres (Council and non-Council owned and managed) in a range of contexts similar to those across the Borough. The S3 team developed and agreed a semi-structured engagement template with the Council to support these engagement meetings. The information gathered through these meetings supported Council to examine a range of options for the management of Centres. It also informed how Council might develop partnerships with community and public sector organisations to provide appropriate Community Centre provision across the Borough where need is identified. The benchmarking focused on:<br>• Age, scale, layout, specifications and design<br>• Location and context(urban/rural)<br>• Governance and management model<br>• Operational management approach<br>• Approaches to marketing and promotion<br>• Activities and percentage utilisation<br>• Pricing policies<br>• Performance and measurement<br>• Financial efficiency<br>• Developing community sector capacity and provision |
| Four: Emerging Options and Approach | Stage four brings together the outputs of the first three stages to provide:<br>• Options on how Council might address the need for and provision of community centres (these will be strategic options)<br>• Recommendations on areas such as evidencing the need for a community centre, pricing policy, opening hours policy, admissions policy, access and booking, marketing and promotion and capacity building |

## 3. Context for the Review

The context for the review is set by a number of factors including:

- Life experience of the Borough citizens
- The strategic and policy context for the Borough
- The community services strategy and provision across the Borough

### Community Services Structure

The Council offers a range of Community Services as part of its Community Development Strategy – 'the Game Plan'. Not all of these services require access to Community Centres and Halls. However, the delivery of many of these services require access to inclusive community space in the communities across the Borough. The thrust of these Community Services supports the development of community leadership and capacity leading to the delivery of needs led services in local communities across the Borough. The support of these activities is enabled through the access to the network of Community Centres and Halls across the Borough including the 20 owned and managed by the Council.

*Table 2: Community Development Services*

| **Partnerships** |
|---|
| • SLA with Community Networks<br>• Neighbourhood Renewal<br>• Community Advice Ards and North Down (CAAND) |
| **Community Development Support** |
| • Community Planning working groups<br>• Interagency meetings<br>• Ezine<br>• Grant application support<br>• Delivery of Safeguarding<br>• Training<br>• Community Group AGM's<br>• Community Meetings<br>• Cross Council Reading Groups<br>• Volunteer development<br>• Education Projects<br>• Peer working<br>• Networking events<br>• Community Consultations<br>• Weekly community email – funding and community information |
| **Initiatives** |
| • Youth Voice<br>• Mae Murray Accessible Beach |

| |
|---|
| • Tea Dances<br>• Reading Borough<br>• Connecting Families<br>• Stay Connected, Stay Active |
| **Direct Provision** |
| • Play Clubs<br>• Young Leaders Programme<br>• Additional Needs Club<br>• Over 50's Club<br>• Summer schemes direct provision plus support of Community Partners |
| **Annual Grants** |
| • Community Development running costs<br>• Community festival fund<br>• Seeding grants<br>• Christmas festival grants<br>• Community support initiatives (Social Supermarket)<br>• Community Advice Ards and North Down<br>• One off grant, VE Day, Coronation, hardship. |

## 4. Mapping and Summary of Council Community Centre Provision

Community Centres and Halls provide multi-use/flexible spaces in communities. Typically, these support a range of services and activities including:

- Play and summer schemes
- Outreach service provision (by statutory and voluntary agencies)
- Family events and celebrations
- Advice clinics
- Training

The Council offers a range of 20 community centre and hall facilities as outlined below:

*Table 3: Council Community Centre*

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. The Alderman George Green Community Centre | 11. Carrowdore Community Centre |
| 2. Conlig Community Centre | 12. Comber Adult Learning Centre |
| 3. Green Road Community Centre | 13. Donaghadee Community Centre |
| 4. Groomsport Boathouse | 14. Kircubbin Community Centre |
| 5. Hamilton Road Community Hub | 15. Manor Court Community Centre |
| 6. Kilcooley Community Centre | 16. Portaferry Market House |
| 7. Marquis Hall | 17. Portavogie Community Centre |
| 8. Redburn Community Centre | 18. The Glen Community Centre |
| 9. Skipperstone Community Centre | 19. West Winds Community Centre |
| 10. Ballygowan Village Hall | 20. Kiltonga Hall |

The map overleaf provides locational context for the Council's 20 Community Centres and Halls:

## Map of Community Centres and Halls

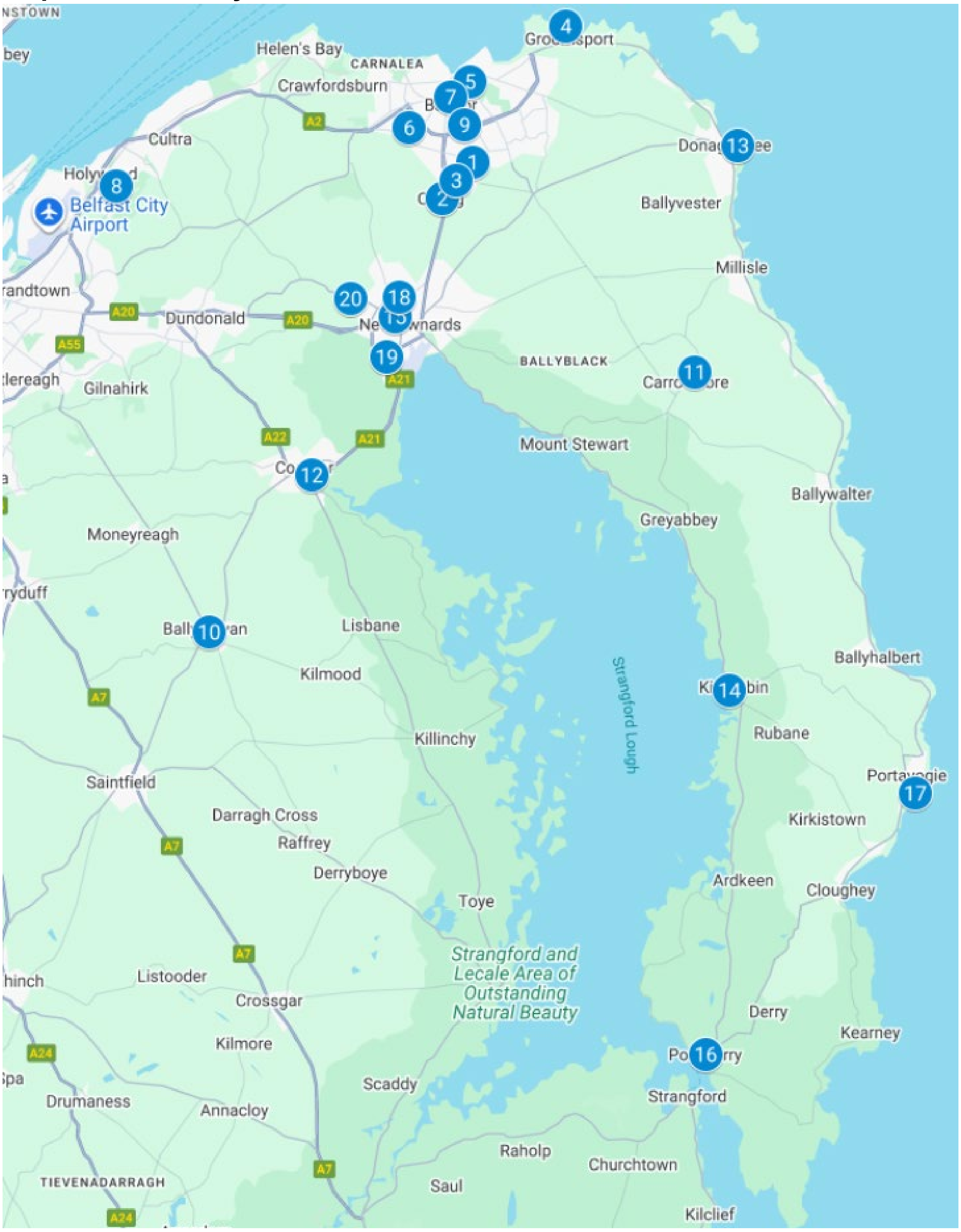



*Figure 1: Map of Council Community Centre and Halls Provision in Ards and North Down*

As part of the mapping of current provision the following table sets out three features of Council's current provision; name, location, spaces and facilities.

| No | Name | Location | Spaces and Facilities |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | The Alderman George Green Community Centre | 1 Rathgill Parade, Bangor, BT19 7TZ | Multi-use Hall, Minor Hall, Meeting Room x 2, Office Centre users will have access to: Kitchen with oven, microwave and fridge, Wi-fi, Projector, Screen and Flipchart |
| 2 | Ballygowan Village Hall | Belfast Road, Ballygowan, Newtownards, BT23 6NA | Main Hall, Meeting Room, Centre users will have access to: Kitchen with oven, microwave and fridge, Wi-fi, Projector, Screen and Flipchart |
| 3 | Carrowdore Community Centre | 110 Main Street, Carrowdore, Newtownards, BT22 2HW | Multi-use Hall, Minor Hal, Meeting Room, Centre users will have access to: Kitchen with oven, microwave and fridge, Wi-fi, Projector, Screen and Flipchart |
| 4 | Comber Community Centre | 1 Park Way Comber, Newtownards, BT23 5AR | Multi-use Hall, Meeting Room, Centre users will have access to: Kitchen with oven, microwave and fridge, Wi-fi, Projector, Screen and Flipchart |
| 5 | Conlig Community Centre | 38 Main Street, Conlig, BT23 7PT | Minor Hall (Ground Floor), Meeting Room (1st Floor - stair access only), Centre users will have access to: Kitchen with oven, microwave and fridge, Wi-fi, Projector, Screen and Flipchart |
| 6 | Donaghadee Community Centre | 12a Railway Street, Donaghadee, BT21 0HG | Multi-use Halls x 2, Minor Halls x 2, Meeting Room, Centre users will have access to: Kitchen with oven, microwave and fridge, Wi-fi, Projector, Screen and Flipchart |
| 7 | Green Road Community Centre | 30 Breezemount Grove, Conlig, BT23 7T | Multi-use Hall, Meeting Room, Centre users will have access to: Kitchen with oven, microwave and fridge, Wi-fi, Projector, Screen and Flipchart |
| 8 | Groomsport Boathouse | 19 Harbour Road, Groomsport, BT19 6JP | Minor Hall, Centre users will have access to: Kitchen with oven, microwave and fridge, Wi-fi, Projector, Screen and Flipchart |
| 9 | Hamilton Road Community Hub | 39 Hamilton Road, Bangor, BT20 4LF | Multi-Use Hall (Ground Hall), Minor Hall (1st floor), Meeting Rooms x2 (1st floor), Multi-Use Hall (2nd floor), Centre users will have access to: Kitchen with oven, microwave and fridge, Wi-fi, Lift, Projector, Screen and Flipchart |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | Kilcooley Community Centre | 50 Owenroe Drive, Bangor, BT19 1QH | Multi-use Hall (1st Floor), Meeting Room x 3, Centre users will have access to: Kitchen with oven, microwave and fridge, Wi-fi, Lift, Projector, Screen and Flipchart |
| 11 | Kiltonga Hall | 36a Belfast Road, Newtownards, BT23 4TT | Centre users will have access to: Toilets, Projector, Screen and Flipchart, Red carpet. More suitable for Weddings etc. |
| 12 | Kircubbin Community Centre | 4 Church Grove, Kircubbin, Newtownards, BT22 2SU | Multi-use Hall, Centre users will have access to: Kitchen with oven, microwave and fridge, Wi-fi, Projector, Screen and Flipchart |
| 13 | Manor Court Community Centre | Mill Street, Newtownards, BT23 4LT | Multi-Use Hall, Centre users will have access to: Kitchen with oven, microwave and fridge, Wi-fi, Projector, Screen and Flipchart |
| 14 | Marquis Hall | Castle Park, 5 Abbey Street, Bangor, BT20 4JE | Minor Hall, Centre users will have access to: Kitchen with oven, microwave and fridge, Wi-fi, Stage, Projector, Screen and Flipchart |
| 15 | Portaferry Market House | The Square, Portaferry, Newtownards, BT22 1LR | First Floor, Ground Floor, Centre users will have access to: Kitchen with oven, microwave and fridge, Wi-fi, Lift, Projector, Screen and Flipchart |
| 16 | Portavogie Community Centre | 54 New Harbour Road, Portavogie, BT22 1EB | Multi-use Hall, Meeting Room, Centre users will have access to: Kitchen with oven, microwave and fridge, Wi-fi, Projector, Screen and Flipchart |
| 17 | Redburn Community Centre | 1A Ardnagreena Gardens, Holywood, BT18 9PD | Multi-use Hall, Meeting Room, Centre users will have access to: Kitchen with oven, microwave and fridge, Wi-fi, Projector, Screen and Flipchart |
| 18 | Skipperstone Community Centre | 99A Skipperstone Road, Bangor, BT20 4EU | Minor Hall, Centre users will have access to: Kitchen with oven, microwave and fridge, Wi-fi, Projector, Screen and Flipchart |
| 19 | Glen Community Centre | 33 Glenard Road Newtownards, BT23 4HS | Multi-Use Hall; Kitchen with oven, microwave and fridge, Wi-fi, Projector, Screen and Flipchart |
| 20 | West Winds Community Centre | Dakota Avenue, Newtownards, BT23 4QX | Multi-Use Hall, Meeting Room, Centre users will have access to: Kitchen with oven, microwave and fridge, Wi-Fi, Projector, Screen and Flipchart |

The independent review also acknowledges that these 20 centres and halls are not the only public spaces available for community based and led activities.

Council also has a responsibility to manage leisure centres across the Borough. These centres have rooms/multi-functional spaces which can be hired by community organisations and families for the provision of services and events. The location of Council owned and managed leisure centres is also mapped below with further detail and information being found in **Appendix 1.**

**Map of Council Facilities outside Community Services Remit**

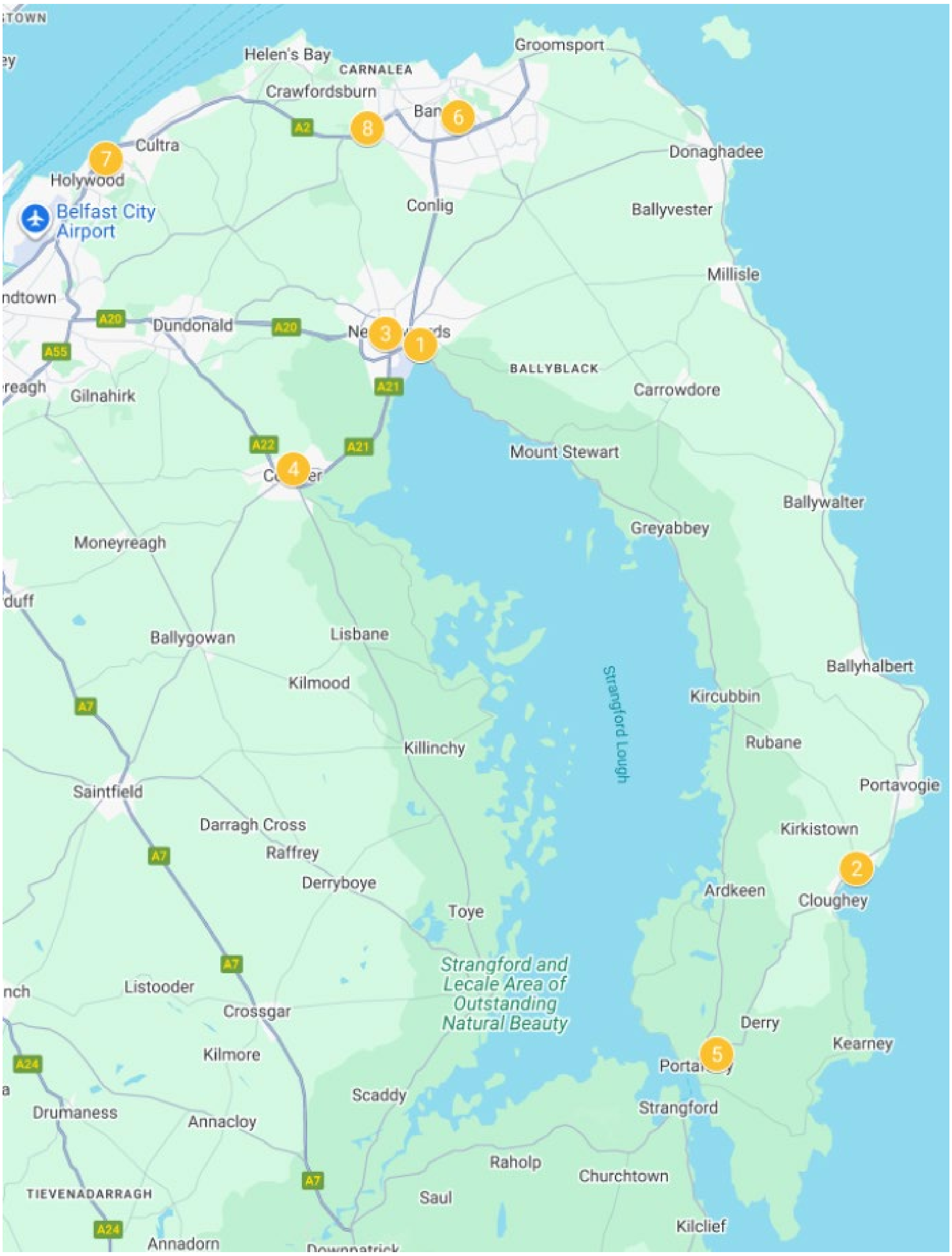



*Figure 2: Map of Council Facilities outside Community Services remit in Ards and North Down*

It is appropriate to examine the location of these leisure centres as some are located in the same community catchments as some of the Council's 20 owned and managed Community Centres and Halls.

The following map also sets out the location of community space provided by community organisations/church/sporting organisations rather than directly by the Council.

**Map of existing non-Council Community provision**

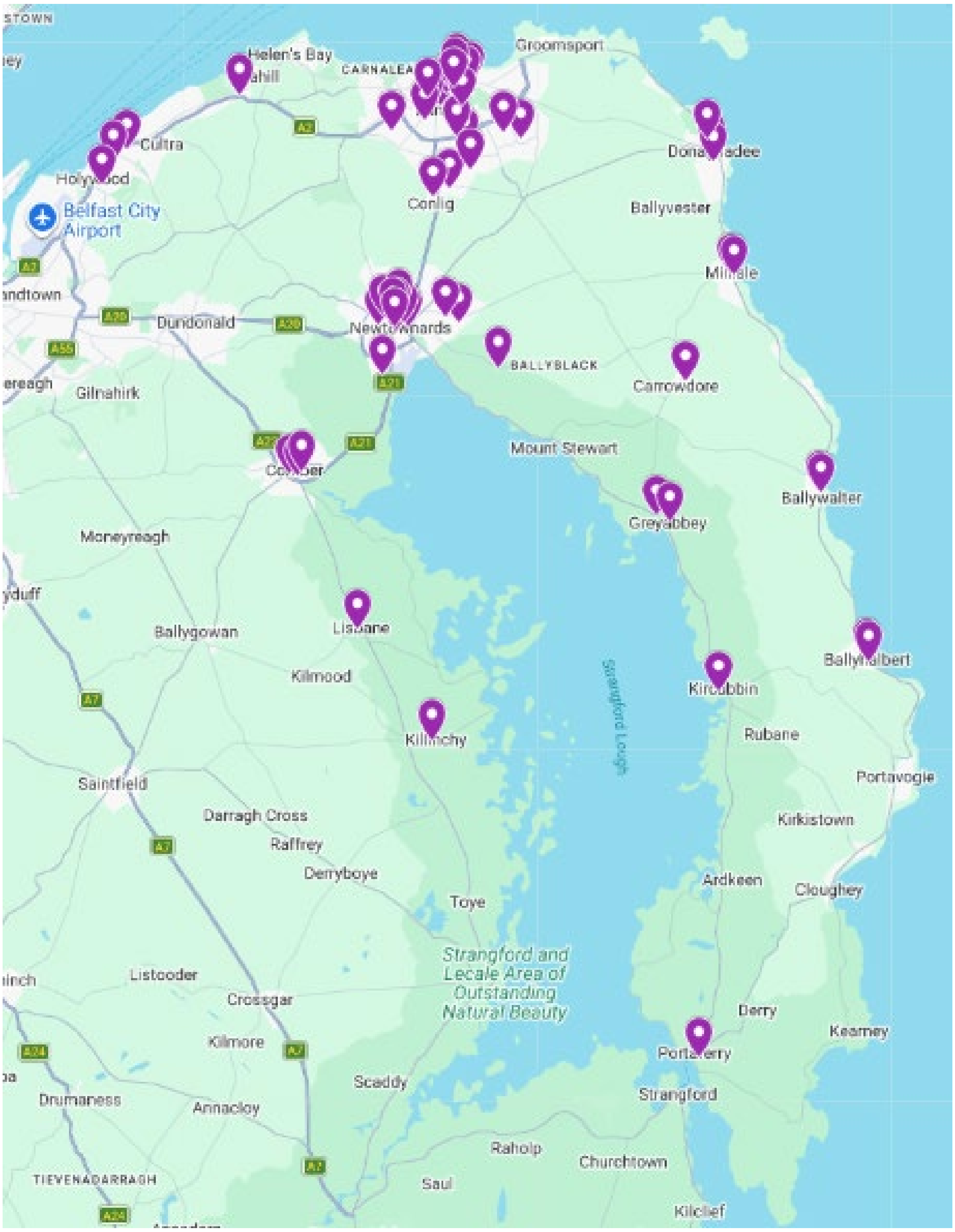



*Figure 3: Map of existing non-Council Community provision in Ards and North Down*

Typically, these centres have been developed and managed by a range of organisations including community associations, regeneration groups, sports clubs and faith groups.

Detail of the Council leisure provision and non-Council Community provision is also detailed in **Appendix 1.**

As part of its 10-year Community Centre Plan to 2035 it is recommended that the Council examines if there are duplication scenarios where one or other of the Council's assets (a community or leisure centre) might meet the needs in lieu of the Community Centres and Halls Provision.

The review process has mapped existing provision by the Council (community and leisure) and other community organisations to:

- Identify opportunities to rationalise provision and reduce duplication.
- Examine where there may be opportunities for the Council to transfer ownership/management to well governed groups and organisations where there is demonstrable capacity; this might be via Community Asset transfer (CAT) or Service Level Agreements (SLAs).

## Management Structure

Council owned Community Centres and Halls are managed within the Community Services section of the Council. The organisational diagram below sets out the management structure resourced by Council to support the effective management of the Community Centres and Halls:

The management structure is:

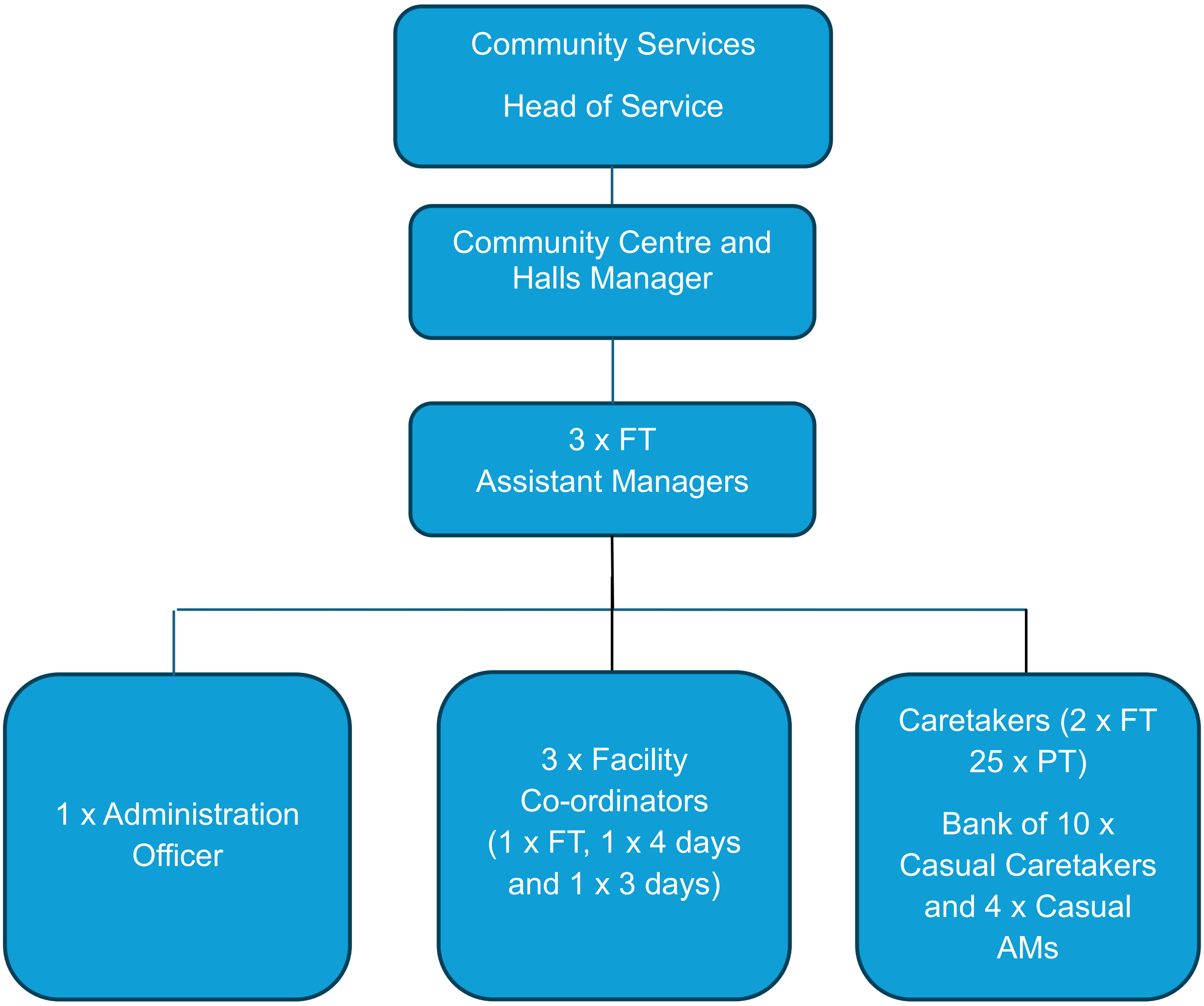



*Figure 4: Community Centres and Halls Organisational Chart*

## 5. Citizen and User Feedback

S3 Solutions has carried out a consultation process to ensure that the views, needs and expectations of stakeholders and local communities are reflected. The community consultation and engagement process has been agreed with Council to ensure that its citizens had the opportunity to input and influence the community centre review process. The community consultation and engagement processes were:

**Phase One of Engagement – October and November 2025**

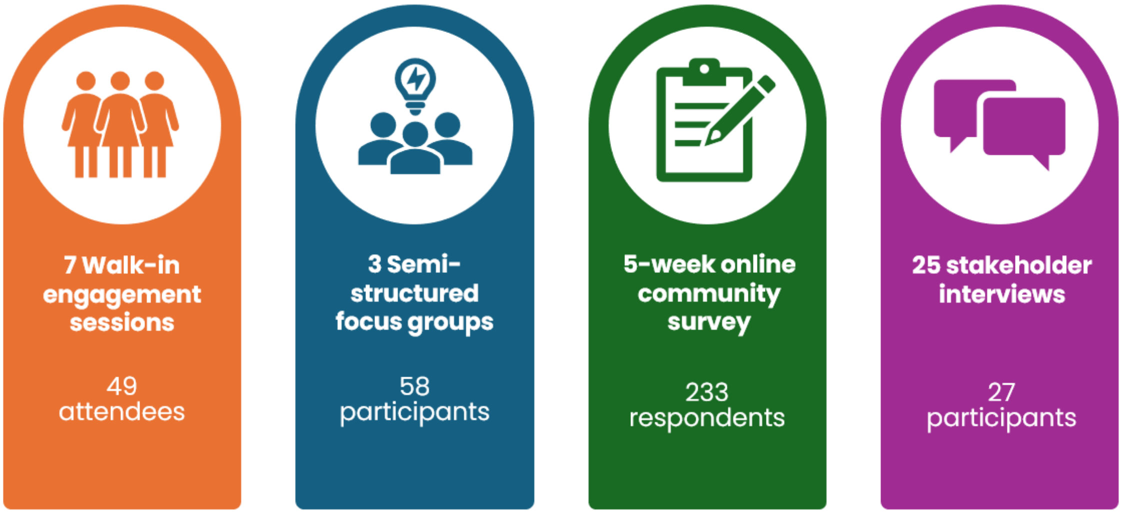



*Figure 5: Phase One of Engagement*

**Phase Two of Engagement – March 2026 using the *Consultation and Draft Actions Framework* as a focus for the Consultation.**

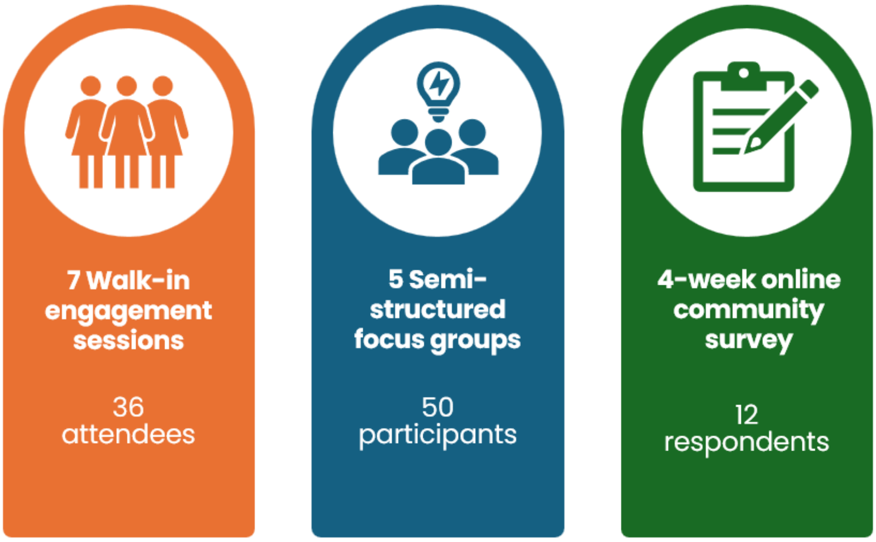



*Figure 6: Phase Two of Engagement*

Therefore, it is reasonable to state that the review has been developed based on a high level of civic engagement as follows:

**Awareness of the Community Centre Offer**

33% of respondents are of the opinion that the marketing and raising awareness of the Community Centres is poor with a further 22.3% believing it is below average. This equates to just over half of the respondents.

The survey also sought qualitative input into how people became aware of their local centre/hall. A review of their responses can be summarised in broad themes as follows:

- I am a member of the group
- I found out that 'something was on' through word of mouth
- I picked it up through social media
- I attend meetings in the centre/hall but apart from that 'I haven't a clue what's on'
- I attend family parties but nothing else … nothing else promoted

Fundamentally these high-level qualitative responses establish that the current approach has probably become more ad-hoc than structured. The review recognises that the raising awareness of the centres/halls requires to be both borough wide and local. At a borough wide level raising awareness should focus on:

- Promoting the awareness of the network and location of the centres
- Confirming that they are available for hire by individuals/families, community and voluntary organisations and statutory organisations
- Communicating how to book
- Communicating opening hours (which requires an internal Council agreement on common opening dates and times)
- Promoting any Borough wide services, activities or events which can be assessed through the centres

## Use of Community Centres and Halls

Online respondents were asked which local Community Centre/Hall is closest to your area, with the ability to select up to two options outlined in the table below:

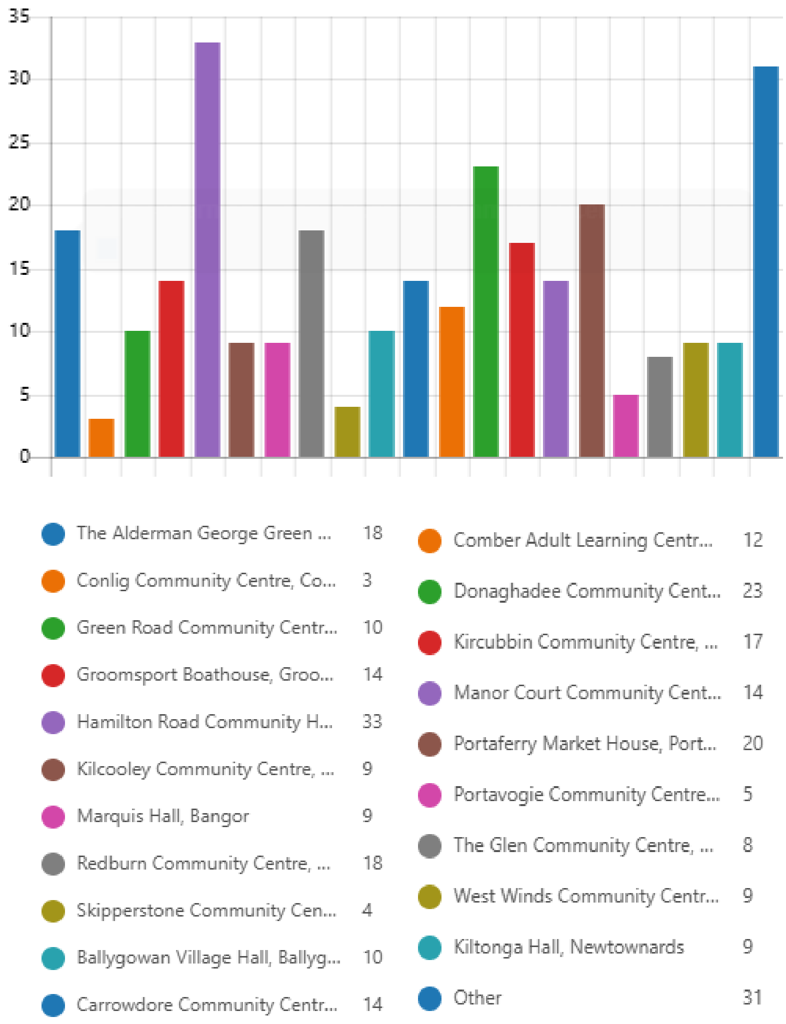



*Figure 7: Local Community Centre/Hall of respondents*

All council community centres were selected, further highlighting the diverse geographical spread of respondents from across all geographic areas of the borough. Of the council facilities the most popular option was Hamilton Road Community Hub in Bangor, which was selected by 11% of respondents. Based on council data Portaferry Market House is the least used of the council halls facilities, however its users were well represented in terms of online survey participation and represented 6% of online survey respondents.

**How often do you use your local Community Centre/Hall?**

The graph below establishes how often people use their local Community Centres and Halls.

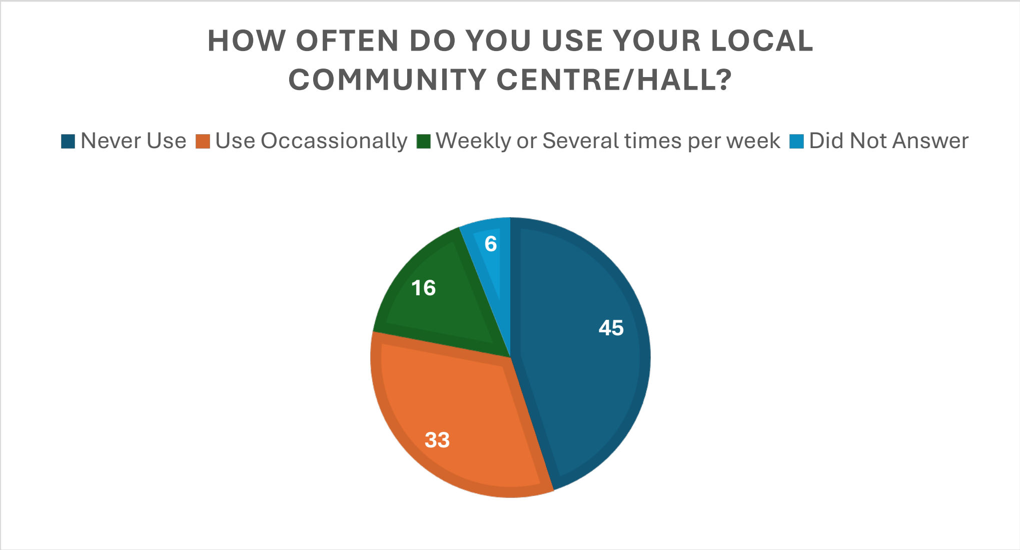



*Figure 8: How often do you use your local Community Centre/Hall?*

224 citizens responded with 45% confirming that they never access services or activities from their local Centre/Hall. For those who do, 33% do so occasionally. Therefore, 21% of citizens responding to the survey use the Centres/Halls on what could be described as a regular basis (daily, weekly or monthly).

The review also recognises that the centres/halls are local meeting the needs of people within a 0 – 20-minute travel time (less in urban areas and more in rural areas). On that basis each centre will have its own locally focused services and activities. This will require an appropriate range of promotional activities for the catchment within which it is located.

### Rating the aspects of your local Community Centre/Hall

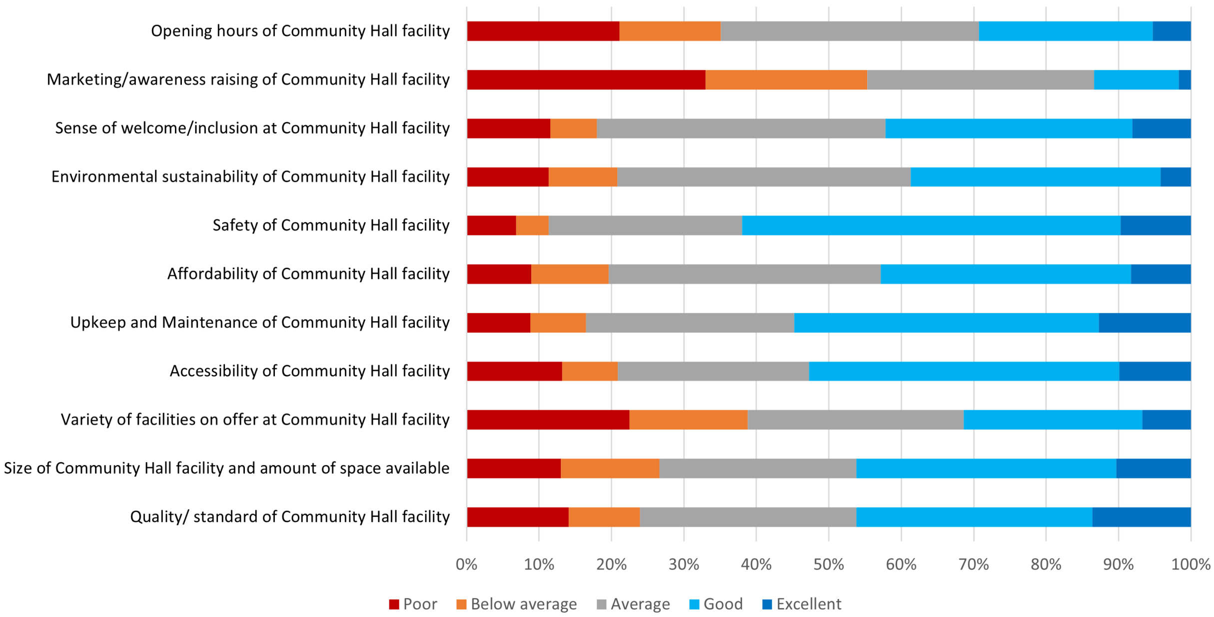



*Figure 9: Rating the aspects of your local Community Centre*

Respondents were asked to select which elements of the Community Centre/Hall facility they use. The table below outlines the results:

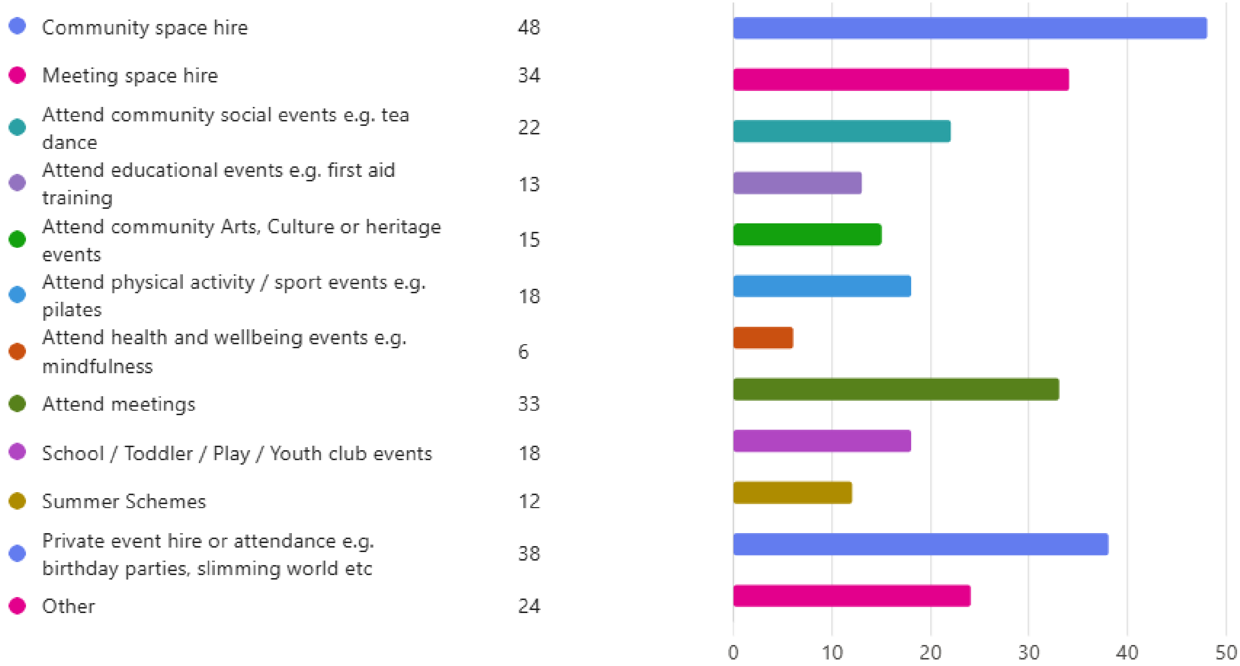



*Figure 10: Which elements of the Community Cente/Hall facility do you use?*

The four most common responses were community space hire (17%, n.48), private event hire or attendance e.g. birthday (13%, n.38) attending space hire (12%, n.34) and attending meetings (11%, n.33).

**Quality/Standard of the Community Centre/Hall**

46% of respondents are of the opinion that the standard of their local Community Centre/Hall is good (32.6%) or excellent (13.6%). Equally this means that over half think they are average (30%), below average (9.8%) or poor (14.1%). The review recognises that many of the centres are dated in terms of construction and in some cases, design. This mitigates against achieving higher ratings in terms of the quality of the existing centres/halls. From a review perspective, Council may want to examine how it plans investment in centres (refurbishment or replacement). It may want to examine a common design specification/language for centres based on the learning from its own centres, those developed and managed by peer local centres and those developed and managed by local communities

**Opening Hours**

The response to the satisfaction with opening hours confirms that just under 30% believe that the current opening hours of their local centres/halls are either good (24%) or excellent (5.3%). On that basis there may be merit in the Council examining a consistent approach to opening hours for the centres for which it has operational management responsibility.

**Booking Community Centres and Halls**

Respondents were asked if they knew how to make a booking at their local Community Centre/Hall. While 50% of respondents knew how to make a booking, 50% either didn't know or were not sure.

Additionally, respondents were asked if they book the Community Centre/Hall, are the facilities available for use as often as they would like.

While 46% (n.79) of respondents informed they do not need to book community space/facilities, 36% of respondents indicated that they are always or usually able to book the facilities they need. Although 11% (n.18) of respondents are sometimes unable to book the facilities, and 6% (n.11) are often unable to book the facilities due to a lack of availability.


*Figure 11: Awareness of booking system*

The following table outlines the key respondent views in relation to the provision of Community Centres and Halls:

*Table 4: Key respondent views in relation to the provision of Community Centres and Halls*

| Positives | Negatives | Insights |
|---|---|---|
| • Safety (62% rated as good/excellent)<br>• Upkeep and accessibility (>50% rated as good/ excellent)<br>• Affordability not identified as a major barrier | • Marketing and awareness is the lowest rated (33% rated as poor)<br>• Opening hours rated poorly (21% rated as poor)<br>• Variety of facilities rated as limited<br>• 50% do not know how to book halls<br>• Community Centre/Halls viewed as venue hire rather than community hubs; reduced access | • 45% never use their local community centre; 33% occasionally; and 16% weekly or more<br>• Most used for community space hire (17%), private event hire or attendance (13%), meeting space hire (12%), and to attend meetings (11%) |



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*Table 5: Key positive views in relation to the provision of Community Centres and Halls*

| Positive Feedback | Standard Met | Good – Excellent |
|---|---|---|
| Quality and standard of Community Centres and Halls | 30% | 45% |
| Size of Community Centres and Halls for multipurpose use | 27% | 46% |
| Accessibility of Community Centres and Halls | 27% | 53% |
| Maintenance of Community Centres and Halls | 29% | 55% |
| Safety of Community Centres and Halls | 27% | 63% |
| Affordability of Community Centres and Halls | 38% | 44% |

*Table 6: Key negative views in relation to the provision of Community Centres and Halls*

| Negative Feedback | Standard Met | Below Average – Poor |
|---|---|---|
| Marketing and awareness of Community Centres and Halls offer | 31% | 55% |
| Variety of Community Centres and Halls offer for multipurpose use | 30% | 39% |
| Flexibility in opening hours of Community Centres and Halls | 32% | 35% |

Consultation analysis to date has identified the following requirements in terms of Community Centre and Halls provision:

- To establish a clear, evidence led strategic vision and management framework for the Community Centres and Halls Estate
- To improve visibility and awareness of Community Centres and Halls to support access and use
- To improve the user experience of accessing and using Community Centres and Halls
- To review and prioritise areas for modernisation and improvements across the Community Centres and Halls Estate
- To enhance activation, diversification and use of Community Centres and Halls

The full Consultations and Needs Analysis report is attached as **Appendix 2.**

## 6. Benchmarking with Peer Local Authorities

As part of the review of Council-owned Community Centres and Halls, a benchmarking exercise was undertaken to understand how comparable local authorities manage their community centre provision, governance arrangements and operational models. The benchmarking aimed to identify common practices, alternative delivery models and key operational considerations that could inform future provision within Ards and North Down Borough Council. **Appendix 3** provides the detailed benchmarking analysis of Community Centres and Halls across a range of peer local authorities.

### Peer Authorities Consulted

Information was requested from a range of peer local authorities across Northern Ireland. These included:

- Belfast City Council
- Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council
- Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council
- Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
- Derry City and Strabane District Council
- Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council
- Mid and East Antrim Borough Council
- Mid Ulster District Council
- Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council were the only local authority who did not make contact back. In addition, Mid Ulster District Council advised that it does not own or operate any council community centres or halls.

The context for peer local authority benchmarking of Community Centre and Hall provision and management must be understood. It includes:

- There are no standard design or specifications for Community Centres and Halls across the eleven NI local authorities. It is also a fact that there are no standard designs or specifications for centres and halls across any single local authority (and this is also the case for ANDBC) so the possibility of a direct like for like comparison is not possible.
- The location of centres and halls has an impact on the approach that local authorities take in relation to them; some are in urban areas and some in rural and this can dictate the approach that the local authority takes; especially in

relation to the pricing policies applied to the centre or hall due to the level of competition from other providers of space (often the local authority's own leisure centres and from the community and voluntary sectors.

Therefore, the benchmarking process will provide ANDBC with some comparator information around policies for opening hours, pricing and staffing but it will have to agree its own policies based on performance and feedback from users in addition to the design, location and conditions of its existing Community Centres and Halls.

**Scale of Provision**

The benchmarking identified variation in the scale of community centre provision across councils. Examples include:

- Belfast City Council operates 35 centres in total, comprising 27 directly managed centres and 8 independently managed community centres
- Newry, Mourne and Down District Council operates 24 centres in total, comprising 6 council-managed centres and 18 council-owned centres managed through Facilities Management Agreements
- Derry City and Strabane District Council operate 19 Community Centres and Halls
- Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council operates 18 Community Centres
- Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council operates 12 council-owned centres, with an additional centre managed through a Service Level Agreement with the Education Authority
- Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council operate 11 centres, comprising 8 directly managed centres and 3 managed through service management agreements
- Fermanagh and Omagh District Council operate 10 Community Centres
- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council operate 9 centres, comprising 4 directly managed centres and 5 leased satellite centres.

**Governance and Management Models**

A range of governance and management models are used across councils. The most common approaches include:

- Council-owned and community-managed facilities, often through leases, licences, shared management agreements or facilities management agreements with local community groups.
- Direct council management, where facilities are operated by council staff.

- Hybrid models, where some centres are council-managed while others are managed by community associations or external partners.

For example, Derry City and Strabane District Council operates a shared management model, where the council retains ownership and responsibility for building maintenance, compliance and running costs, while local community groups manage day-to-day operations and programming. Similarly, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council operate mixed models combining directly managed centres with community-managed facilities.

In contrast, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council primarily operates a direct management model, with dedicated facility managers and attendants responsible for day-to-day operations.

Community Asset Transfer policies are in place in some councils; however, these have generally not been widely used to transfer community centres.

**Performance Monitoring**

Approaches to performance monitoring vary across councils. Common metrics include:

- Number of bookings and users
- Attendance or footfall levels
- Income and expenditure
- Utilisation trends
- Customer satisfaction levels

Some councils, such as Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, set annual financial targets and undertake monthly monitoring of financial and usage performance. Belfast City Council has a target of 65% usage across centres, while several authorities use annual budgets and key performance indicators such as bookings and footfall.

Formal user satisfaction measurement is more developed in some councils, with annual or bi-annual surveys used to inform service improvements and action planning. In other cases, satisfaction is measured in relation to specific programmes or activities rather than overall centre usage.

**Pricing Policies**

Most councils operate a structured pricing framework for community centre hire, typically including:

- Room hire charges
- Community and commercial rates
- Concessionary pricing for community organisations
- Peak and off-peak or block booking rates in some areas

The degree of standardisation varies. Some councils apply a borough-wide schedule of charges across all centres, while others approve pricing annually through council governance processes without a single standardised policy across every facility. Several councils also distinguish community centre pricing from leisure pricing to reflect differing usage patterns and affordability considerations.

To understand how Ards and North Down Borough Council (ANDBC) is positioned relative to other Northern Ireland councils, a review of published Community Centre/Hall hire charges was undertaken. Where councils publish pricing schedules/hire rates, these charges have been presented directly. Where councils apply different charges across individual community centres, a range of published hourly charges has been provided to reflect variations in centres. Ards and North Down offer discount to groups who meet a set criterion of 10 or 25 percent.

| Council | Minor Hall (Community) (£/hr) | Main Hall (Community) (£/hr) | Minor Hall (Commercial) (£/hr) | Main Hall (Commercial) (£/hr) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ards and North Down Borough Council | £8.00 | £15.00 | £10.50 | £22.50 |
| Armagh Craigavon and Banbridge Borough Council | £17.00 | £15.00–£23.00 (depending on venue) | £19.00 | £17.00–£25.00 (depending on venue) |
| Fermanagh and Omagh District Council | £7.25–£8.75* | £11.25 | £11.75–£13.75* | £18.25 |
| Newry, Mourne and Down Borough Council | £6.75–£9.00 | £14.60–£22.45 | N/A | £28.00–£44.90 |
| Mid and East Antrim | £6.67–£8.55 | £10.71–£13.85 | £20.00-25.00 | £32.17-37.50 |
| Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council | £6.00–£8.00 | £10.60 | £9.00-12.00 | £12.00-15.00 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council | £8.50–£10.00 | £11.00-17.00 | £16.00-19.00 | £23.00-34.00 |
| Belfast City Council ** | £2.40 | £3.80 | £2.88 | £4.56 |
| Derry City and Strabane District Council | £18.00 | £20.00 | £21.60 | £24.00 |
| Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council | £18.00 | £23.50 | £21.60 | £28.20 |

*Fermanagh and Omagh categorises facilities as small meeting rooms, large meeting rooms and main halls rather than minor and main halls.

** Belfast City Council community centre hire changes vary depending on the room and the time of day. Community development organisations that meet specific criteria may qualify for free use. The hire rates presented are based of Ardoyne Community Centre

Councils such as Fermanagh and Omagh, Mid and East Antrim, Antrim and Newtownabbey and Causeway Coast and Glens generally provide lower community hire rates for smaller halls and meeting rooms, whereas Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon and Newry, Mourne and Down apply comparatively higher charges to community centres.

A number of councils (excluding Fermanagh and Omagh District Council) operate centre-specific pricing structures rather than a single borough-wide structure. Consequently, ranges of charges have been presented to provide a representative comparison across their community centre estates.

Overall, the benchmarking indicates that there is no standard pricing model across Northern Ireland councils, with pricing influenced by the type, size and specification of facilities as well as local policy objectives. This provides important context when considering the competitiveness and appropriateness of ANDBC's current pricing structure.

**Asset Management and Investment**

Asset management practices differ between authorities but generally include:

- Integration of community centres into wider corporate asset management strategies.
- Planned maintenance programmes and condition surveys.

- Refurbishment or redevelopment programmes based on condition assessments and available funding.
- Consideration of energy efficiency and sustainability measures as part of capital investment planning.
- Progressive moves toward more consistent design standards where refurbishments take place.

Several councils referenced condition surveys, lifecycle planning, carbon reduction measures, improved heating systems, LED lighting and modernisation works as part of their ongoing estate management approach.

**Operational Arrangements**

Operational structures typically include dedicated council staff responsible for facility oversight, caretaking, bookings and administration, although staffing levels vary depending on the management model.

Most councils operate staff-managed booking systems, with several authorities moving toward or already using online booking platforms to improve accessibility and data collection.

Some centres operate fixed opening hours, while others open flexibly based on bookings, demand or community need. In limited cases, trusted keyholder arrangements are used for regular users or unstaffed facilities.

**Marketing and Programming**

Marketing approaches across councils are generally modest and rely primarily on:

- Council websites
- Social media channels
- Printed materials and noticeboards
- Community networks and local promotion

Some larger authorities, such as Belfast City Council, reported more structured promotional support through dedicated communications staff and planned campaigns.

Programming approaches also vary. In many cases, activities delivered within centres are driven by community groups hiring the facilities rather than directly programmed by the council. In other areas, councils also deliver targeted programmes such as youth activities, older people's services, health and wellbeing initiatives, physical activity classes and outreach activity based on local need. Centres managed by community associations often develop programmes collaboratively with residents and local groups.

**Appendix 3** provides the detailed benchmarking analysis of Community Centres and Halls across a range of peer local authorities.

## 7. 2026 Baseline: SCOT Analysis

The Strengths, Constraints, Opportunities, Threats (SCOT) and Needs Assessment presented below reflects the written remarks which were left by local residents, community and voluntary groups, and key stakeholders gathered throughout the consultation process.

*Table 7: SCOT Analysis*

| STRENGTHS | CONSTRAINTS |
|---|---|
| • The feedback from citizens as part of this independent review process helps to direct the 10-Year Community Centre Plan. It has established actions which can transform the Councils ownership and management of Community Centres and Halls.<br>• The provision of community centres aligns with the Council's Community Services. The rationale for community development is to support communities to develop the leadership and capacity to meet their own needs; this includes the need for community spaces. The review identifies that there are communities and organisations in these communities with a desire to have a role in the provision of community centre and hall spaces across the Borough. It is recognised that this will not work in all communities, but where the potential exists, the Council should help build capacity to manage (via a service level agreement, licence agreements) or own and manage (via asset transfer if appropriate). | • Feedback indicates that the booking process is complicated and bureaucratic and this is likely to be a barrier to people (especially new users) using the community centres. Progressively people are comfortable using apps and online processes to book a wide range of public and private services and activities. At this point Council must examine the migration to 'instant' means of booking and the use of technology and digital approaches to support this.<br>• The level of satisfaction with the community centres is mixed with over 50% of citizens who engaged in the review process are of the opinion that the centres and halls are average, poor or very poor in respect of their presentation and conditions. Any capital asset will lose its appeal and presentation as it becomes dated and many of the council's community centres are now in their second or third decade. Council needs to capture the learning from modern flexible community hubs and agree |



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|---|---|
| • Staff in council premises are helpful and accommodating.<br>• Using the halls is not expensive and offers huge social benefits to local people. Helps residents to feel embedded in their local communities and meet their neighbours.<br>• The centres and halls have proven suitable to facilitate outreach service delivery.<br>• The current pricing policy is perceived as affordable. This removes the potential for cost of access to be a barrier in relation to financial exclusion for individuals of families living with poverty. | a design for small, medium and large-scale centres and commit to a medium to long term investment programme (refurbishment and replacement).<br>• The lack of awareness of the Council owned community centres and what is provided from them was a clear piece of the feedback from citizens. The current approach to the promotion and awareness raising of the centres is not effective.<br>• The review process has identified that the centres and halls need a planned and resourced maintenance programme as there is a perception that they could be better presented. Currently the maintenance is undertaken as part of the Council's overall asset management and maintenance processes. This means that they may not always get the attention required in a timely manner. This is crucial to the presentation of high footfall community spaces if they are to be appreciated by users and generate repeat bookings. Timely maintenance generally helps user perception in a positive sense.<br>• Council should consider the need for a dedicated maintenance budget for their 20 owned and managed Community Centres and Halls.<br>• The review has identified that many of the centres are dated in terms of their design (this is common across the Community Centres and Halls owned and managed by the other local authorises across NI). |

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|---|---|
| | • The review process has identified that the management data and information retained and available to support decision making for the centres and halls is inconsistent. This mitigates against comparison of performance on a year-on-year basis or on a centre-by-centre basis.<br>• The Council incurs additional staffing and management costs after 5.30pm on Saturdays and Sundays and as a consequence pricing should be increase during these hours to balance income and expenditure anomalies. |
| **OPPORTUNITIES** | **THREATS** |
| • There is potential for some community organisation to work in partnership with the Council to provide or manage Community Centres and Halls across the Borough.<br>• There is potential to examine rationalisation across the Councils community and leisure estates; there are situations where the Council is providing both community and leisure centres in the same catchments(largely urban).It may make sense to provide one centre to meet both requirements.<br>• The effectiveness of the proposed 10 Year Community Centre Plan will require strong internal leadership and co-ordination. This may require a restructuring of the current operational management structure, introducing a new post/role to lead that transformation.<br>• There is an opportunity to raise awareness of the current network of Community Centres and Halls and increase | • There are several scenarios where the Council community centre is adjacent to a leisure centre or a community owned community hub or hall. There is an opportunity to rationalise the council's community centre portfolio by examining development opportunities for centres which are part of the duplication scenario.<br>• Access to halls and schemes can be problematic for those with disabilities and low mobility.<br>• There are wide disparities in deprivation and income across the Borough. Some of the Borough population live within some of the most affluent SOAs in NI whilst others live in SOAs within the 10% most deprived communities in NI. Therefore, it is likely that the pricing policy for community centres must consider financial exclusion. This is more pronounced due to the fact that the Borough |

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| the connectivity of the communities in their catchments with them and increase the overall usage of them. This will need to be co-ordinated and resourced and promote the centres at a strategic level whilst also recognising that each centre is a local neighbourhood hub and therefore will need its own locally appropriate promotional plan.<br>• There is an opportunity to introduce a 'trusted user' process using digital keypads/ entry systems or other agreed keyholder models.<br>• The population of the Borough is significantly older than the average for NI; centre design (health and safety/slip trips and falls and accessibility) and programming should reflect this. This is also in a context where the population of NI is getting older, therefore, this is likely to be on emerging consideration across the 2026-2035 timeframe.<br>• Some of the council owned Community Centres and Halls are in locations where they are adjacent to other publicly owned spaces (NIHE and HSCT). There is an opportunity to examine partnership approaches where the public body uses the community centre as a base (as an anchor tenant) or where the Council agrees a partnership approach with that body so that its space can also be made available as public community space.<br>• Given that Newtownards has a population of 465,293 within a 30-minute catchment and Bangor has a population of 295,567 within 30 minutes there may be an opportunity (over the 2026-2035 timeframe) to ensure the | has the lowest levels of medium gross pay (weekly) by place of work and second lowest by area of residence. |

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| development of strategic community hubs supported by smaller local centres.<br>• Halls could be much better used to support local communities to develop strong linkages and sense of community. Need to be open more hours, offer a neutral meeting place for residents of all ages.<br>• Need to make Council facilities such as Halls more dementia friendly, better signage, avoid rabbit-warrens of doors.<br>• It was identified that there is potential to give each Community Centre/Hall its own events page e.g. Facebook allowing locals to search for what is on at their own centre specifically. | |

## NEEDS

1. Availability of community services and facilities must be fair, and a reflection of the equal rates paid across the borough. Many respondents noted they became aware through the survey that there are a host of programmes delivered by the council which do not exist in their areas.
2. Issues with layout and acoustics of some halls need to be addressed as limiting use.
3. Usage of halls by religious and political groups threatens perception of halls as a neutral, inclusive, community space.
4. Open days for community to come in and see their hall.

## 8. Consideration of Management Options

The review process largely focuses on centres owned and managed by the Council. The mapping process has established that there is a significant cohort of Community Centre/Halls and centres across the Borough which are not managed by the Council (with some of them receiving revenue support from the Council via its community grants element of its community services programme).

Based on the review of the existing community centre information and on the benchmarking of peer local authorities and community led owners and managers of Community Centres and Halls, the review process has considered the strategic ownership and management options that the Council will need to consider when it makes decisions relating to new provision or evolving current provision.

In line with conventional approach to appraisal of options the process is set out below as follows:

- Description of the option
- Assessment of the strengths of the option
- Consideration of the constraints of the option
- Identification of the implications of actioning each option

*Table 8: Strategic Option One*

| **Strategic Option One: Council Owned and Managed** | |
|---|---|
| **Description** | Option one is the business-as-usual option. It recognises the lead role that the Council has taken in providing and managing Community Centres and Halls across the Borough (urban and rural).<br>This is the current core approach for the Council as it manages its portfolio of 20 Community Centres and Halls across the Borough (and its peer local authorities across NI).<br>This will remain the main approach for the Council in respect of providing and managing Community Centres and Halls. However, it is also recognised that there may be other appropriate strategic options depending on the specific contexts in DEAs and communities across the Borough. |
| **Strengths** | Option one has the following strengths:<br>• Council has a track record in the provision and management of centres and halls.<br>• The structures and processes are already in place.<br>• Council has access to wider support services and inputs including maintenance, promotion, financial management and procurement. |
| **Constraints** | Option one has the following constraints: |

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| | • Efficiencies which might be realised through the implementation of other strategic options will not materialise if Council only pursues option one.<br>• It does not promote or encourage community leadership and development and by default creates more of a dependency culture in respect of the provision of Community Centres and Halls. |
| **Implications** | Option one has the following implications:<br>• The responsibility for provision and management of Community Centres and Halls lies solely with Council. |

*Table 9: Strategic Option Two*

| **Strategic Option Two: Service Level Agreement / Licence Agreement / Lease Agreement** | |
|---|---|
| **Description** | Some communities and community organisations have the desire and the capacity (or are willing to develop the capacity) to manage a community centre or hall in their own community. Option two would mean that the Council has a decision making and support process in place to support communities to work in partnership with it and take a lead in the management of their local community space.<br>A service level agreement would be developed and agreed by both parties. It will set out:<br>• The responsibilities for each party (especially in relation to maintenance and management of the option).<br>• Performance targets and when and how they will be measured.<br>• Break clauses if either party is not in a position to meet their responsibilities.<br>• The polices that the community partner will be required to adopt (typically inclusion, health and safety and acceptable activities and events).<br>The Council will develop a support process for any group or groups willing to consider taking leadership for their local centre or hall. This will focus on developing and embedding the governance and management skills required to effectively manage a community centre or hall. |
| **Strengths** | Option two has the following strengths:<br>• In line with good community development principles, it supports communities to take a lead in meeting their needs.<br>• Local community organisations tend to be visible and connected in their own communities and as a result can be more effective in connecting local people to the centre or hall. |

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| | • By being 'on the ground' local community organisations fully understand local community needs and can develop the annual programme of services and activities around that need.<br>• The local groups local connections supports it to promote the centre and its programme within the community. |
| **Constraints** | Option two has the following constraints:<br>• Without clearly establishing standards and expectations there can be a divergence in the management of the community centre compared to that by the Council.<br>• Community capacity can be transitionary; strong for a number of years and weaker for some years (when people leave the group or volunteers burn out). |
| **Implications** | Option two has the following implications:<br>• The Councils community centre and hall management structure will need to reflect both its direct management responsibilities and the need to support groups and communities which want to take a more direct role in the provision of the community centre in their own community and monitored closely to ensure access for all potential users.<br>• Council needs to communicate this model of delivery will be considered if a group or community can demonstrate that the interest is there and the leadership potential and capacity is available and can be developed. |

*Table 10: Strategic Option Three*

| **Strategic Option Three: Community Asset Transfer** | |
|---|---|
| **Description** | Whilst some community organisations might want to take a management role and responsibility for their community centre or hall in other cases communities may want to take an outright ownership approach. In option three Council recognises that some communities want to progress beyond option two and take full ownership of the community centre or hall.<br>If this is the case Council would action a Community Asset Transfer (CAT) process |
| **Strengths** | Option three has the following strengths:<br>• It retains the same volume of provision across the Borough but frees the Council from the responsibility for managing all centres.<br>• It will bring some level of capital receipt which can be invested by Council to deliver better outcomes for its citizens. |
| **Constraints** | Option three has the following constraints:<br>• The process can take time so the interest of the community might wane if it becomes protracted. |

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| | • The Council may require the community willing to enter into the transfer to provide capital to purchase the asset (even at a lesser value than may be provided by LPS); the community organisation may not have access to this level of capital investment. |
| **Implications** | Option three has the following implications:<br>• The Council will need to agree and adopt a Community Asset Transfer (CAT) policy.<br>• Implementation of this option will require Departmental approval. |

*Table 11: Strategic Option Four*

| **Strategic Option Four: Facilitator of Community Led Provision** | |
|---|---|
| **Description** | Community leadership and capacity varies across the Boroughs urban and rural communities. There are already examples of where community-based organisations have taken the lead and have developed and managed community centre and hub spaces.<br>The review acknowledges that there are some communities across the Borough (mostly rural) where there is no immediate access to a community centre or hall.<br>It may be appropriate for the Council to engage with the local community infrastructure to identify if there is a willingness to examine the community led development and management of a community centre/hub or hall.<br>Council would provide a technical support process to:<br>• Establish demand<br>• Review other models (successful community led models within and exterior to the Borough) |
| **Strengths** | Option four has the following strengths:<br>• It shares the responsibility for providing community centres between the Council and the community sector.<br>• It represents good community development practice and principles as it supports the development of community leadership and capacity to take ownership for needs in their own communities.<br>• It reduces the capital investment required from Council to provide centres or halls and removes the need for annual operational investment in the maintenance of the Centre; these financial resources can be invested by Council in the ongoing transformation of its owned and managed Community Centres and Halls.<br>• Local groups are often better connected in their own communities than the Council and this tends to generate increased levels of usage (evidenced by the benchmarking underpinning this independent review). |

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| | • Local groups are 'on the ground' and therefore have a better understanding of the needs of their community; this tends to leave them better placed to develop an annual programme of services, activities and events which meet those needs. |
| **Constraints** | Option four has the following constraints:<br>• Option four may take more time to deliver a community centre or hall in a community where need exists.<br>• The local community organisation may find it difficult to access the capital funding required (given the relative dearth of community capital funding, urban or rural, at present). |
| **Implications** | Option four has the following implications:<br>• Council will need to develop and agree a support process which commences with needs analysis and the implementation of a technical assistance and project development process which examines site availability, design options and capital delivery costs.<br>• Most groups will need access to mentoring or advice to 'steer 'them through the process. |

*Table 12: Strategic Option Five*

| **Strategic Option Five: Partnership** | |
|---|---|
| **Description** | Option five references that there are some scenarios where another organisation already provides space which can be access by the public across the Borough (though largely in its urban DEAs). This includes provision by the Education Authority, Libraries NI or the Health and Social Care Trust as examples. Depending on the policy and willingness of the public owner of a building and its potential for repurposing (if underutilised) or increasing the volume of space there may be a potential for collaboration to make the building more effective for both parties.<br>If this scenario arises this will require a (perhaps Community Planning led co-design approach) partnership approach to providing one building but of better quality, design and presentation than either of the two existing buildings. |
| **Strengths** | Option five has the following strengths:<br>• It presents a practical opportunity for a Community Plan or co-design led approach to meeting the needs of the local community.<br>• It creates synergies which can help address issues associated with health and wellbeing, poverty, and inclusion that are shared by public sector partners.<br>• It creates efficiencies across the wider public funds. |

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| | • It may allow the Council to dispose of an existing asset and use the capital gain to invest in its portfolio of Community Centres and Halls (investing in some of the centre specific recommendations set out in this independent review). |
| **Constraints** | Option five has the following constraints:<br>• Opportunities to action an option five approach will depend on the owner of the public building and its policy and senior leadership commitment to this approach.<br>• The level of any required capital investment in the required adaptations to the existing space. |
| **Implications** | Option five has the following implications:<br>• There needs to be a head of agreement or memorandum of understanding between the Council and the public owner of the proposed shared use building.<br>• The community access to the building must be assured before Council would consider closing or disposing of its current centre or hall. |

*Table 13: Strategic Option Six*

| **Strategic Option Six: Seek Alternative Development Opportunities** | |
|---|---|
| **Description** | Option six recognises that in some scenarios there is no remaining rationale for the Council to retain and resource a community centre or hall in some of its communities or DEAs. This scenario can arise due to:<br>• A change in the population dynamics (reduced numbers of young children as an example)<br>• New community facilities opened by the community<br>• Other public space in the area (including the Council leisure estate)<br>Based on a needs assessment and public engagement process it may be appropriate to examine potential development opportunities. |
| **Strengths** | Option six has the following strengths:<br>• It can assist in avoiding displacement scenarios.<br>• It can lead to a capital gain which Council can reinvest to deliver outcomes for citizens. |
| **Constraints** | Option six has the following constraints:<br>• Development opportunities can be perceived as the removal of services. |
| **Implications** | Option six has the following implications:<br>• There needs to be very sensitive communication relating to any proposal to action option six for a Council owned and managed community centre or hall; even if the user numbers are small this can and will be emotive for the existing users. |


S3 SOLUTIONS

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| | • The potential for other provision must be confirmed and available before any public engagement takes place; the option should be presented (and be) a better and more sustainable position than the current status quo. |

These strategic options can be used as a range of options for Council to apply depending on the context or scenario in any community or DEA. Currently the Council implements strategic option one for the majority of its 20 owned and managed Community Centres and Halls.

**Appendix 4** sets out a centre-by-centre baselining and appraisal process for each of the Councils 20 owned and managed Community Centres and Halls. It recommends provisional options for each centre based on the six strategic options detailed above.

## 9. Performance Review and Internal Benchmarking

As part of the review process the S3 team analysed the operational management and audit information relating to the Council's 20 owned and managed Centres and Halls.

**Appendix 5** provides a further detailed statistical and financial analysis of the above for further review and interpretation.

### Total Costs for Community Centres and Halls

The table below reflects the total costs related to running costs for each Community Centre/Hall for the period of 2023/2024 – 2025/2026 based on information received to date:

*Table 14: Total Costs for Community Centres and Halls*

| TOTAL COSTS | 10 Months to Jan 26 | | | 12 Months to Mar 25 | | | 12 Months to Mar 24 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **All Community Centres** | **Budget** | **Actual** | **Variance** | **Budget** | **Actual** | **Variance** | **Budget** | **Actual** | **Variance** |
| Salaries & Wages Basic Pay | 275,400 | 231,128 | 44,272 | 319,500 | 323,768 | -4,268 | 297,100 | 244,497 | 52,603 |
| Salaries & Wages Plain Time OT | 500 | 1,325 | -825 | 500 | 1,182 | -682 | 1,000 | 973 | 27 |
| Salaries & Wages Time Half OT | 4,400 | 8,897 | -4,497 | 4,400 | 15,840 | -11,440 | 3,300 | 6,584 | -3,284 |
| Salaries & Wages Double OT | 1,300 | 1,159 | 141 | 1,300 | 5,407 | -4,107 | 700 | 2,465 | -1,765 |
| Salaries & Wages - Casuals | 1,500 | 7,455 | -5,955 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 238 | -238 |
| Holiday Pay Adjustment | 1,600 | 1,144 | 456 | 1,600 | 1,291 | 309 | 0 | 12,508 | -12,508 |
| NILGOSC Emp'r Pension Contrib | 52,300 | 46,869 | 5,431 | 0 | 430 | -430 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Emp'rs National Insur Contrib | 35,300 | 33,543 | 1,757 | 0 | 314 | -314 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Apprentice Levy | 1,400 | 1,282 | 118 | 0 | 11 | -11 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| First Aiders Allowance | 300 | 144 | 156 | 300 | 414 | -114 | 300 | 332 | -32 |
| Single year business cases | 0 | 0 | 0 | 39,000 | 0 | 39,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mileage | 300 | 266 | 34 | 300 | 308 | -8 | 200 | 101 | 99 |
| Car parking | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 18 | -18 |
| Expenses (Payroll) | 0 | 581 | -581 | 0 | 117 | -117 | 0 | 95 | -95 |
| Training Employees (Fees/Courses) | 0 | 400 | -400 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Large Equipment & Fixtures >£500 | 900 | 0 | 900 | 900 | 0 | 900 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Office Equipment & Fixtures | 0 | 75 | -75 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1,000 | 1,130 | -130 |
| Printing & Design Services | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 257 | -257 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Hospitality (Entertainment) - External | 0 | 99 | -99 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Uniforms/Protective Clothing | 500 | 0 | 500 | 500 | 314 | 186 | 300 | 36 | 264 |
| ***Sub total*** | ***375,700*** | ***334,365*** | ***41,335*** | ***368,300*** | ***349,652*** | ***18,648*** | ***303,900*** | ***268,975*** | ***34,925*** |
| Running costs | 81,800 | 91,033 | -9,233 | 94,800 | 78,932 | 15,868 | 76,400 | 45,152 | 31,248 |
| Energy costs | | | | 149,500 | 149,500 | 0 | 173,768 | 173,768 | 0 |
| Maintenance costs | 346,325 | 346,325 | | 341,286 | 341,286 | 0 | 302,489 | 302,489 | 0 |
| | **803,825** | **771,723** | **32,102** | **953,887** | **919,371** | **34,516** | **856,557** | **790,385** | **66,172** |

## Allocation of Expenses for each Community Centre/Hall

This table below outlines the allocation of expenses apportioned to each Community Centre and Hall for the period of 2023/2024 – 2025/2026:

*Table 15: Allocation of Expenses for each Community Centre/Hall*

| ALLOCATION OF EXPENSES | 10 Months to Jan 26 | | | 12 Months to Mar 25 | | | 12 Months to Mar 24 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Running cost schedule** | **Budget** | **Actual** | **Variance** | **Budget** | **Actual** | **Variance** | **Budget** | **Actual** | **Variance** |
| Alderman George Green CC | 77,200 | 53,551 | 23,649 | 73,000 | 73,824 | -824 | 66,500 | 79,837 | -13,337 |
| Ballygowan Village Hall | 26,800 | 29,563 | -2,763 | 25,300 | 34,422 | -9,122 | 23,300 | 29,606 | -6,306 |
| Carrowdore CC | 17,300 | 25,361 | -8,061 | 17,500 | 29,811 | -12,311 | 16,200 | 21,159 | -4,959 |
| Comber Community Centre | 11,100 | 12,094 | -994 | 7,100 | 12,596 | -5,496 | 6,600 | 10,894 | -4,294 |
| Conlig CC | 19,000 | 15,422 | 3,578 | 20,800 | 21,805 | -1,005 | 3,900 | 19,652 | -15,752 |
| Donaghadee CC | 56,700 | 44,001 | 12,699 | 57,500 | 52,694 | 4,806 | 44,500 | 64,473 | -19,973 |
| Glen CC | 16,500 | 14,866 | 1,634 | 18,000 | 18,189 | -189 | 14,700 | 21,737 | -7,037 |
| Green Road CC | 34,000 | 35,110 | -1,110 | 27,200 | 41,691 | -14,491 | 25,000 | 31,712 | -6,712 |
| Groomsport Boathouse | 30,400 | 28,539 | 1,861 | 32,800 | 34,373 | -1,573 | 26,500 | 32,776 | -6,276 |
| Hamilton Road Community Hub | 90,300 | 82,239 | 8,061 | 86,500 | 92,227 | -5,727 | 71,800 | 88,954 | -17,154 |
| Kilcooley CC | 20,300 | 12,660 | 7,640 | 22,100 | 24,630 | -2,530 | 17,500 | 19,713 | -2,213 |
| Kiltonga Hall | 2,500 | 3,408 | -908 | 1,600 | 2,411 | -811 | 1,500 | 1,756 | -256 |
| Kircubbin CC | 21,900 | 21,925 | -25 | 35,700 | 28,186 | 7,514 | 19,300 | 28,828 | -9,528 |
| Manor Court CC | 25,400 | 16,585 | 8,815 | 32,500 | 24,296 | 8,204 | 41,200 | 29,473 | 11,727 |
| Marquis Hall | 24,300 | 30,675 | -6,375 | 26,700 | 37,296 | -10,596 | 20,900 | 30,076 | -9,176 |
| Portaferry Market House | 16,100 | 13,501 | 2,599 | 17,300 | 15,487 | 1,813 | 14,000 | 14,032 | -32 |
| Portavogie CC | 39,100 | 41,170 | -2,070 | 40,600 | 34,171 | 6,429 | 14,300 | 20,401 | -6,101 |
| Redburn CC | 52,400 | 49,940 | 2,460 | 53,300 | 54,503 | -1,203 | 45,400 | 56,254 | -10,854 |
| Skipperstone CC | 34,000 | 28,815 | 5,185 | 42,100 | 32,155 | 9,945 | 34,100 | 38,817 | -4,717 |
| West Winds CC | 13,100 | 19,363 | -6,263 | 13,900 | 20,925 | -7,025 | 2,800 | 13,164 | -10,364 |
| | **628,400** | **578,786** | **49,614** | **651,500** | **685,691** | **-34,191** | **510,000** | **653,315** | **-143,315** |



S3 SOLUTIONS

## Incomes for Community Centres and Halls

The table below reflects the incomes for each Community Centre/Hall for the period of 2023/2024 – 2025/2026, The column to the right reflects the percentage apportionment of income for each hall against the overall income accrued for all halls. The top five performing halls in terms of income are: Hamilton Road Community Hub (21%), Donaghadee Community Centre (14%), Alderman George Green Community Centre (9%) Carrowdore Community Centre (6%) and Redburn Community Centre (6%):

*Table 16: Incomes for Community Centres and Halls*

| | 10 Months to Jan 26 | | | 12 Months to Mar 25 | | | 12 Months to Mar 24 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **INCOMES [Hire & Misc. income]** | **Target** | **Actual** | **Variance** | **Target** | **Actual** | **Variance** | **Target** | **Actual** | **Variance** | ***% of total 2026*** |
| Alderman George Green CC | 29,400 | 24,878 | -4,522 | 27,400 | 40,233 | 12,833 | 25,700 | 36,396 | 10,696 | *9%* |
| Ballygowan Village Hall | 10,100 | 10,470 | 370 | 9,600 | 13,116 | 3,516 | 9,000 | 10,814 | 1,814 | *4%* |
| Carrowdore CC | 8,100 | 16,936 | 8,836 | 7,400 | 13,234 | 5,834 | 6,900 | 7,261 | 361 | *6%* |
| Comber Community Centre | 3,500 | 8,539 | 5,039 | 3,000 | 9,446 | 6,446 | 2,800 | 8,298 | 5,498 | *3%* |
| Conlig CC | 11,500 | 3,007 | -8,493 | 11,300 | 4,390 | -6,910 | 10,600 | 3,847 | -6,753 | *1%* |
| Donaghadee CC | 25,800 | 38,715 | 12,915 | 23,800 | 42,424 | 18,624 | 22,300 | 45,594 | 23,294 | *14%* |
| Glen CC | 4,700 | 5,424 | 724 | 4,300 | 7,452 | 3,152 | 4,000 | 9,810 | 5,810 | *2%* |
| Green Road CC | 9,300 | 12,993 | 3,693 | 8,500 | 16,723 | 8,223 | 8,000 | 13,677 | 5,677 | *5%* |
| Groomsport Boathouse | 5,500 | 6,733 | 1,233 | 5,100 | 9,613 | 4,513 | 4,800 | 6,547 | 1,747 | *2%* |
| Hamilton Road Community Hub | 49,000 | 57,555 | 8,555 | 45,700 | 69,417 | 23,717 | 42,800 | 63,864 | 21,064 | *21%* |
| Kilcooley CC | 13,300 | 8,707 | -4,593 | 12,900 | 9,386 | -3,514 | 12,100 | 7,315 | -4,785 | *3%* |
| Kiltonga Hall | 900 | 6,072 | 5,172 | 900 | 1,841 | 941 | 800 | 1,000 | 200 | *2%* |
| Kircubbin CC | 11,800 | 12,689 | 889 | 11,100 | 15,236 | 4,136 | 10,600 | 13,290 | 2,690 | *5%* |
| Manor Court CC | 8,300 | 4,573 | -3,727 | 8,000 | 5,809 | -2,191 | 7,500 | 7,918 | 418 | *2%* |
| Marquis Hall | 9,300 | 12,368 | 3,068 | 8,600 | 15,406 | 6,806 | 8,100 | 13,234 | 5,134 | *4%* |
| Portaferry Market House | 4,900 | 2,804 | -2,096 | 4,600 | 4,899 | 299 | 4,300 | 5,638 | 1,338 | *1%* |
| Portavogie CC | 10,000 | 11,425 | 1,425 | 9,400 | 13,996 | 4,596 | 9,000 | 11,936 | 2,936 | *4%* |
| Redburn CC | 14,600 | 17,147 | 2,547 | 13,700 | 19,860 | 6,160 | 12,800 | 17,501 | 4,701 | *6%* |
| Skipperstone CC | 8,000 | 5,199 | -2,801 | 7,700 | 6,018 | -1,682 | 8,200 | 5,450 | -2,750 | *2%* |
| West Winds CC | 5,000 | 8,819 | 3,819 | 4,600 | 9,306 | 4,706 | 4,300 | 8,373 | 4,073 | *3%* |
| | **243,000** | **275,052** | **32,052** | **227,600** | **327,803** | **100,203** | **214,600** | **297,763** | **83,163** | *100%* |

**Community Centres and Halls Cost to Council (Council requirement for Intervention)**

The table below reflects the incomes less totals figures for the Community Centres and Halls Estate from 2023/2024 to 2025/2026 based on information received to date. The bottom figures represent the total cost of Community Centres and Halls to Council year on year, that is the shortfall that the Council has to provide financial intervention against for the Community Centres and Halls Estate. Based on this analysis, on average the cost to council is £838,782 each year, whilst it is estimated that over the last three years the cost to Council is estimated at £2,516,347:

*Table 17: Community Centres and Halls Cost to Council*

| | 10 Months to Jan 26 | 12 Months to Mar 25 | 12 Months to Mar 24 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Incomes less total costs** | ***Actual** | **Actual** | **Actual** |
| Alderman George Green CC | -125,616 | -77,710 | -79,000 |
| Ballygowan Village Hall | -40,316 | -42,091 | -32,096 |
| Carrowdore CC | -42,276 | -48,960 | -47,171 |
| Comber Community Centre* | -6,396 | -24,883 | -23,632 |
| Conlig CC | -21,647 | -27,938 | -25,587 |
| Donaghadee CC | -44,247 | -64,351 | -73,582 |
| Glen CC | -17,616 | -41,676 | -21,213 |
| Green Road CC | -47,489 | -82,843 | -79,972 |
| Groomsport Boathouse | -30,632 | -36,719 | -35,155 |
| Hamilton Road Community Hub | -80,669 | -89,420 | -80,812 |
| Kilcooley CC | -31,086 | -34,938 | -29,270 |
| Kiltonga Hall * | 2,520 | -4,397 | 9,524 |
| Kircubbin CC | -28,052 | -80,634 | -40,377 |
| Manor Court CC | -40,548 | -30,514 | -32,823 |
| Marquis Hall | -26,887 | -30,704 | -27,275 |
| Portaferry Market House | -28,726 | -44,165 | -15,518 |
| Portavogie CC | -60,106 | -61,156 | -52,778 |
| Redburn CC | -48,508 | -51,761 | -52,820 |
| Skipperstone CC | -32,381 | -42,737 | -51,118 |
| West Winds CC | -21,712 | -22,281 | -13,404 |
| | **-772,390** | **-939,878** | **-804,079** |
| | *Using '25 Energy costs | -2,516,347 | |

*2026 energy costs have not been provided therefore using 2025 energy costs.*

*Comber Community Centre maintenance costs have not been provided [all years].*

*Kiltonga Hall Maintenance costs have not been provided [all years]. Energy costs presented as positive 2024.*

**Community Centres and Halls Booking Data**

An analysis was also carried out on booking data for each hall during 2025 - 2026. This analysis considered the availability of hours at each centre, hours booked, and the monthly income of the Community Centres and Halls against caretaker costs. Key observations are:

- Average hours booked for the year amounted to 21% against available hours booked
- Yearly income comprised of £370,815 against Caretaker costs alone of £584,869 revealing a cost deficit for that year of £241,345
- Kiltonga was the only Community Centre / Hall to show an income return of £1,205
- The top five Community Centres and Halls in terms of bookings were Redburn Community Centre (42%), Hamilton Road Community Hub (37%), Marquis Hall (37%), Kircubbin Community Centre (30%) and Alderman George Green Community Centre/Donaghadee Community Centre (25%)
- In the year 2025 - 2026, the percentage booking for 14 halls was 24% or less.

*Table 18: Community Centres and Halls Booking Data 2025-2026*

| | Hrs available | Hrs booked | % Usage | Yearly Income | Income apportioned as % of total | Approximate Caretaker costs | Approximate additional AM costs | Income / - Deficit |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Redburn | 4,600 | 1,944 | 42% | £22,347 | 7% | £45,448 | £2,657 | -£25,758 |
| Hamilton | 23,000 | 8,418 | 37% | £78,874 | 22% | £75,762 | £11,592 | -£8,848 |
| Marquis | 4,600 | 1,679 | 37% | £16,759 | 4% | £38,445 | £0 | -£21,686 |
| Kircubbin | 4,600 | 1,357 | 30% | £17,608 | 4% | £33,120 | £0 | -£15,512 |
| Alderman George Green | 13,800 | 3,508 | 25% | £33,212 | 9% | £52,831 | £0 | -£19,619 |
| Donaghadee | 18,400 | 4,600 | 25% | £53,319 | 14% | £58,006 | £4,589 | -£9,276 |
| Groomsport | 4.600 | 1,081 | 24% | £9,149 | 2% | £12,213 | £0 | -£3,064 |
| Glen | 4,600 | 966 | 21% | £7,740 | 3% | £23,046 | £0 | -£15,306 |
| Westwinds | 9,200 | 1,932 | 21% | £14,221 | 5% | £32,200 | £2,415 | -£20,384 |
| Skipperstone | 4,600 | 863 | 19% | £7,092 | 2% | £22,356 | £0 | -£15,264 |
| Green Road | 9,200 | 1,668 | 18% | £16,470 | 6% | £34,305 | £0 | -£17,835 |
| Ballygowan | 9,200 | 1,346 | 15% | £13,393 | 4% | £28,612 | £6,038 | -£21,257 |
| Manor Court | 4,600 | 656 | 14% | £5,888 | 2% | £14,594 | £0 | -£8,706 |
| Comber | 9,200 | 1,162 | 13% | £12,682 | 3% | £26,186 | £0 | -£13,504 |
| Portavogie | 9,200 | 1,127 | 12% | £14,454 | 3% | £21,735 | £0 | -£7,281 |
| Conlig | 4,600 | 518 | 11% | £4,238 | 1% | £12,443 | £0 | -£8,205 |
| Kilcooley | 9,200 | 966 | 11% | £10,766 | 2% | £13,915 | £0 | -£3,149 |
| Carrowdore | 19,800 | 1,173 | 9% | £20,205 | 3% | £22,563 | £0 | -£2,358 |
| Portaferry | 4,600 | 380 | 8% | £4,051 | 1% | £8,947 | £0 | -£4,896 |
| Kiltonga | 4,600 | 345 | 8% | £8,347 | 3% | £7,142 | £0 | £1,205 |
| | 176,200 | 35,689 | | £370,815 | 100% | £584,869 | £27,291 | -241,345 |
| | Average | 21% | | | | | | |



S3 SOLUTIONS

## Booking, Income and Costs Rankings

The table below outlines the performance of each Community Centre and Hall in terms of booking ranking, income ranking and cost rankings for the financial year 2025/26 based on financial information received to date:

*Table 19: Booking, Income and Costs Rankings*

| | Booking ranking | Income ranking | Cost ranking |
|---|---|---|---|
| Alderman George Green | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Ballygowan | 12 | 9 | 8 |
| Carrowdore | 18 | 13 | 7 |
| Comber | 14 | 11 | 15 |
| Conlig | 16 | 19 | 18 |
| Donaghadee | 6 | 2 | 3 |
| Glen | 8 | 12 | 19 |
| Green Road | 11 | 5 | 6 |
| Groomsport | 7 | 15 | 13 |
| Hamilton | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Kilcooley | 17 | 16 | 12 |
| Kiltonga | 20 | 14 | 20 |
| Kircubbin | 4 | 8 | 10 |
| Manor Court | 13 | 17 | 9 |
| Marquis | 3 | 7 | 11 |
| Portaferry | 19 | 20 | 17 |
| Portavogie | 15 | 10 | 4 |
| Redburn | 1 | 4 | 5 |
| Skipperstone | 10 | 18 | 14 |
| Westwinds | 9 | 6 | 16 |
| **Grand Total** | **210** | **210** | **210** |

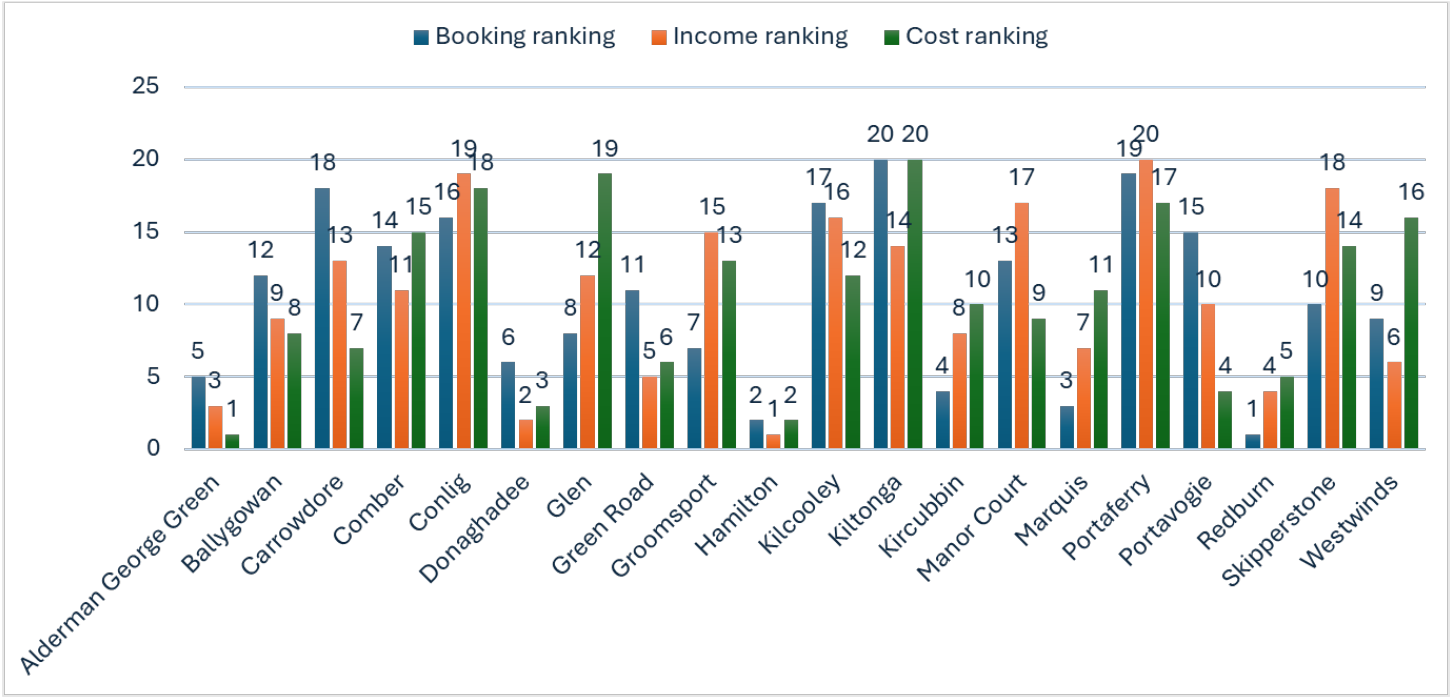


*Figure 12: Booking, Income and Costs Rankings*



S3 SOLUTIONS

**Cost/Income Ratios– Based on Annual Projections 2025/2026**

The following table and graph outlines the calculated ratios of the value of income return for each Community Centre/Hall against the cost to run each Community Centre and Hall for the financial period 2025/2026 based on financial information received to date. Based on this analysis the top five performing Community Centres and Halls include Kiltonga Hall (1:7), Donaghadee Community Centre (2:3), Hamilton Road Community Hub (2:5), Kircubbin Community Centre (3:3) and Marquis Hall (3:4). The bottom five performing Community Centres and Halls include Portaferry Market House (11:2), Manor Court Community Centre (9:9), Conlig Community Centre (8:3), Skipperstone Community Centre (7:3) and Portavogie Community Centre (6:3).

*Table 20: Cost/Income Ratios and – Based on Annual Projections 2025/2026*

| | Cost/Income |
|---|---|
| Kiltonga | 1.7 |
| Donaghadee | 2.3 |
| Hamilton | 2.5 |
| Kircubbin | 3.3 |
| Marquis | 3.4 |
| Carrowdore | 3.6 |
| Westwinds | 3.6 |
| Redburn | 4 |
| Comber | 4.4 |
| Glen | 4.4 |
| Kilcooley | 4.7 |
| Green Road | 4.8 |
| Ballygowan | 5 |
| Groomsport | 5.7 |
| Alderman George Green | 6.2 |
| Portavogie | 6.3 |
| Skipperstone | 7.3 |
| Conlig | 8.3 |
| Manor Court | 9.9 |
| Portaferry | 11.2 |
| Grand Total | 102.5 |

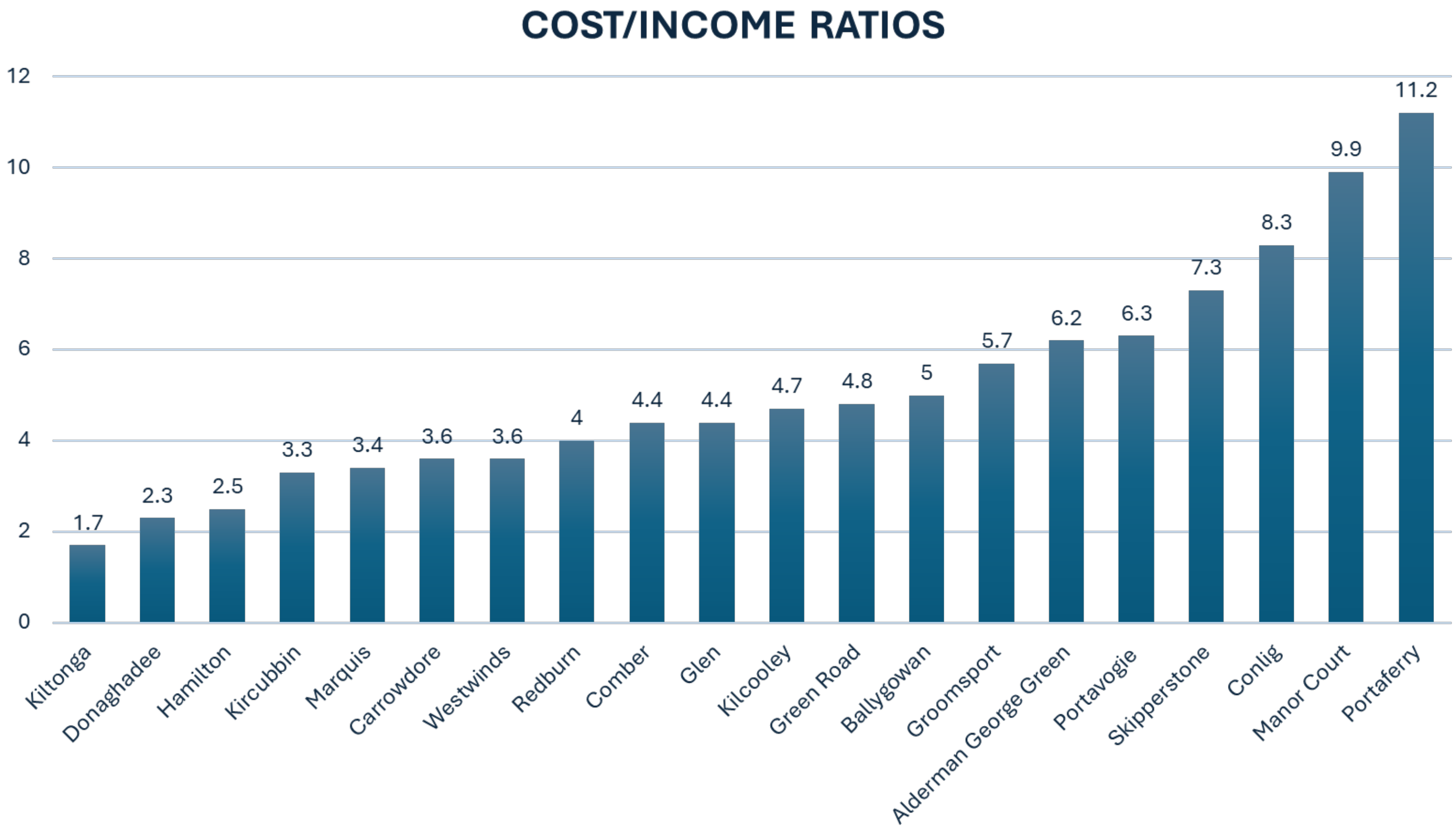


*Figure 13: Cost/Income Ratios and Rankings – Based on Annual Projections 2025/2026*

## 10. Community Centres and Halls Centre Specific Provisional Recommendations

This section of the report provides a financial analysis of each of the Community Centres and Halls for the period 2025/26 based on financial detail receive to date accompanied by Community Centre/Hall specific provisional recommendations:

**Alderman George Green**

| ACTUAL COST ANALYSIS | 2026 |
|---|---|
| 2025/6 Income [10 months] | £24,878 |
| Income pro rata 12 months | £29,853 |
| 2025/6 Running costs [10 months] | £53,551 |
| Running costs pro rata 12 months | £64,261 |
| 2026 Maintenance costs [10 months] | £80,633 |
| Maintenance costs pro rata 12 months | £96,760 |
| *Community Centre Costs apportioned %age* | *9%* |
| 2026 Community Centre costs [10 months] | £30,243 |
| Community Centre Costs pro rata 12 months | £36,291 |
| 2024/5 Energy costs 12 months | £16,309 |
| **TOTAL PRO RATA 12-MONTH COST TO ANDBC** | -£183,768 |
| **Cost/Income Ratio** | **6.2** |
| Letting efficiency %age | 25% |

**Ballygowan**

| ACTUAL COST ANALYSIS | 2026 |
|---|---|
| 2025/6 Income [10 months] | £10,470 |
| Income pro rata 12 months | £12,564 |
| 2025/6 Running costs [10 months] | £29,563 |
| Running costs pro rata 12 months | £35,476 |
| 2026 Maintenance costs [10 months] | £14,393 |
| Maintenance costs pro rata 12 months | £17,271 |
| *Community Centre Costs apportioned %age* | *4%* |
| 2026 Community Centre costs [10 months] | £12,728 |
| Community Centre Costs pro rata 12 months | £15,274 |
| 2024/5 Energy costs 12 months | £6,831 |
| **TOTAL PRO RATA 12-MONTH COST TO ANDBC** | -£62,287 |
| **Cost/Income Ratio** | **5.0** |
| Letting efficiency %age | 15% |

**Carrowdore**

| ACTUAL COST ANALYSIS | 2026 |
|---|---|
| 2025/6 Income [10 months] | £16,936 |
| Income pro rata 12 months | £20,323 |
| 2025/6 Running costs [10 months] | £25,361 |
| Running costs pro rata 12 months | £30,434 |
| 2026 Maintenance costs [10 months] | £26,109 |
| Maintenance costs pro rata 12 months | £31,331 |
| *Community Centre Costs apportioned %age* | *6%* |
| 2026 Community Centre costs [10 months] | £20,588 |
| Community Centre Costs pro rata 12 months | £24,706 |
| 2024/5 Energy costs 12 months | £7,741 |
| **TOTAL PRO RATA 12-MONTH COST TO ANDBC** | -£73,889 |
| **Cost/Income Ratio** | **3.6** |
| Letting efficiency %age | 9% |

**Comber**

| ACTUAL COST ANALYSIS | 2026 |
|---|---|
| 2025/6 Income [10 months] | £8,539 |
| Income pro rata 12 months | £10,246 |
| 2025/6 Running costs [10 months] | £12,094 |
| Running costs pro rata 12 months | £14,512 |
| 2026 Maintenance costs [10 months] | £21,298 |
| Maintenance costs pro rata 12 months | £25,557 |
| *Community Centre Costs apportioned %age* | *3%* |
| 2026 Community Centre costs [10 months] | £10,380 |
| Community Centre Costs pro rata 12 months | £12,456 |
| 2024/5 Energy costs 12 months | £2,841 |
| **TOTAL PRO RATA 12-MONTH COST TO ANDBC** | -£45,120 |
| **Cost/Income Ratio** | **4.4** |
| Letting efficiency %age | 13% |

*Figure 14: Financial analysis for Alderman George Green, Ballygowan, Carrowdore and Comber Community Centres and Halls*

**Comber 2026 Maintenance costs [10 months] no data available. Cost is based on 'Kilcooley' which has a similar income.*

*Table 21: Centre Specific Provisional Recommendations*

| Centre | Centre Specific Provisional Recommendations |
|---|---|
| **Alderman George Green** | **Need Options / Centre option:** Retention as Community Service<br>• Cost/Income ratio is 6.2.<br>• Potential for further development of the centre via outreach programmes aligned with the Leisure Strategy and the Community Strategy.<br>• Delivery to be undertaken by Community Centres and Halls staff to maintain consistency.<br>• Planned refurbishment of two rooms during 2026/27 will increase capacity and utilisation. |
| **Ballygowan** | **Need Options / Centre option:** Retention as Community Service<br>• Cost/Income ratio is 5.0.<br>• Potential for further development of the centre via outreach programmes aligned with Leisure and Community Services Strategy.<br>• Delivery to be undertaken by Community Centres and Halls staff rather than outsource in alignment with organisational objectives. |
| **Carrowdore** | **Need Options / Centre option:** Potential to offer Licence / Lease Agreement, Service Level Agreement (SLA) for portion of centre and retain as Community Service<br>• Cost/Income ratio is 3.6.<br>• Potential to development centre through partnership with local community group currently operating from alternative premises.<br>• Would require a revised approach to room hire within Community Centres and Halls Outreach programmes aligned with the Leisure Strategy and the Community Strategy should be implemented to strengthen community engagement, delivered by Community Centres and Halls staff. |
| **Comber** | **Need Options / Centre option:** Retention as Community Service<br>• Cost/Income ratio is 4.4.<br>• Planned development of mini-digi hub (works to commence January/February 2027 – Regen/EU Funding).<br>• To be supported by a targeted marketing plan to maximise user engagement and ensure sustainability. |

| Conlig | Disp. |
|---|---|
| **ACTUAL COST ANALYSIS** | **2026** |
| 2025/6 Income [10 months] | £3,007 |
| Income pro rata 12 months | £3,608 |
| 2025/6 Running costs [10 months] | £15,422 |
| Running costs pro rata 12 months | £18,507 |
| 2026 Maintenance costs [10 months] | £6,448 |
| Maintenance costs pro rata 12 months | £7,737 |
| *Community Centre Costs apportioned %age* | *1%* |
| 2026 Community Centre costs [10 months] | £3,655 |
| Community Centre Costs pro rata 12 months | £4,386 |
| 2024/5 Energy costs 12 months | £2,784 |
| **TOTAL PRO RATA 12-MONTH COST TO ANDBC** | -£29,806 |
| **Cost/Income Ratio** | **8.3** |
| Letting efficiency %age | 11% |

| Donaghadee | |
|---|---|
| **ACTUAL COST ANALYSIS** | **2026** |
| 2025/6 Income [10 months] | £38,715 |
| Income pro rata 12 months | £46,458 |
| 2025/6 Running costs [10 months] | £44,001 |
| Running costs pro rata 12 months | £52,802 |
| 2026 Maintenance costs [10 months] | £22,236 |
| Maintenance costs pro rata 12 months | £26,683 |
| *Community Centre Costs apportioned %age* | *14%* |
| 2026 Community Centre costs [10 months] | £47,063 |
| Community Centre Costs pro rata 12 months | £56,476 |
| 2024/5 Energy costs 12 months | £16,725 |
| **TOTAL PRO RATA 12-MONTH COST TO ANDBC** | -£106,228 |
| **Cost/Income Ratio** | **2.3** |
| Letting efficiency %age | 25% |

| Glen | SLA |
|---|---|
| **ACTUAL COST ANALYSIS** | **2026** |
| 2025/6 Income [10 months] | £5,424 |
| Income pro rata 12 months | £6,509 |
| 2025/6 Running costs [10 months] | £14,866 |
| Running costs pro rata 12 months | £17,839 |
| 2026 Maintenance costs [10 months] | £5,554 |
| Maintenance costs pro rata 12 months | £6,664 |
| *Community Centre Costs apportioned %age* | *2%* |
| 2026 Community Centre costs [10 months] | £6,594 |
| Community Centre Costs pro rata 12 months | £7,913 |
| 2024/5 Energy costs 12 months | £2,621 |
| **TOTAL PRO RATA 12-MONTH COST TO ANDBC** | -£28,527 |
| **Cost/Income Ratio** | **4.4** |
| Letting efficiency %age | 21% |

| Green Road | |
|---|---|
| **ACTUAL COST ANALYSIS** | **2026** |
| 2025/6 Income [10 months] | £12,993 |
| Income pro rata 12 months | £15,592 |
| 2025/6 Running costs [10 months] | £35,110 |
| Running costs pro rata 12 months | £42,132 |
| 2026 Maintenance costs [10 months] | £18,926 |
| Maintenance costs pro rata 12 months | £22,711 |
| *Community Centre Costs apportioned %age* | *5%* |
| 2026 Community Centre costs [10 months] | £15,795 |
| Community Centre Costs pro rata 12 months | £18,954 |
| 2024/5 Energy costs 12 months | £6,447 |
| **TOTAL PRO RATA 12-MONTH COST TO ANDBC** | -£74,652 |
| **Cost/Income Ratio** | **4.8** |
| Letting efficiency %age | 18% |

*Figure 15: Financial analysis for Conlig, Donaghadee, Glen and Green Road Community Centres and Halls*

| Centre | Centre Specific Provisional Recommendations |
|---|---|
| **Conlig** | **Need Options / Centre option:** Examine potential development opportunity<br>• Cost/Income ratio is 8.3.<br>• Centre currently limited in use, with identified issues relating to damp that require investment to address.<br>• Given its proximity to alternative facilities (Green Road within one mile and Alderman George Green within two miles), there is an overlap in provision. |
| **Donaghadee** | **Need Options / Centre option:** Retention as Community Service<br>• Cost/Income ratio is 2.3.<br>• Clear development potential, including introduction of community gym, addressing gap in local provision.<br>• Existing infrastructure supports this opportunity, although changes to staffing structures and operating hours will be required. This aligns with planned developments in the area and the Leisure Strategy and the Community Strategy.<br>• Outreach programmes should be implemented and delivered by Community Centres and Halls staff. |
| **Glen** | **Need Options / Centre option:** Examine potential Development opportunity, Licence Agreement / Lease Agreement Service Level Agreement (SLA), Community Asset Transfer (CAT)<br>• Cost/Income ratio is 4.4.<br>• Facility is currently limited in scope of use and is dated requiring significant capital investment to modernise.<br>• Potential to reposition as a community hub in collaboration with other agencies via a 'Trusted User' model using digital keypads/ entry systems or other agreed keyholder processes.<br>• If SLA/CAT is pursued, governance and compliance arrangements should be retained with Community Centres and Halls. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Green Road** | **Need Options / Centre option:** Retention as Community Service<br>• Cost/Income ratio is 4.8.<br>• Facility has development potential but requires investment to support this.<br>• Opportunities to implement outreach programmes aligned with the Leisure Strategy and the Community Strategy, particularly due to its proximity to new Greenway.<br>• Delivery to be undertaken by Community Centres and Halls staff to ensure consistency and maximise impact. |

| Groomsport | |
|---|---|
| **ACTUAL COST ANALYSIS** | **2026** |
| 2025/6 Income [10 months] | £6,733 |
| Income pro rata 12 months | £8,079 |
| 2025/6 Running costs [10 months] | £28,539 |
| Running costs pro rata 12 months | £34,247 |
| 2026 Maintenance costs [10 months] | £5,349 |
| Maintenance costs pro rata 12 months | £6,419 |
| *Community Centre Costs apportioned %age* | *2%* |
| 2026 Community Centre costs [10 months] | £8,184 |
| Community Centre Costs pro rata 12 months | £9,821 |
| 2024/5 Energy costs 12 months | £3,476 |
| **TOTAL PRO RATA 12-MONTH COST TO ANDBC** | -£45,884 |
| **Cost/Income Ratio** | **5.7** |
| Letting efficiency %age | 24% |

| Hamilton | |
|---|---|
| **ACTUAL COST ANALYSIS** | **2026** |
| 2025/6 Income [10 months] | £57,555 |
| Income pro rata 12 months | £69,066 |
| 2025/6 Running costs [10 months] | £82,239 |
| Running costs pro rata 12 months | £98,686 |
| 2026 Maintenance costs [10 months] | £31,359 |
| Maintenance costs pro rata 12 months | £37,631 |
| *Community Centre Costs apportioned %age* | *21%* |
| 2026 Community Centre costs [10 months] | £69,966 |
| Community Centre Costs pro rata 12 months | £83,959 |
| 2024/5 Energy costs 12 months | £24,626 |
| **TOTAL PRO RATA 12-MONTH COST TO ANDBC** | -£175,837 |
| **Cost/Income Ratio** | **2.5** |
| Letting efficiency %age | 37% |

| Kilcooley | SLA |
|---|---|
| **ACTUAL COST ANALYSIS** | **2026** |
| 2025/6 Income [10 months] | £8,707 |
| Income pro rata 12 months | £10,449 |
| 2025/6 Running costs [10 months] | £12,660 |
| Running costs pro rata 12 months | £15,192 |
| 2026 Maintenance costs [10 months] | £21,298 |
| Maintenance costs pro rata 12 months | £25,557 |
| *Community Centre Costs apportioned %age* | *3%* |
| 2026 Community Centre costs [10 months] | £10,585 |
| Community Centre Costs pro rata 12 months | £12,702 |
| 2024/5 Energy costs 12 months | £5,836 |
| **TOTAL PRO RATA 12-MONTH COST TO ANDBC** | -£48,838 |
| **Cost/Income Ratio** | **4.7** |
| Letting efficiency %age | 11% |

| Kiltonga | |
|---|---|
| **ACTUAL COST ANALYSIS** | **2026** |
| 2025/6 Income [10 months] | £6,072 |
| Income pro rata 12 months | £7,286 |
| 2025/6 Running costs [10 months] | £3,408 |
| Running costs pro rata 12 months | £4,089 |
| 2026 Maintenance costs [10 months] | £5,554 |
| Maintenance costs pro rata 12 months | £6,664 |
| *Community Centre Costs apportioned %age* | *2%* |
| 2026 Community Centre costs [10 months] | £7,381 |
| Community Centre Costs pro rata 12 months | £8,857 |
| 2024/5 Energy costs 12 months | £144 |
| **TOTAL PRO RATA 12-MONTH COST TO ANDBC** | -£12,469 |
| **Cost/Income Ratio** | **1.7** |
| Letting efficiency %age | 8% |

*Figure 16: Financial analysis for Groomsport, Hamilton, Kilcooley and Kiltonga Community Centres and Halls*

*Table 23: Centre Specific Provisional Recommendations*

| Centre | Centre Specific Provisional Recommendations |
|---|---|
| **Groomsport Boathouse** | **Need Options / Centre option:** Retention as Community Service**,** Licence Agreement / Lease Agreement Service Level Agreement<br>• Cost/Income ratio is 5.7.<br>• The facility has limitations to provide some services due to restricted size and scope, but it is accepted that any alternative provision is in excess of 5 miles (most notably Donaghadee Community Centre).<br>• Tailored animation and cross council offerings should be considered (pilot leisure schemes etc.).<br>• If SLA/licence is pursued, governance and compliance arrangements should be retained with Community Centres and Halls. |
| **Hamilton Hub** | **Need Options / Centre option:** Retention as Community Service<br>• Cost/Income ratio is 2.5.<br>• Centre currently operating with high volume across a seven-day period, indicating strong demand.<br>• Potential for further development of the centre via outreach programmes aligned with the Leisure Strategy and the Community Strategy.<br>• Should focus on strengthening community integration. Delivery to be undertaken by Community Centres and Halls staff. |
| **Kilcooley** | **Need Options / Centre option:** Examine potential **d**evelopment opportunity**,** Licence Agreement / Lease Agreement, Service Level Agreement (SLA), Community Asset Transfer (CAT)<br>• Cost/Income ratio is 4.7.<br>• Potential to reposition as a community hub in partnership with local groups via 'Trusted User' model using digital keypads/ entry systems or other agreed keyholder processes.<br>• If SLA/CAT is pursued, governance and compliance arrangements should be retained with Community Centres and Halls. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Kiltonga** | **Need Options / Centre option:** Retention as Community Service<br>• Cost/Income ratio is 1.7.<br>• Targeted promotion of facility as a distinctive wedding venue and flexible space for pop-up shops.<br>• To build on this, additional structured marketing activity is required. |

| Kircubbin | |
|---|---|
| **ACTUAL COST ANALYSIS** | **2026** |
| 2025/6 Income [10 months] | £12,689 |
| Income pro rata 12 months | £15,227 |
| 2025/6 Running costs [10 months] | £21,925 |
| Running costs pro rata 12 months | £26,309 |
| 2026 Maintenance costs [10 months] | £11,687 |
| Maintenance costs pro rata 12 months | £14,025 |
| *Community Centre Costs apportioned %age* | *5%* |
| 2026 Community Centre costs [10 months] | £15,425 |
| Community Centre Costs pro rata 12 months | £18,510 |
| 2024/5 Energy costs 12 months | £7,129 |
| **TOTAL PRO RATA 12-MONTH COST TO ANDBC** | -£50,747 |
| **Cost/Income Ratio** | **3.3** |
| Letting efficiency %age | 30% |

| Manor Court | Disp. |
|---|---|
| **ACTUAL COST ANALYSIS** | **2026** |
| 2025/6 Income [10 months] | £4,573 |
| Income pro rata 12 months | £5,488 |
| 2025/6 Running costs [10 months] | £16,585 |
| Running costs pro rata 12 months | £19,902 |
| 2026 Maintenance costs [10 months] | £24,049 |
| Maintenance costs pro rata 12 months | £28,858 |
| *Community Centre Costs apportioned %age* | *2%* |
| 2026 Community Centre costs [10 months] | £5,560 |
| Community Centre Costs pro rata 12 months | £6,671 |
| 2024/5 Energy costs 12 months | £4,487 |
| **TOTAL PRO RATA 12-MONTH COST TO ANDBC** | -£54,431 |
| **Cost/Income Ratio** | **9.9** |
| Letting efficiency %age | 14% |

| Marquis | Disp. |
|---|---|
| **ACTUAL COST ANALYSIS** | **2026** |
| 2025/6 Income [10 months] | £12,368 |
| Income pro rata 12 months | £14,841 |
| 2025/6 Running costs [10 months] | £30,675 |
| Running costs pro rata 12 months | £36,810 |
| 2026 Maintenance costs [10 months] | £6,812 |
| Maintenance costs pro rata 12 months | £8,175 |
| *Community Centre Costs apportioned %age* | *4%* |
| 2026 Community Centre costs [10 months] | £15,035 |
| Community Centre Costs pro rata 12 months | £18,042 |
| 2024/5 Energy costs 12 months | £1,768 |
| **TOTAL PRO RATA 12-MONTH COST TO ANDBC** | -£49,953 |
| **Cost/Income Ratio** | **3.4** |
| Letting efficiency %age | 37% |

| Portaferry | |
|---|---|
| **ACTUAL COST ANALYSIS** | **2026** |
| 2025/6 Income [10 months] | £2,804 |
| Income pro rata 12 months | £3,365 |
| 2025/6 Running costs [10 months] | £13,501 |
| Running costs pro rata 12 months | £16,202 |
| 2026 Maintenance costs [10 months] | £12,826 |
| Maintenance costs pro rata 12 months | £15,391 |
| *Community Centre Costs apportioned %age* | *1%* |
| 2026 Community Centre costs [10 months] | £3,409 |
| Community Centre Costs pro rata 12 months | £4,090 |
| 2024/5 Energy costs 12 months | £5,203 |
| **TOTAL PRO RATA 12-MONTH COST TO ANDBC** | -£37,521 |
| **Cost/Income Ratio** | **11.2** |
| Letting efficiency %age | 8% |

*Figure 17: Financial analysis for Kircubbin, Manor Court, Marquis and Portaferry Community Centres and Halls*

*Table 24: Centre Specific Provisional Recommendations*

| Centre | Centre Specific Provisional Recommendations |
|---|---|
| **Kircubbin** | **Need Options / Centre option: Examine** potential to offer Licence / Lease Agreement, Service Level Agreement (SLA) or Community Asset Transfer<br>• Cost/Income ratio is 3.3.<br>• Potential to establish partnership with Peninsula Healthy Living who have expressed interest in taking ownership and developing facility. As only community facility in village, it holds strategic importance.<br>• If SLA/CAT is pursued, governance and compliance arrangements should be retained with Community Centres and Halls. |
| **Manor Court** | **Need Options / Centre option:** Examine potential development opportunity**,** Licence Agreement / Lease Agreement, Service Level Agreement (SLA) or Community Asset Transfer (CAT)<br>• Cost/Income ratio is 9.9.<br>• Given proximity to Ards Blair Mayne and limited parking, facility presents risks of service duplication.<br>• Recent expression of interest from a local sports club to assume operational responsibility.<br>• If SLA/CAT is pursued, governance and compliance arrangements should be retained with Community Centres and Halls to ensure appropriate oversight. |
| **Marquis** | **Need Options / Centre option:** Examine potential transfer opportunity to Parks and Open Spaces Department<br>• Cost/Income ratio is 3.4.<br>• Potential to transfer facility to Parks and Open Spaces Department, aligning with emerging proposals for development of Castle Park.<br>• This could support wider strategic objectives, including complementary uses such as a café. |
| **Portaferry** | **Need Options / Centre option:** Retention as Community Service<br>• Cost/Income ratio is 11.2.<br>• Competition from recently refurbished local halls has impacted bookings and as a consequence further animation and cross council offerings should be considered (pilot leisure schemes).<br>• If SLA/CAT is pursued, governance and compliance arrangements should be retained with Community Centres and Halls. |

| **Portavogie** | |
|---|---|
| **ACTUAL COST ANALYSIS** | **2026** |
| 2025/6 Income [10 months] | £11,425 |
| Income pro rata 12 months | £13,711 |
| 2025/6 Running costs [10 months] | £41,170 |
| Running costs pro rata 12 months | £49,404 |
| 2026 Maintenance costs [10 months] | £16,653 |
| Maintenance costs pro rata 12 months | £19,984 |
| *Community Centre Costs apportioned %age* | *4%* |
| 2026 Community Centre costs [10 months] | £13,889 |
| Community Centre Costs pro rata 12 months | £16,667 |
| 2024/5 Energy costs 12 months | £13,708 |
| **TOTAL PRO RATA 12-MONTH COST TO ANDBC** | -£86,053 |
| **Cost/Income Ratio** | **6.3** |
| Letting efficiency %age | 12% |

| **Redburn** | |
|---|---|
| **ACTUAL COST ANALYSIS** | **2026** |
| 2025/6 Income [10 months] | £17,147 |
| Income pro rata 12 months | £20,577 |
| 2025/6 Running costs [10 months] | £49,940 |
| Running costs pro rata 12 months | £59,928 |
| 2026 Maintenance costs [10 months] | £11,243 |
| Maintenance costs pro rata 12 months | £13,491 |
| *Community Centre Costs apportioned %age* | *6%* |
| 2026 Community Centre costs [10 months] | £20,845 |
| Community Centre Costs pro rata 12 months | £25,014 |
| 2024/5 Energy costs 12 months | £4,473 |
| **TOTAL PRO RATA 12-MONTH COST TO ANDBC** | -£82,329 |
| **Cost/Income Ratio** | **4.0** |
| Letting efficiency %age | 42% |

| **Skipperstone** | |
|---|---|
| **ACTUAL COST ANALYSIS** | **2026** |
| 2025/6 Income [10 months] | £5,199 |
| Income pro rata 12 months | £6,239 |
| 2025/6 Running costs [10 months] | £28,815 |
| Running costs pro rata 12 months | £34,578 |
| 2026 Maintenance costs [10 months] | £5,572 |
| Maintenance costs pro rata 12 months | £6,686 |
| *Community Centre Costs apportioned %age* | *2%* |
| 2026 Community Centre costs [10 months] | £6,320 |
| Community Centre Costs pro rata 12 months | £7,584 |
| 2024/5 Energy costs 12 months | £3,193 |
| **TOTAL PRO RATA 12-MONTH COST TO ANDBC** | -£45,802 |
| **Cost/Income Ratio** | **7.3** |
| Letting efficiency %age | 19% |

| **Westwinds** | **SLA** |
|---|---|
| **ACTUAL COST ANALYSIS** | **2026** |
| 2025/6 Income [10 months] | £8,819 |
| Income pro rata 12 months | £10,582 |
| 2025/6 Running costs [10 months] | £19,363 |
| Running costs pro rata 12 months | £23,235 |
| 2026 Maintenance costs [10 months] | £7,565 |
| Maintenance costs pro rata 12 months | £9,078 |
| *Community Centre Costs apportioned %age* | *3%* |
| 2026 Community Centre costs [10 months] | £10,720 |
| Community Centre Costs pro rata 12 months | £12,864 |
| 2024/5 Energy costs 12 months | £3,603 |
| **TOTAL PRO RATA 12-MONTH COST TO ANDBC** | -£38,198 |
| **Cost/Income Ratio** | **3.6** |
| Letting efficiency %age | 21% |

*Figure 18: Financial analysis for Portavogie, Redburn, Skipperstone and West Winds Community Centres and Halls*

*Table 25: Centre Specific Provisional Recommendations*

| Centre | Centre Specific Provisional Recommendations |
|---|---|
| **Portavogie** | **Need Options / Centre option:** Retention as Community Service<br>• Cost/Income ratio is 6.3.<br>• Potential for development, although current layout presents operational challenges for certain uses<br>• Investment required to address limitations.<br>• Outreach programmes aligned with the Leisure Strategy and the Community Strategy should be implemented to strengthen community engagement, delivered by Community Centres and Halls staff. |
| **Redburn** | **Need Options / Centre option:** Retention as Community Service<br>• Cost/Income ratio is 4.<br>• Potential for further development, facility is dated and requires investment to remain fit for purpose.<br>• Potential for further development of the centre via outreach programmes aligned with the Leisure Strategy and the Community Strategy.<br>• Delivery to be undertaken by Community Centres and Halls staff to ensure alignment with service standards. |
| **Skipperstone** | **Need Options / Centre option:** Examine potential development opportunity**,** Licence Agreement / Lease Agreement, Service Level Agreement (SLA), Community Asset Transfer (CAT), retention as Community Service<br>• Cost/Income ratio is 7.3.<br>• Facility currently limited in its capacity and requires investment to modernise and improve usability.<br>• Without investment, its scope for expanded programming remains constrained. |
| **Westwinds** | **Need Options / Centre option:** Consider Licence Agreement / Lease Agreement, Service Level Agreement (SLA) or Community Asset Transfer (CAT)<br>• Cost/Income ratio is 3.6.<br>• Potential to operate as a community hub in partnership with other agencies.<br>• An established local community group may wish to operate the centre for local use.<br>• If SLA/CAT is pursued, governance and compliance arrangements should be retained with Community Centres and Halls to ensure appropriate oversight. |

## Priority Recommendations for Council Consideration

To facilitate further review and discussion regarding development options for the Community Centres and Halls, a scenario analysis has been completed below and in **Appendix 5** as to the cost savings to Council that may arise based on a review of the 2025/26 years for Manor Court Community Centre, Marquis Hall and Conlig Community Centres if either a disposal or development opportunity scenario was to emerge, and for Glen Community Centre, Kilcooley Community Centre, and West Winds Community Centres if an Service Level Agreement / License Agreement scenario was to emerge:

### *Examine Development Opportunity Scenario*

*Table 26: Examine Development Opportunity Scenario*

| ACTUAL COST SCENARIOS | Manor Court CC | Marquis Hall | Conlig CC |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2025/6 Income [10 months] | 4,573 | 12,368 | 3,007 |
| Income pro rata 12 months | 5,488 | 14,841 | 3,608 |
| 2025/6 Running costs [10 months] | 16,585 | 30,675 | 15,422 |
| Running costs pro rata 12 months | 19,902 | 36,810 | 18,507 |
| 2026 Maintenance costs [10 months] | 24,049 | 6,812 | 6,448 |
| Maintenance costs pro rata 12 months | 28,858 | 8,175 | 7,737 |
| *Community Centre Costs apportioned %age* | 2% | 4% | 1% |
| 2026 Community Centre costs [10 months] | 5,560 | 15,035 | 3,655 |
| Community Centre Costs pro rata 12 months | 6,671 | 18,042 | 4,386 |
| 2024/5 Energy costs 12 months | 4,487 | 1,768 | 2,784 |
| **TOTAL ANNUAL PRO RATA INCOME-EXPENDITURE** | **-54,431** | **-49,953** | **-29,806** |
| **POTENTIAL ANNUAL SAVINGS** | | **134,190** | |

**Community Centre Costs apportioned %age - Based on 2026 incomes as a %age of total hall incomes*
**2025/6 Energy costs not available*

### ***Service Level Agreement / License*** **Agreement / Lease Agreement Scenario**

*Table 27: Service Level Agreement / License Agreement / Lease Agreement Scenario*

| ACTUAL COST SCENARIOS | Glen CC | Kilcooley CC | West Winds CC |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2025/6 Income [10 months] | 5,424 | 8,707 | 8,819 |
| Income pro rata 12 months | 6,509 | 10,449 | 10,582 |
| 2025/6 Running costs [10 months] | 14,866 | 12,660 | 19,363 |
| Running costs pro rata 12 months | 17,839 | 15,192 | 23,235 |
| 2026 Maintenance costs [10 months] | 5,554 | 21,298 | 7,565 |
| Maintenance costs pro rata 12 months | 6,664 | 25,557 | 9,078 |
| *Community Centre Costs apportioned %age* | 2% | 3% | 3% |
| 2026 Community Centre costs [10 months] | 6,594 | 10,585 | 10,720 |
| Community Centre Costs pro rata 12 months | 7,913 | 12,702 | 12,864 |
| 2024/5 Energy costs 12 months | 4,473 | 144 | 2,621 |
| **TOTAL ANNUAL PRO RATA INCOME-EXPENDITURE** | **-30,380** | **-43,147** | **-37,216** |
| **POTENTIAL ANNUAL SAVINGS** | | **110,742** | |

**Community Centre Costs apportioned %age - Based on 2026 incomes as a %age of total hall incomes*
**2025/6 Energy costs not available*



S3 SOLUTIONS

**Priority Centre Specific Provisional Recommendations**

Based on the above analysis it is therefore recommended that the Council prioritise the following seven Community Centres/Halls for change:

1. Examine development opportunity for development of Manor Court Community Centre which could lead to savings of circa £54,430 per annum. A recent expression of interest from a local sports club.
2. Consider development opportunities for Conlig Community Centre which could lead to savings of circa £29,806 per annum.
3. Consider transfer of Marquis Hall as an opportunity site to the Parks and Open Spaces Department, which could potentially support wider strategic objectives for the site, which could lead to savings of circa £49,953 per annum.
4. Consider Glen Community Centre for a development opportunity based on the potential to reposition the site as a community site in collaboration with other agencies via a ‘Trusted User’ model, which could lead to a savings of £30,380 per annum.
5. Consider Kilcooley Community Centre for a development opportunity based on the potential to reposition the site as a community site in collaboration with other agencies via a ‘trusted User’ model which could lead to savings of £43,147 per annum.
6. Consider West Winds Community Centre for a development opportunity based on the potential to reposition the site as a community site and the knowledge that an established local community group may wish to operate the centre for local use, which could lead to savings of £37,216 per annum.
7. it is recommended that further negotiations are undertaken with Peninsula Healthy Living who have expressed interest in taking ownership and developing the Council owned facility in Kircubbin.

## 11. Community Centre Review Conclusions and Recommendations

The review process has considered a series of provisional conclusions and recommendations for the Council to consider as it continues to provide community centre space as one element of its community services. The provisional recommendations have been developed against a number of themes below:

| **Theme One: Evidence informed planning and provision of community centres** |
|---|
| Theme one recognises that the Borough covers a significant geography which includes a mix of urban and rural settlements (some of the highest density urban and least dense rural populations across NI). The review has established that there are more private providers than the Council (sports clubs, cultural organisations, community associations and faith groups). It is also recognised in the review that population and demography evolve over time and that the requirement for centres can change. As a result of this combination of factors, it is important that a decision to invest in a new community centre or hall, refurbish or expand a centre or dispose of one is done on objective evidence led basis.<br>It is recommended that the Council take the following approach in its 10-year Community Centre Plan:<br>• Examine population and demography projections.<br>• Agree accessibility norms (travel distances) and scale options (spaces and specifications).<br>• Identify priority areas where there is no or limited access to community centre space and identify the scale of centre required.<br>• Identify areas where duplication exists.<br>• Identify areas where demography will change the requirements across the duration of the 10-Year Community Centre Plan.<br>This evidence base will support the Council's decision making and the progression of the most strategic option from section 9. |
| **Theme Two: Investment in sustainable, flexible and efficient community centre assets** |
| Results from the citizens survey found that over half of the citizens believe the centres are average or below in terms of presentation and quality. The review has identified that the Council has learned a lot about the design and specification of centres as a provider and manager of them. The benchmarking (with the other 10 peer local authorities across NI) has also identified some approaches which the Council may want to implement across the 10-Year Community Centre and Hall Plan including:<br>• Agreeing a 10-Year Investment Plan for the Centres to implement the recommendations of the independent review and the 10-year Community Centre Plan.<br>• Agree a common design specification for small, medium and large-scale community centres and implement them where a new centre is provided or where a centre is being redeveloped.<br>• Implement a regular conditions assessment of each centre based on the previous assessment completed for five of the 20 centres.<br>• Establish agreed standards for reporting and addressing maintenance and conditions issues. |

| Theme Three: Improved approaches to management of performance and the return on investment in community centres |
|---|
| The review has identified that whilst the Council holds information on both a service-wide and individual centre/hall basis there is little consistency in how it is collated. A number of recommendations have been developed based on the review and the benchmarking processes which should provide the Council team with higher quality and more meaningful information to make informed decisions on its overall provision and on each centre as follows:<br>• Provision of a dashboard with common performance measurements for all of the centres which presents an overview of how they are performing and a ranking of them. |
| **Theme Four: Raising awareness and promoting our centres and their services and activities** |
| The review has established that many of the Borough's citizens are not aware of the centres or do not go to them. Over 50% of the respondents consulted were not aware of the Council's Community Centres and Halls and the programme of services, activities and events available from them. Therefore, it is recommended that the Council:<br>• Assign dedicated staff resource to lead the implementation of the 10-Year Community Centre Plan.<br>• Develop a strategic and co-ordinated promotional plan for the Council's network of Community Centres and Halls.<br>• Support the overall promotional plan with a centre-by-centre local promotional plan. |
| **Theme Five: Partnership and capacity, supporting others to lead and manage centres and halls where appropriate** |
| Whilst the Council will retain a lead role in the provision of Community Centres and Halls across the Borough. It is recognised that in some situations it may be appropriate and more effective for a local community to take a lead role in the provision and management of community centres/space. This can be the case where there is a need for a community centre and there is already a strong community-based organisation which can take the lead. There are also communities where there is strong community leadership and capacity. It is recommended that:<br>• Council considers a Community Asset Transfer Policy and process for community centres.<br>• A support and capacity building programme is put in place for communities which want to consider an SLA approach (strategic management option two). |
| **Theme Six: Consistent approaches to policies and practice across Council owned and managed community centres** |
| The independent review has identified some inconsistencies in the approach to management across the Councils Community Centres and Halls. Some of this relates to policies and the review provides an opportunity to address these and bring a level of consistency. It is recommended that:<br>• The review has identified that the availability of all the Community Centres and Halls is the same, however, usage and bookings vary across the Estate. |



S3 SOLUTIONS

- Council should review the benchmarking information from its peer local authorities across NI(see table presenting a pricing comparator for centres and halls across NI) and agree and adopt a pricing policy. The review recognises that the location, design and condition of the centres and halls owned and operated by the Council across the Borough varies so the Councils approach might want to focus on a minor hall/room, medium hall/room and a large hall/room(based on its portfolio and the benchmarking information it should define these types of space in metres sq.) and agree a price per hour for each and apply it consistently across its stock of Community Centres and Halls. Furthermore, consideration to apply an enhanced rate for users who book outside of normal hours as a mitigation to any additional staff renumeration costs should be undertaken.
- Once the pricing policy is agreed and adopted by the Council a promotion and awareness campaign will be implemented (as part of the Community Centre and Halls Communications Plan).
- Examine potential of a trusted user policy and potentially the introduction of a keypad entry for confirmed trusted users if deemed appropriate and feasible
- Migration to an online/app-based booking system across the centres and halls.

## 12. Vision for Community Centre/Halls Provision by 2035

The review process has established a baseline position for the Council's leadership and management of Community Centres and Halls across the Borough. Learning has been captured which has the potential to influence how the Council evolves its approach to the delivery of Community Centres and Halls across the Borough for the next 10 years up to 2035. Whilst sections 2 to 9 of the review examine the current position and performance of the Council's 20 Community Centres and Halls, sections 10 and 11 set out how the Council proposes to evolve its approach to the provision of Community Centres and Halls up to 2035.

Our Vision Statement for the Community Centres and Halls provision in the Ards and North Down Borough by 2035 is:

| |
|---|
| Our community centres are **vibrant, inclusive, multi-service neighbourhood hubs** that strengthen community wellbeing and social connections, increase access to opportunities, reduce inequalities, and support our citizens throughout their lives |

Ards and North Down Borough Council

# Review of Community Development Direct Provision

## To read in conjunction with the Community Strategy

**September 2026**

Supporting Organisations Enabling Social Change

S3

# Contents

1. Introduction ..... 3

 1.1 About Ards and North Down ..... 3

 1.2 The Review ..... 5

2. Purpose & Scope of Community Development Direct Provision ..... 6

 2.1 Community Development Provision ..... 6

 2.2. Community Development Unit ..... 8

 2.3 Community Development Values ..... 9

3. Inputs & Activity Targets ..... 10

4. Performance and Impacts ..... 12

5. Community and Stakeholder Consultations ..... 23

 5.1 Consultation Overview ..... 23

 ~~5~~.2 Consultation Process- ..... 23

 5.5 Feedback in relation to Community Development Direct Provision ..... 27

6. Conclusions ..... 32

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 About Ards and North Down

Ards and North Down is a local government district (LGD) in the east of Northern Ireland. It is one of 11 local councils and includes the larger settlements of Bangor, Comber, Donaghadee, Holywood and Newtownards. The district spans an area of 228 square miles and boasts natural landscapes and seascapes with 115 miles of scenic coastline winding along the edge of Belfast Lough, on to the Ards Peninsula and Strangford Lough.

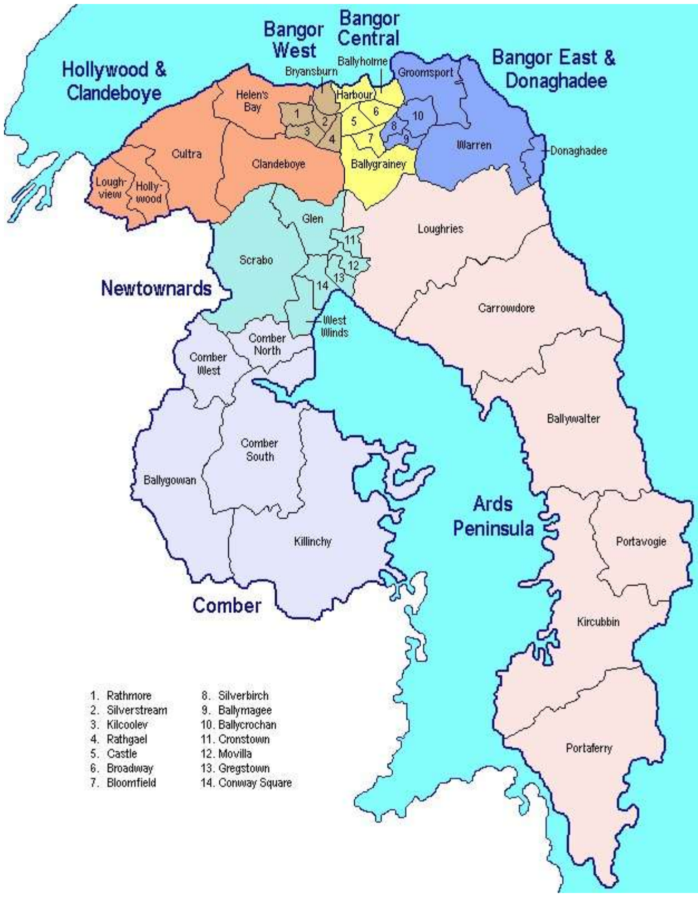


*Figure 1: Map of Ards and North Down LGD*

**Population**

Ards and North Down has a population of 164,223, making it the fourth most populated of the 11 Council areas in Northern Ireland (NI). The area has a population density of 359.8 people per square kilometre, approximately three times the Northern Ireland average. The area presents a balanced demographic composition, with females comprising 51% and males 49%. Since 2013, the area has witnessed a population increase of 4.4% just below the Northern Ireland average of 4.8%.

Compared to the Northern Ireland median age of 40 years, Ards and North Down LGD maintains an older demographic, with a median age in mid-2023 of 45.2 years, giving it the highest median age at local government district level. Over one in five people (23%) living in Ards and North Down in mid-2023 were estimated to be aged 65 and over, the highest proportion compared to other LGDs, compared with 18% on a NI level. Conversely, the district has the lowest proportion of children (i.e. people aged 0 to 15 years) at 17.8% compared to 20% on a NI level. Additionally, the district has the lowest proportion of the working age population (i.e. people aged 16 to 64 years) among its population 59.2% compared to 62% nationally.

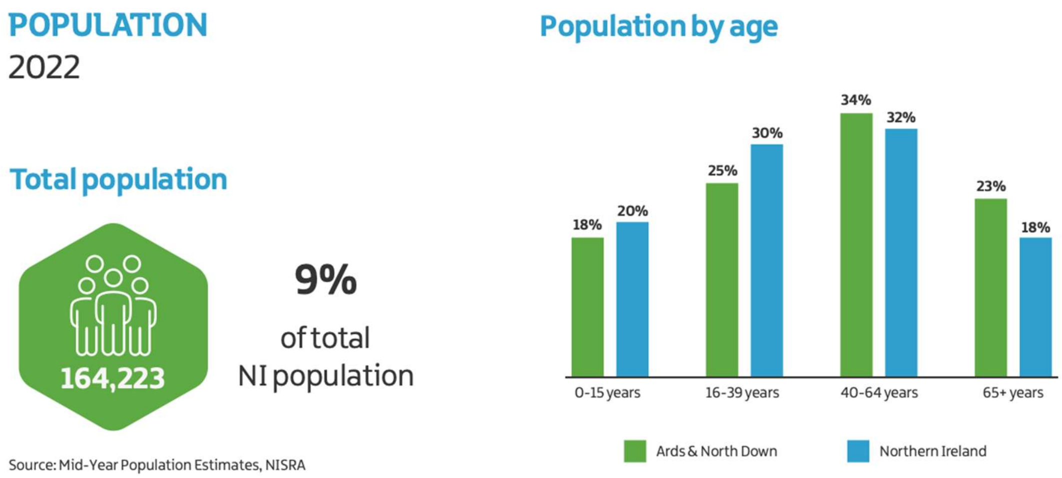


*Figure 2: Ards and North Down Population Data*

**Educational Attainment**

Educational attainment is significantly higher than the NI average in terms of the level of qualifications attained by school leavers and the proportion of the population across all age groups from 16- 64 holding Level 2 qualifications and Level 3 qualifications and above. School leavers from this area generally perform well, with the numbers going on to Further Education very high with 65.5% of the population aged 16 to 64 with a Level 3 or above qualifications compared to 60.3% for NI.

**Health**

From the 2021 Census, 78% of Ards and North Down population rated their health as very good or good, which is similar to the rate for NI of 79%. The rate of those who reported their health as bad or very bad is the same in Ards and North Down as it is in NI with both rating 8%. Personal wellbeing indicators for the area are reflective of the challenging health and wellbeing impacts experienced by local residents. These figures are based on headline estimates of personal wellbeing gathered from the latest Annual Population Survey in 2023 (ONS).

- The mean score (out of 10) for life satisfaction in the Ards and North Down was 7.8, higher than the recorded NI average of 7.63.
- The mean score (out of 10) for happiness in the Ards and North Down was 7.7, again higher than the recorded NI average of 7.57.
- The mean score (out of 10) for anxiety in the Ards and North Down was 3.0 this is higher than the recorded NI average of 2.91.

**Deprivation**

Super Output Areas (SOA) are used by NISRA to measure deprivation, there are 890 SOAs in Northern Ireland. 3 of the SOAs in Ards and North Down were in the top 100 most deprived SOAs in NI, including Scrabo 2 (ranked 71), Glen 1 (ranked 97) and Central (ranked 99).

*Table 1: Deprivation Rankings for Ards and North Down SOAs in top 100 most deprived SOAs in NI*

| SOA Name | NI Deprivation Rank (out of 890) |
|---|---|
| Scrabo 2 | 71 |
| Glen 1 | 97 |
| Central | 99 |

Income deprivation is a marked feature of the area profile at a local level. Analysis of median rates of gross pay by LGD demonstrate relatively low earnings across the district. When considered by place of work, Ards and North Down has the lowest levels of median gross pay (weekly) of all LGDs in Northern Ireland. The differential is significant with the median gross earnings more than £100 per week less than the equivalent figure for NI as a whole. When median gross pay is considered by place of residence as opposed to place of work, Ards and North Down has the second lowest median rate of gross weekly pay (after Causeway Coast and Glens) of all LGDs. This means while some workers travel outside the area to earn more, overall, this area compares unfavourably in terms of rates of pay to almost every other district in Northern Ireland.

### 1.2 The Review

S3 Consulting has been appointed by Ards & North Down Borough Council (ANDBC) to:

1. Develop a Community Development Strategy and Action Plan.
2. Carry out a review of Community Development Direct Provision and make recommendations of future provision.
3. Carry out a review of Community Centres and Halls provision and operating model in ANDBC and make recommendations of future provision.

This report focuses on requirement 2, the review of Community Development Direct Provision and recommendations of future provision for 2026 – 2035.

## 2. Purpose & Scope of Community Development Direct Provision

ANDBC delivers a range of Community Development activities in line with the Council's current Community Development Strategy – The Game Plan. The Game Plan's vision:

*"To have every community in our Borough bustling with community led activities and initiatives for all"*

The Game Plan identifies 6 desired outcomes:

Outcome 1 - Partnership Solutions
Through the development of a collaborative process or through the development of collaborative processes our communities are able to work with us, and each other, to identify solutions that address local needs.

Outcome 2 - Start-Up/Sustainable
Local groups are sustainable and able to meet their own needs due to an empowering start-up and support process.

Outcome 3 – Volunteering
Communities are happy and healthy due to the opportunities available for people to maximise their skills and talents.

Outcome 4 - Training & Development
Our communities are skilled, engaged and empowered through training and development opportunities.

Outcome 5 - Clubs & Community Summer Schemes
Needs are addressed through the delivery of quality programmes with relevant partners in shared spaces.

Outcome 6 – Grants
Our communities have capacity to avail of Council funds to address locally identified needs.

### 2.1 Community Development Provision

The full extent of the Community Development Services is outlined in the following table.

*Table 2: Community Development Services*

| |
|---|
| **Partnerships** |
| • SLA with Community Networks<br>• Neighbourhood Renewal<br>• Community Advice Ards and North Down (CAAND) |
| **Community Development Support** |
| • Community Planning working groups<br>• Interagency meetings<br>• Ezine<br>• Grant application support<br>• Delivery of Safeguarding<br>• Training<br>• Community Group AGM's<br>• Community Meetings<br>• Cross Council Reading Groups<br>• Volunteer development<br>• Education Projects<br>• Peer working<br>• Networking events<br>• Community Consultations<br>• Weekly community email – funding and community information |
| **Initiatives** |
| • Youth Voice<br>• Mae Murray Accessible Beach<br>• Tea Dances<br>• Reading Borough<br>• Connecting Families<br>• Stay Connected, Stay Active |
| **Direct Provision** |
| • Play Clubs<br>• Young Leaders Programme<br>• Additional Needs Club<br>• Over 50's Club<br>• Summer schemes direct provision plus support of Community Partners |
| **Annual Grants** |
| • Community Development running costs<br>• Community festival fund<br>• Seeding grants<br>• Christmas festival grants<br>• Community support initiatives (Social Supermarket)<br>• Community Advice Ards and North Down<br>• One off grant, VE Day, Coronation, hardship. |

### 2.2. Community Development Unit

The Community Development Unit sits within the Community Services Department under the Active and Healthy Communities Directorate in Council. The Department also includes Community Centres and Halls and Externally Funded Programmes units.

The Community Services Department strive to achieve community cohesion and pride in culture and heritage and empowers communities through capacity building, peace building and instilling pride.

The service supports all three of the Councils corporate priorities but in particular the social priority - improving wellbeing through social inclusion and reducing inequality.

The Community Development Service Unit offers support directly and indirectly to enable and empower communities. The service facilitates partnership working with a range of community and voluntary organisations. The Community Development team is outlined below.

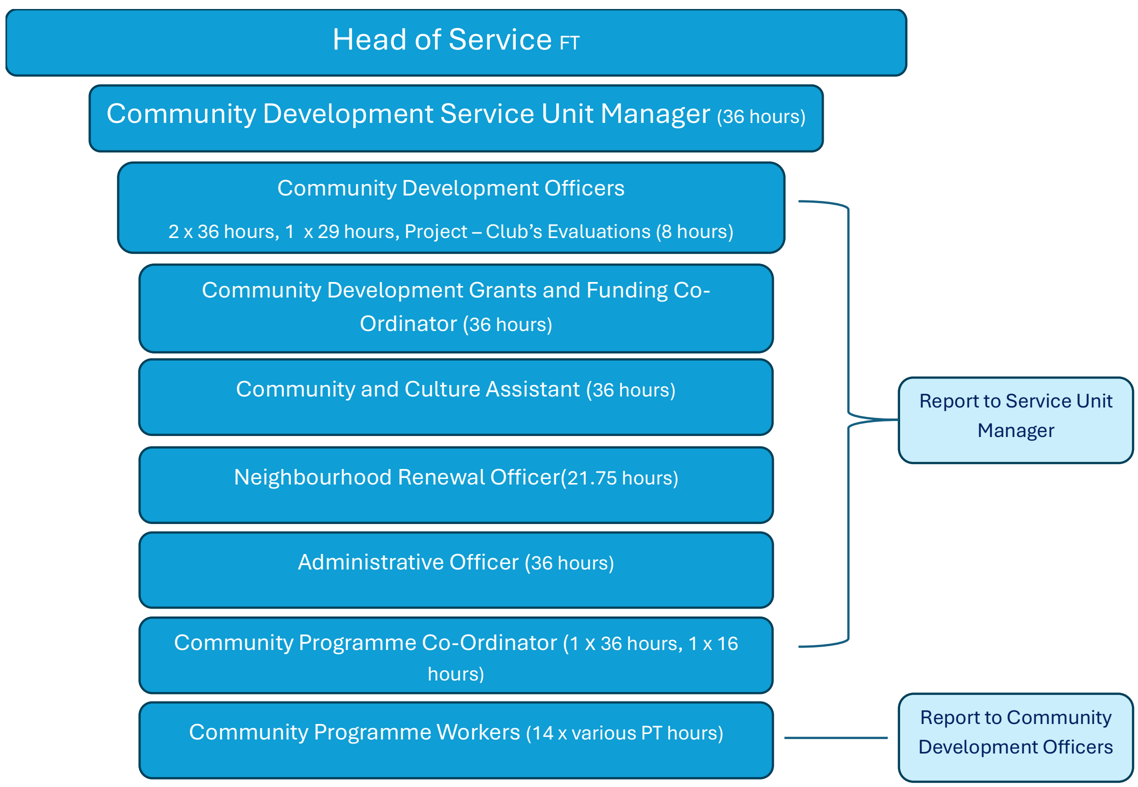


*Figure 3: Community Development Service Unit Organisational Chart*

### 2.3 Community Development Values

The team's delivery is based on the following Community Development Values and Principles:

*Table 3: Community Development Values and Principles*

| Our Values | Our Promise |
|---|---|
| Honesty | We will always operate with integrity through our honest and transparent action. |
| Championing Empowerment | We will work with and support local communities to build their capacity to address their specific needs. |
| Openness | We will publish our yearly 'Game Plan' and demonstrate our performance against agreed targets. |
| Fairness | We will address imbalances and bring about positive change founded on social justice and inclusion. |
| Efficiency | We will work with other statutory and non-statutory organisations together with the community to ensure common goals are targeted and co-ordinated effectively |

### 3. Inputs & Activity Targets

The following actions and targets are set out in ANDBC Community Development Strategy – The Game Plan

*Table 4: ANDBC Community Development Strategy – The Game Plan Actions and Targets*

| Outcome | Key Actions | Targets |
|---|---|---|
| **1. Partnership Solutions** | Review needs Analysis for all communities | Compile community profiles |
| | Statutory Profile | Explore local statutory activities |
| | Charity Profile | Explore local charity activities |
| | Private Profile | Private sector activities |
| | Manage neighbourhood renewal programme | Meet agreed identified targets in Neighbourhood Renewal Programme |
| | Oversee agreement with advice services | DfC targets met |
| **2. Start-up/Sustainable Support** | Identify requirements for new community groups | Borough wide needs analysis |
| | Continue to support groups using innovative and creative approaches | 75% satisfaction |
| | Establish community hubs | 6 community hubs established |
| | Reduce bureaucracy and offer practical assistance in community groups | Promote our services aimed for 75% services satisfaction |
| **3. Volunteering** | **Council Volunteers** | |
| | Run a volunteer pilot through Summer Schemes | 10 Council volunteers recruited |
| | Run a volunteer pilot through clubs | 10 Council volunteers recruited |
| | **Community Volunteers** | |
| | Create and implement a PR plan | Design & deliver |
| | Create and pilot signposting mechanism | Design & deliver |
| | Pilot new volunteer support line | Design & deliver |
| | Facilitate a large volunteering night for all – showcase partnership approach | 75% satisfactory |
| **4. Training** | Develop an agreed toolkit with partners | Design & produce |


S3 SOLUTIONS

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| | Identify priority areas for delivery | Produce database |
| | Establish '1 stop community hub' | Distribute and publish toolkit Borough-wide |
| **5. Clubs & Community Summer Schemes** | **Clubs** | |
| | Deliver relevant programmes in agreed areas across the 5 work areas | 75% satisfaction |
| | Review and rationalise Program delivery | Review complete |
| | Identify Programmes for transfer to independence | Complete evaluation |
| | Identify key areas for direct provision | Complete evaluation |
| | Identify and support community and voluntary groups to deliver activities independently | Design an online community directory |
| | **Summer Schemes** | |
| | Establish groups for community led Summer Scheme | 4 community led Summer Schemes |
| | Provide relevant support and delivery for the development of locally led Summer Schemes | 75% satisfaction |
| | Assess level of financial support | Agree budget |
| | Strategically target and deliver Council led Summer Schemes | 75% satisfaction |
| **6. Grants** | Advertise and communicate Council grants | 75% satisfaction |
| | Continue to support groups using innovative and creative approaches | 75% satisfaction |
| | Provide and administer Community Festival Fund grants to community voluntary sector | 100% fund allocation 80% of applications awarded |
| | Provide and administer Community Development grants to community voluntary sector | 100% fund allocation 80% of applications awarded |
| | Design and pilot a digital 'how to' guide | Pilot |



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## 4. Performance and Impacts

The Community Development Team prepare and implement an annual operating plan to deliver on the key actions outlined in 'The Game Plan'. The following table provides a summary of the performance in the years 2023-2024, 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 based on the most up to date information received to date.

*Table 5: Summary of Community Development Performance and Impacts 2023-2024, 2024-2025 and 2025-2026*

| Outcome | Activity | Outputs/Outcomes |
|---|---|---|
| **2023-2024** | | |
| **1. Partnership Solutions** | Community Development Partners SLAs – Budget £30,000 | • Engaged with and supported 3 Community Networks (County Down Rural CN, Ards Development Bureau, North Down CN)<br>• 8834 Groups/Individuals signposted to appropriate services/support<br>• 68 Groups/Individuals supported towards Identifying appropriate funding opportunities<br>• 990 Groups / Individuals supported through training opportunities |
| | Supporting Neighbourhood Renewal | • Engaged with and supported Kilcooley Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership (Bangor area)<br>• 21 meetings/events attended.<br>• Health Fair held<br>- 35 organisations represented<br>- Circa 115 individuals attended<br>- 34 health surveys completed<br>- Dental Hygienist provided follow up advice on poor oral health to local primary school<br>- Dads group supported through SEHSCT information and workshops |

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| | | on mental health and addiction service.<br>- Joint funding applications for outdoor gazebos<br>- New solo mums group linked in with Community Development Team for support. |
| | Community Advice (CAAND) support – budget £380,836 | • Support the delivery of DfC 'Advice Grant'<br>• £147,563 provided by Council to support the drawdown of the DfC contribution |
| | Community Development Support | • 3 CD Officers supporting 3 geographic areas<br>• 192 meetings/events attended or delivered<br>• Book Start Initiative started in April 2024 – to provide Book Start baby packs to families with newborn babies on registration of the birth. 1600 packs purchased and 84 issued.<br>• Continued support for the Mae Murray Foundation to support residents with physical disabilities to take part in activities at Groomsport Beach.<br>• Youth Voice<br>- Teambuilding and Introductory sessions for new members<br>- Research sessions for Bucket List book idea.<br>- Photography Session – taking photos at points of interests within the Ards and North Down area.<br>- Graphic design workshops – design ideas for book<br>- Social Night – exam stress<br>- 135 engagement/knowledge sessions<br>- 17 participants engaged<br>- 12 face-to-face sessions<br>- 8 leadership sessions |

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| | | - 4 citizenship sessions<br>- 12 communication sessions |
| **2. Start-up/Sustainable Support** | Community Information Register *(Data from September 2024 onwards)* | • 63% increase in registered groups<br>• 6 Council grants shared<br>• 70 third party grants shared<br>• 7 Council community information shared<br>• 33 third party community information shared<br>• Online survey of those registered<br>- 70% had applied for funding opportunities (92% successfully received funding)<br>- 60% would like support with 3rd party funding applications.<br>- 40% ranked project costs as the most important topic.<br>- 25% ranked rural opportunities as the least important topic. |
| | Community Ezine | • The digital application successfully shared information from the Community Services Department and other partners across Council including:<br>- Community Development<br>- Good Relations<br>- Community Policing Community Partnership<br>- Community Safety Team<br>- Peace<br>- Age Friendly<br>- Parks<br>- Environmental Health<br>- Community Planning<br>• 112 members registered for information |
| **3. Volunteering** | Support and training | • Support and training provided for volunteers including:<br>- Compliance with recruitment and selection processes<br>- ANI vetting for staff working directly with people. |


S3 SOLUTIONS

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| | | - Induction and support meetings<br>- Training opportunities relevant to role<br>- Best practice approach. |
| | Recognition event | • Held on 14 March 2024<br>• 48 attendees<br>• 23 community groups represented |
| **4. Training & Development** | Community Development Toolkit | • Available on the ANDBC website<br>• Provided to all new groups and groups changing management |
| | Safeguarding | • Safeguarding training officers in place in Council<br>• 5 training sessions delivered<br>• 2 upskilling training attended<br>• 3 review group meetings<br>• 10 Internal safeguarding meetings |
| **5. Clubs & Community Summer Schemes** | Clubs | • Weekly additional needs disco<br>- 69 registrations<br>- 1023 attendances<br>• Weekly 50+ club<br>- 691 attendances<br>- Transitioned from independent provider to Council provision<br>- Lunch club reinstated increased membership by 33%<br>• Play Clubs for children aged 5 to 11<br>- 6 clubs in operation<br>- 127 children registered |
| | Summer Schemes | - 7 Council led schemes delivered<br>- 3 Community led schemes delivered<br>- 385 places available per week (264 Council, 121 Community). 19% decrease on previous year<br>- Net cost £82,715 |
| **6. Grants** | Community Development Cost Grant - £90,000 | • 67 applications received<br>• 45 successful groups awarded 100% of eligible running costs (total £87,320.50) |



S3 SOLUTIONS

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| | Events & Festivals Fund | • 4 Tier model (Large, Medium, Neighbourhood & Local)<br>• 20 groups<br>• £82,500 awarded<br>• 45,162 attendees |
| | Seeding Grants (£200 to support a group's early stage start up) | • 4 groups supported |
| | Christmas Festival Grants | • 13 villages supported<br>• 3 towns supported<br>• £21,138 awarded<br>• 14,625 attendees |
| | Hardship Funding – from DfC | • 30 groups applied<br>• 23 groups supported<br>• £344,024 awarded |
| | Social Supermarkets | • 2 SLAs in place<br>• 2 Organisations funded<br>• 132 households supported<br>• £100,277 funding |
| | Council Funded Special Commemorative Events | • Coronation celebrations funded<br>- 60 groups supported<br>- Party Packs provided<br>- 2 55+ tea dances |
| **2024-2025** | | |
| **1. Partnership Solutions** | Community Development Partners SLAs – Budget £37,936.32 | • Continued to engage with and supported 3 Community Networks (County Down Rural CN, Ards Development Bureau, North Down CN)<br>• 8284 Groups/Individuals signposted to appropriate services/support<br>• 116 Groups/Individuals supported towards Identifying appropriate funding opportunities<br>• 639 Groups / Individuals supported through training opportunities |
| | Supporting Neighbourhood Renewal | • Continued to engage with and supported Kilcooley Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership KNRP (Bangor area)<br>• 25 meetings/events attended. |

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| | | • KNRP newsletter launched in December 2024 and PVC banner created |
| | Community Advice (CAAND) support – budget £386,947 | • Support the delivery of DfC 'Advice Grant'<br>- £124,850 provided by council to support the drawdown of the DfC contribution |
| | Community Development Support | • 3 CD Officers supporting 3 geographic areas<br>• 257 meetings/events attended or delivered<br>• Book Start Initiative to provide Book Start baby packs to families with newborn babies on registration of the birth is ongoing. A further 1091 have been issued bringing the total to 1175.<br>• Continued support for the Mae Murray Foundation. Over 600 people attended activities at Groomsport Beach.<br>• Youth Voice<br>- Recruitment drive event with 12 new members.<br>- Over 50s intergenerational meetings with Youth – building connections.<br>- Meeting the Mayor and Local Councillors Event at Bangor City Hall to present campaign plans.<br>- Visit to Stormont Parliament Building<br>- Four-day study visit to Edinburgh.<br>- Consultation Real Event working in collaboration with PSNI and EAYS (regional<br>- assessment of need)<br>- Engaged in a policy review consultation with Department of Education.<br>- 22 Youth Voice members<br>- 11 weekly meetings<br>- 22 leadership sessions<br>- 20 citizenship sessions |

| | | |
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| | | - 20 communication sessions<br>- 168 EA engagements<br>- 2 Consultations |
| **2. Start-up/Sustainable Support** | Community Information Register | • 254 registered contacts<br>• 49% increase in registered groups<br>• 10 Council grants shared<br>• 212 third party grants shared<br>• 24 Council community information shared<br>• 117 third party community information shared<br>• Online survey of those registered<br>- 43% had applied for funding opportunities<br>- 40% of those who applied successfully received funding |
| | Community Ezine | • The digital application is continuing successfully<br>• 110 members are registered for information |
| **3. Volunteering** | Recognition event | • Postponed until June 2025 as March clashed with groups who had end of year funding return commitments |
| **4. Training & Development** | Community Development Toolkit | • Continues to be available |
| | Safeguarding | • 2 Safeguarding training officers in place in Council<br>• 4 training sessions delivered<br>• 2 review group meetings<br>• 6 Internal safeguarding meetings |
| | Food Hygiene Course | • 20 older people were trained in food hygiene |
| **5. Clubs & Community Summer Schemes** | Clubs | • Weekly additional needs disco<br>- 1232 attendances<br>• Weekly 50+ club<br>- 680 attendances<br>- A group of members attended a visit to Stormont Parliament Buildings<br>- Regular over 50s tea dances with circa 130 attendees |

| | | |
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| | | • Play Clubs for children aged 5 to 11<br>- 5 clubs in operation<br>- 1581 attendances<br>- Children's mental health week activities |
| | Summer Schemes | • 7 Council led schemes delivered<br>• 3 Community led schemes delivered<br>- 1081 attendees (640 Council, 441 Community). |
| **6. Grants** | Community Development Cost Grant – Budget £92,000 | • 63 applications received<br>• 50 successful groups awarded 89% of eligible running costs (total £93,850) |
| | Community Festival Fund – Budget £175,000 | • 3 Tier model (Medium/Large, Neighbourhood & Local)<br>• 47 applications received<br>• 29 applications successful<br>• £91,139 awarded<br>• 51,555 attendees |
| | Christmas Festival Grants | • 14 villages supported<br>• 3 towns supported<br>• £22,396 awarded<br>• 11,804 attendees |
| | Winter Hardship Funding – from DfC | • 31 groups applied<br>• 22 groups supported<br>• £47,268 awarded |
| | Social Supermarkets | • 2 SLAs are in place<br>• 2 Organisations funded<br>• 1 Service provider ceased the service during the year, and a new one was introduced<br>• £127,822 funding |
| **2025-26 up to and including Quarter 3** | | |
| **1. Partnership Solutions** | Community Development Partners SLAs – Budget £37,936.32 | • Currently on track to exceed targets |
| | Supporting Neighbourhood Renewal | • 25 meetings and sub groups attended<br>• Tea dance supported<br>• Community newsletter developed and distributed<br>• 2026-27 funding application submitted |



S3 SOLUTIONS

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| | Community Advice (CAAND) support – budget £386,947 | • Support the delivery of DfC 'Advice Grant'<br>• £124,850 provided by council to support the drawdown of the DfC contribution |
| | Community Development Support | • 3 CD Officers supporting 3 geographic areas<br>• Youth Voice supported |
| **2. Start-up/Sustainable Support** | Community Information Register | • 350 registered contacts as of 21st January 2026<br>• 380 grants shared in 38 emails between 1st April 2025 and 21st January 2026 |
| | Community Ezine | • Ezine is currently halted due to staff illness, the staff that prepared the Ezine has had to act into another role |
| **3. Volunteering** | Recognition event | • Volunteer Recognition Event was held during Volunteer Week in June 2025. The event attracted 60 attendees. |
| **4. Training & Development** | Community Development Toolkit | • Continues to be available and is currently being reviewed. |
| | Safeguarding | • 1 Safeguarding session delivered to community with 25 attendees<br>• Safeguarding training given to adults at additional needs clubs<br>• Safeguarding training given to young leader on Council programme |
| | Training | • First aid training in the community with 24 attendees<br>• Marshalling training with 20 attendees |
| **5. Clubs & Community Summer Schemes** | Clubs | Additional programmes:<br>• 3 Tea Dances held with a total of 300 participants<br>• Stay Connected Stay Active programme – A partnership with Community Halls as a 6-week programme held in 5 locations which has attracted 111 attendees across all programmes |

| | | |
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| | | • International Women's Day – women community champions celebrated with 18 women recognised<br>• Connecting Family's Programme – A one day event for children aged 5-14 years old to be accompanied by a parent. The event was held during February half term which attracted 100 attendees, 87 of which were under 14 years old<br>• Received successful funding from PHS for over 50's club and £975 for a series of programmes |
| | Summer Schemes | • 8 Council led schemes delivered<br>• 2 Community led schemes delivered<br>• 1 Externally facilitated scheme<br>• Total of 1024 attendees (768 Council, 192 Community, 64 External) |
| **6. Grants** | Community Development Cost Grant – Budget £92,000 | • 63 applications received<br>• 49 successful groups awarded 89% of eligible running costs (Awarded £91,625.04 - Total amount claimed is not available until after year end. |
| | Events & Festivals Fund – Budget £175,000 | • 3 Tier model (Medium/Large, Neighbourhood & Local)<br>• Medium: 5 organisations awarded at 91% - £55,400.80 awarded, 4,350 attendees. (Only 2 evaluations completed to date)<br>• Neighbourhood: 8 organisations awarded - £29,015 awarded, 2,500 attendees. (Only 3 evaluations completed to date)<br>• Local: 11 organisations awarded at 100%- £10,885 awarded, 2,276 attendees. (Only 4 evaluations completed to date) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Christmas Festival Grants | • 14 villages supported<br>• 3 towns supported<br>• £22,396 awarded |
| | Winter Hardship Funding – from DfC | • This funding was not available this year – DfC have confirmed this funding will no longer be available moving forward |
| | Social Supermarkets | • 2 Providers<br>• Budget of £134,000 |

# 5. Community and Stakeholder Consultations

## 5.1 Consultation Overview

S3 Solutions has undertaken an extensive consultation exercise as part of the wider community development review and strategy development assignment. The consultation exercise associated with this project was divided into two phases with distinct purposes. The first engagement phase was completed in November 2025. The second engagement was undertaken in March 2026 using the *Consultation and Draft Actions Framework* as a focus for the Consultation.

## ~~5~~.2 Consultation Process-

The programme of consultations already undertaken is summarised in the following graphics:

**Phase One of Engagement – October / November 2025**

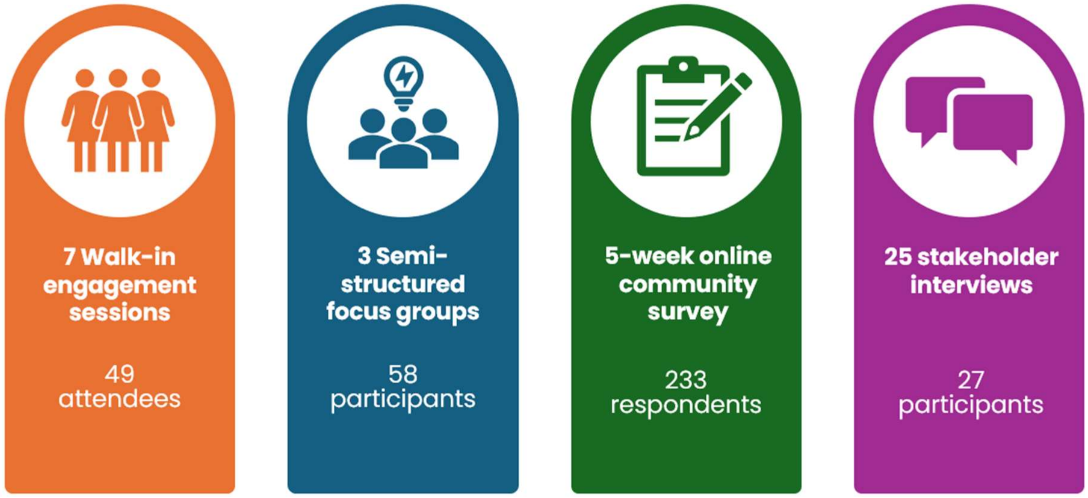



*Figure 5: Phase One of Engagement*

**Phase Two of Engagement – March 2026**

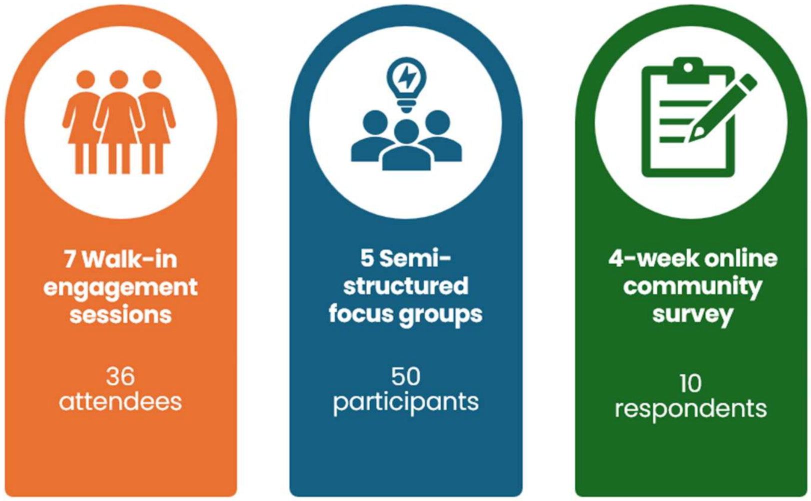



*Figure 6: Phase Two of Engagement*

### 5.2 Promotion

Council branding guidelines were used in order to promote the consultation process and associated events. Consultation opportunities were publicised by the Council across their website, social media platforms, and via a press launch. S3 Solutions supported this promotion by contacting our network of community and voluntary organisations across ANDBC, including every school across the borough and via their social media platforms.

In addition, all those stakeholder organisations who participated in stakeholder interviews agreed to support the awareness-raising process by circulating details of the consultation events and online survey links to their membership bases and wider networks via email, social media and newsletters.

Whilst the online survey had low levels of participation in the early weeks, the promotion did eventually enable the consultation to gain traction. The consultation has been successful in reaching a broad cross-section of the community, including those residing in areas of deprivation, areas of rurality, and hard to reach groups.

### 5.3 Online Community Survey

A community survey was designed, launched and hosted online. The draft questionnaire initially produced by S3 Solutions was circulated to the project team for review and response. Once agreement was reached regarding the content and layout of the questionnaire, the online survey went live on 7th October 2025. A paper version of the online survey was produced, and this was made available at community centres across the borough and via the public walk-in sessions held at various locations. This allowed those attending events to take a copy away for group or family members to complete and return by freepost to the Council.

The survey was originally scheduled to close on 5th November 2025 and was extended to 10th November 2025 to allow it to run over one additional weekend. The Council publicised a 'countdown' to the close of the online community survey which helped to draw public attention and participation remained steady until the closing date. In total 233 participants engaged with the online community survey. An analysis of respondents is as follows:

Of the 233 respondents 73% were female and 26% were male (Figure 7).

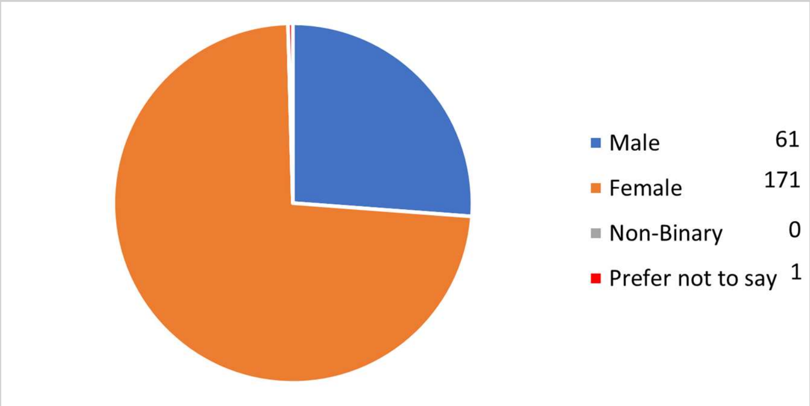



*Figure 7: Gender of respondents*

A sizable proportion of respondents 86% (n.200) completed the survey as a local resident and 14% (n.33) completed the survey as a group/organisation.

A significant number of responses were from adults aged 35-44 (21% n.50) and adults aged 65-74 (21% n.50), followed by adults aged 55-64 (20% n.46).

Respondents were asked to select the District Electoral Area (DEA) in which they reside (Figure 8), responses were received from across the borough, ensuring a broad and representative sample. A significant number of responses came from respondents in Ards Peninsula (28%), Newtownards (23%) and Bangor East and Donaghadee (19%).

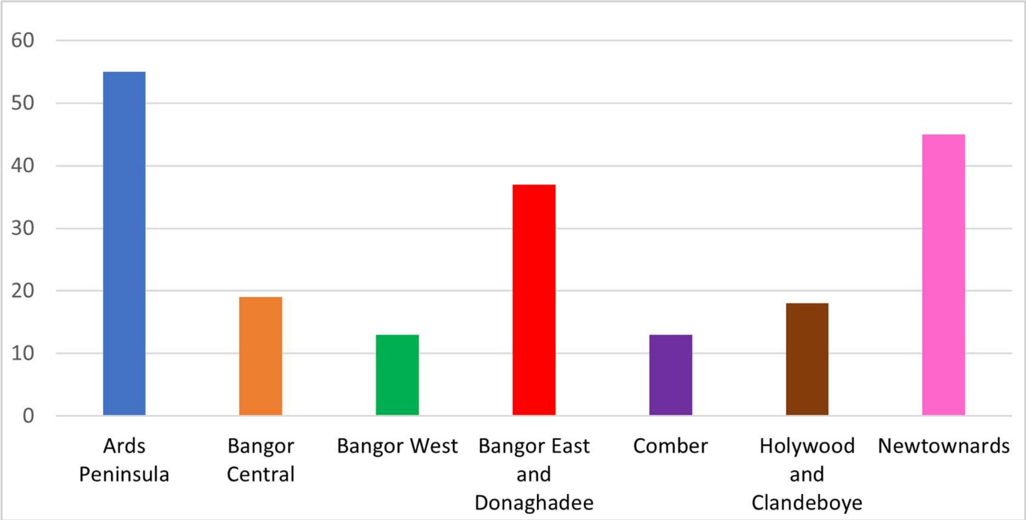



*Figure 8: District electoral area in which respondents reside*

A second online survey has been developed and promoted in March 2026 using the *Consultation and Draft Actions Framework* as a focus for the Consultation.

**5.4 Stakeholder Consultations**

Over thirty target stakeholders were approached to take part in semi structured one to one stakeholder interviews as part of the phase 1 consultation process. Engagement was very positive with stakeholders keen to take part. A total of 25 interviews were completed with 27 participants. Interviews lasted between 50 minutes to an hour each and this has added significantly to qualitative evidence base underpinning the project.

*Table 6: Organisations contacted via the Stakeholder Engagement Process*

| **Organisations contacted via the Stakeholder Engagement Process** | |
|---|---|
| Bangor Alternatives | North Down Community Network |
| Sure Start Bangor | AGEnda |
| Volunteer Now | Linking Generations NI |
| Peninsula Healthy Living | Department for Communities |
| Cedar Foundation | Supporting Communities |
| South Eastern Regional College | Orchardville |
| NI Housing Executive | Kilcooley Neighbourhood Partnership |
| Education Authority | County Down Rural Community Network |
| Sure Start Ards | Alzheimer's Society |
| Over 50s Council | North Down & Ards Women's Aid |
| Radius Housing | Kilcooley Women's Centre |
| Community Advice Ards and North Down | North Down Community Network |
| ANDBC Disability Forum | |

### 5.5 Feedback in relation to Community Development Direct Provision

**Support Required for Community Organisations**

Respondents completing the survey from a group/organisation perspective were asked to rank the importance of developmental support needs to their organisation. Responses indicated that applying for funding (57% first choice), governance, safeguarding or liability supports (20% first choice) and volunteer recruitment, retention and succession planning (18% first choice) were the top three options given the highest importance from respondents. The next highest priority was advice on marketing, strategic planning and measuring impact (5% first choice).


*Figure 9: Top 4 Rank of Importance– Development Support Needs*

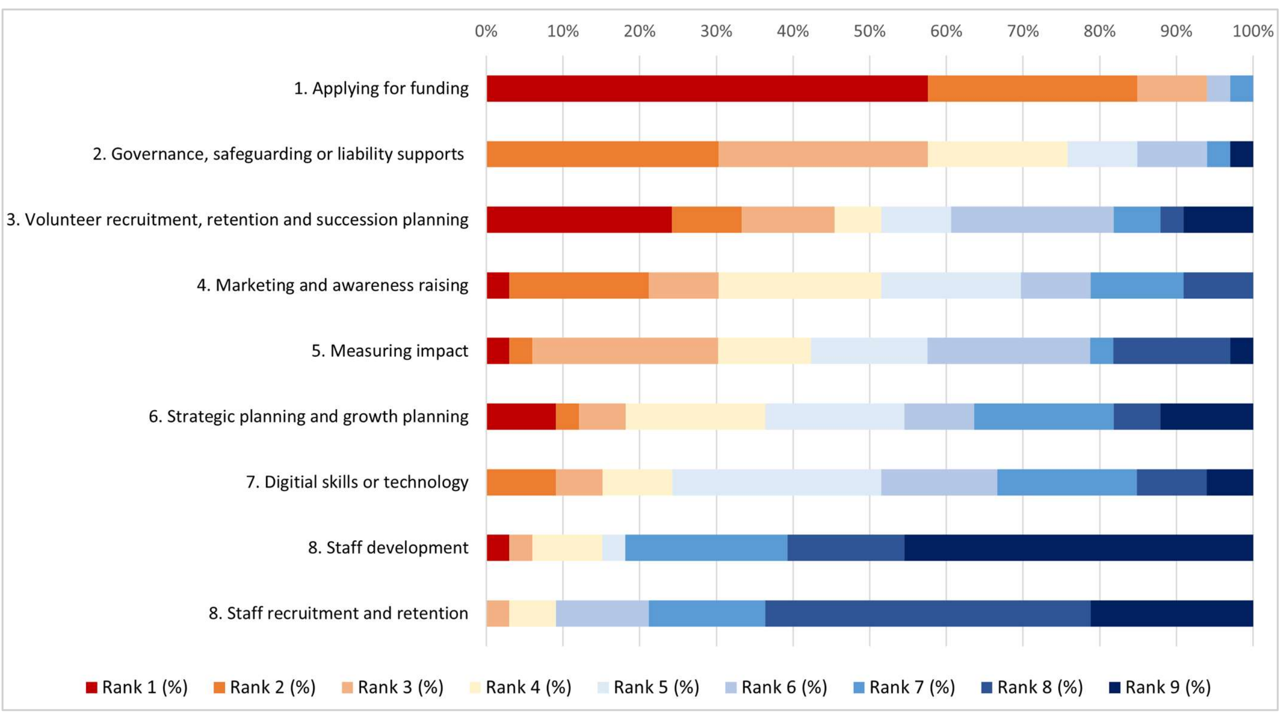



*Figure 10: Rank of Importance – Development Support Needs*

**Community Organisation Operational Costs**

Respondents completing the survey from a group/organisation perspective were also asked to rank costs in accordance with the proportion of their organisations budget.

Based on an analysis of first choice survey responses, those representing community groups/organisations said that costs were mainly incurred in the following budget areas, in order of priority, overhead costs (61% first choice), project and programme costs (16% first choice), governance costs (13% first choice) and volunteer expenses (13% first choice).


*Figure 11: Top 4 Ranking of costs in accordance with budget*

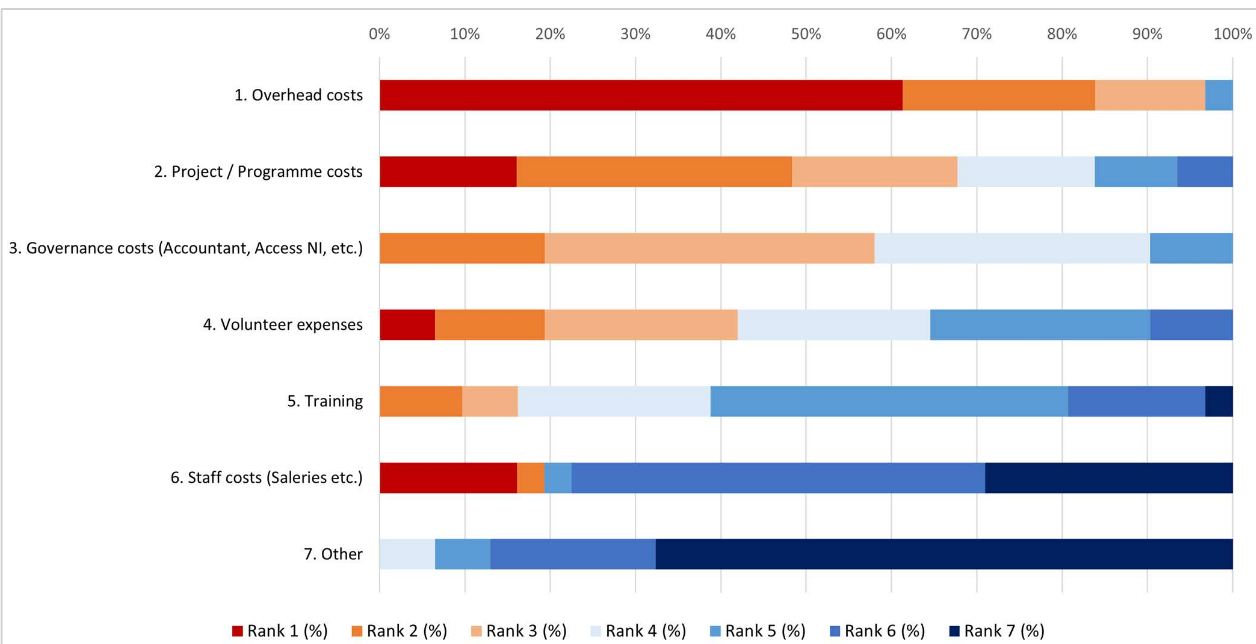



*Figure 12: Ranking of costs in accordance with budget*

**Residents**

Respondents were asked to rate their awareness of a selection of listed initiatives which are offered by the Council. These initiatives included Over 50s Club, Play Clubs, Adults with additional needs Club, Summer Schemes, and Tea Dances.

Summer schemes are the most well-known offering from the Council with 63% of respondents aware of the initiative and within this cohort 18.5% of respondents reported having used the service. Other initiatives rank similarly in terms of respondents' awareness and usage of the service: 34% were aware of or had attended Tea Dances, 32.5% Play Clubs and 31% Over 50s Clubs. Clubs for adults with additional needs ranked lowest in terms of awareness with 73% of respondents reporting a lack of awareness for this initiative.

Apart from Summer Schemes, the responses highlight a lack of awareness of the initiatives offered by the Council to support disadvantaged groups within the Borough. The responses also reveal untapped demand for services with 37.5% of respondents stating they were unaware of Play Clubs but would be interested in using this service.

*Table 7: Awareness of initiatives*

| | Yes, I am aware of this initiative, and I have used this service | Yes, I am aware of this initiative but have not used it | No, I was not aware of this initiative, but I would be interested in using this service | No, I was not aware of this initiative, and this service is not of interest/relevance to me |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Over 50s Club** | 6.5% | 24.5% | 29.5% | 39.5% |
| **Play Clubs** | 8.5% | 21% | 37.5% | 33% |
| **Adults with additional needs Club** | 3% | 24% | 15.5% | 57.5% |
| **Summer Schemes** | 18.5% | 44.5% | 18% | 19% |
| **Tea Dances** | 7% | 27% | 26.5% | 39.5% |

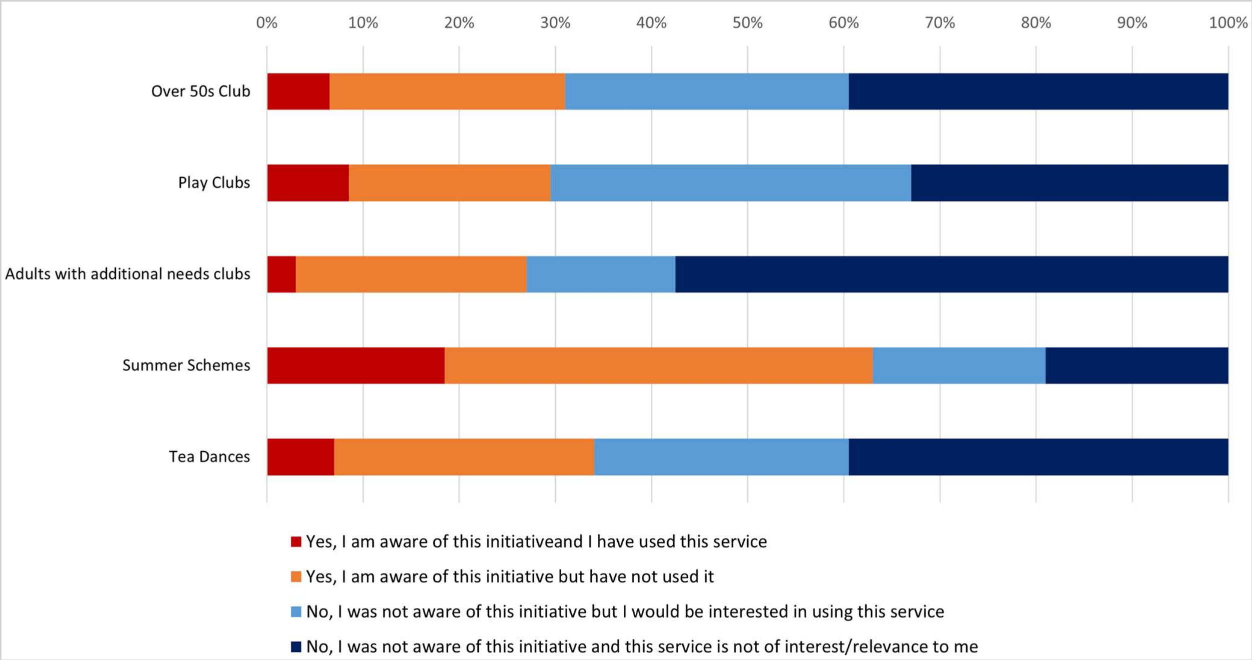



*Figure 13: Rating the awareness of initiatives*

Some issues specifically raised by residents were:

- Uneven geographical provision, especially Peninsula & rural areas with some areas feeling significantly underserved
- Low awareness/marketing of council programmes and halls provision
- Desire for more social connection and health and wellbeing initiatives

**5.3 Stakeholder Feedback**

In total, 103 community and voluntary organisations from across ANDBC participated in the phase one engagement. 32% submitted their feedback electronically with the remainder engaging directly with the consultation team by attending in person events (42%) or taking part in one-to-one interviews via Microsoft Teams (24%). As part of the engagement process all respondents were given the opportunity to express any comments, concerns or suggested actions in relation to community development.

A summary of the key issues highlighted in the feedback from stakeholders included:

- Volunteerism: Decline in volunteerism exacerbated in recent years by the Covid pandemic but is also influenced by increasing bureaucracy and administrative burdens on community/voluntary organisations and a reluctance to get involved in the governance requirements of groups.

- Partnership and collaboration: The majority of community and voluntary stakeholders believed that the levels of partnership working at a regional level were functioning well, and there are excellent examples of multi-agency collaboration in action across the borough (e.g. for resources levered through the UK Sustainable Prosperity Fund). Other stakeholders found resistance to joined up working at a local level linked in part to greater levels of competition for funding awards and reduced stability in the sector overall. The cessation of European Social Funding in March 2023, has contributed to this as the funding landscape has changed substantially.

- Reduced availability of funding: Many believe that this has resulted in a loss of experienced staff in C&V organisations to more stable employment. A wide variety of training and capacity building needs were articulated by groups. Lastly and most importantly, the reduced availability of funding has impacted the delivery of services, programmes and projects within communities causing initiatives to be reduced in scale, duration or withdrawn outright in many instances. As current funding has reduced year on year, all stakeholders believe that a critical point has been reached, and a more strategic approach is required to maximise funding opportunities and more effectively support the sector.

- Awareness raising: the need to raise awareness of available programmes and services offering support across the borough was often articulated by community and voluntary stakeholders (both Council and non-Council provision). Many stakeholders believe there is an opportunity to maximise the outcomes of provision for local communities through addressing this broad concern. Suggested actions included following the approach adopted in the Council area through online hubs like citizen space, others included creating a community directory, Facebook page or e-zine. Awareness raising and branding have been recurring themes within the first round of engagement, with over 100 comments made in relation to this issue from local residents and community organisations.

- Tailored support for disadvantage groups:

  - The borough has an ageing population, and this presents challenges currently which are expected to increase in the future. Issues facing older people across ANDBC include isolation, managing complex health conditions in a time of crisis within the health systems and long waiting lists for treatments.

  - There is a perception among stakeholders that young people, particularly older teenagers are poorly served within the borough and there are less activities, programmes or facilities targeted at this population group. There are a multitude of issues facing young people in the borough including isolation, mental health issues, bullying, poverty, addiction, exploitation, employment opportunities, educational attainment, and poor transport networks. Suggested actions included more initiatives for young people, co- designed by young people themselves.

  - Violence against women and girls is an issue which pervades all sections of society in Northern Ireland. This is a particular difficulty within Ards and North Down Council area where the levels of referrals to the Housing Executive due to domestic violence are the highest relative to population size and levels of referrals to Women's Aid (both self-referrals and through the PSNI) due to domestic violence are particularly high. The Council has strong linkages with Women's Aid and provides funding for domestic violence support.

- Deprived communities face persistent challenges in Ards and North Down and there are numerous stakeholders providing impactful support mechanisms to help alleviate these issues at various locations across the borough. For some residents, the challenges associated with poverty can be further compounded by inter community tensions, paramilitarism, addiction and exploitation (e.g. illegal money lending). Positive feedback was received from community stakeholders in relation to the support provided by Foodbanks and Social supermarkets and other highly innovative partnership programmes in place such as the Freezer Friends initiative.

- Other key population groups frequently singled out by stakeholders as needing priority support included those with disabilities, ethnic minority groups, rural dwellers, jobseekers, and those with low levels of education of all ages.

## 6. Conclusions

Based on the information made available and the feedback from consultations, the following preliminary conclusions have been reached:

- The Council demonstrates clear alignment between its community development function and its statutory responsibilities under the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, particularly in supporting Community Planning.

- The Community Development Direct Provision strategically aligns with National and local policies and strategies.

- The Council provides a diverse range of Community Development Direct Provision, however, there is evidence that this is not provided evenly or equitably across the Borough. Rural and geographically remote areas are under-represented.

- The future resourcing and consistency of delivery for Community Development Provision has been and will continue to be challenging due to;
  A. A decline in volunteering;
  B. The turnover of experienced staff in both Council and Community and Voluntary organisations; and
  C. A challenging funding environment.

- The decline in volunteerism which is an important and essential element of successful Community Development Provision poses a real threat to the Community Development sector. This has been exacerbated in recent years by the Covid pandemic but is also influenced by increasing bureaucracy and administrative burdens on community/voluntary organisations and a reluctance to get involved in the governance requirements of groups.

- The Council Community Development team provides valued support in: Governance and constitutional requirements; Funding advice and grant administration; Safeguarding and compliance.

- There are increasing demands on community development provision particularly in supporting groups responding to: Cost-of-living pressures; Mental health needs; Community safety concerns. This is against an increasingly challenging funding and budget environment.

- Short-term funding cycles (usually annually) and reliance on external funding streams pose sustainability risks for both Council programmes and funded groups.

- While Community Development is well established within the Active and Healthy Communities Directorate (Previously named the Community and Wellbeing Directorate, this changed in September 2025), there are occasional challenges achieving a whole-council approach. Greater integration with other departments would result in efficiencies and better user experiences.

- There is limited performance data available and while activity levels are reasonably well recorded for 2023/24, 2024/25, 2025/26 (e.g. number of groups supported, grants awarded), the measurement of outcome and impacts could be improved.

- There is limited systematic capture of long-term community empowerment outcomes.

- There is limited evidence of equality screening and rural proofing.

- The Council's programme of Clubs and Summer Schemes is well established and make a positive contribution to the wellbeing of citizens. However, there is evidence that there are areas/groups that are unaware of the provision and work needs to be done to review provision and make programmes more accessible.

Unclassified

ITEM 5

## Ards and North Down Borough Council

| | |
|---|---|
| Report Classification | Unclassified |
| Exemption Reason | Not Applicable |
| | If multiple: |
| Meeting | Active and Healthy Communities Committee |
| Date of Meeting | 09 September 2025 |
| Responsible Director | Director of Active and Healthy Communities |
| Responsible Head of Service | Head of Community |
| Report title | Consultation Response - Flags and Emblems Bill |
| Attachments | Appendix 1 Proposed Council Responses |
| File Reference (if applicable) | CW183 |
| Legislation | Other<br>The Display of Flags and Emblems Bill |
| Resource Implications | Staffing<br>Narrative: **Resource Considerations**: Potential staffing, training and financial implications require further assessment. |
| Screening Requirements | *The Council will commit to consider the implication of all reports under the categories of Section 75, Rural Needs, Data Protection, Climate and Sustainability:*<br><br>Screening of report not required |
| Link to Corporate Plan Priority and Outcome | Multiple<br>5. Safe, welcoming and inclusive communities that are flourishing<br>If multiple: |

**Background**
The Committee for Infrastructure is seeking views on the Display of Flags and Emblems Bill.

Under the Assembly's usual legislative process, the Display of Flags and Emblems Bill will only be subject to detailed scrutiny by the Committee for Infrastructure if it passes Second Stage. However, in anticipation of that, the Committee is inviting views on the Bill's objectives, proposals and potential impacts. Should the Bill proceed to Committee Stage, this evidence will help inform the Committee's detailed consideration.
Below are relevant links on Bill and submission responses.

Display of Flags and Emblems Bill

Display of Flags and Emblems - Call for Evidence - Northern Ireland Assembly - Citizen Space

**Key Issues**

**Need for Clear Definitions**: Clarify key terms and decision-making criteria to ensure consistent application of the legislation.

**Council Involvement**: Establish a clear role for local councils in consultation, community engagement and decisions affecting council assets and public spaces.

**Robust Code of Practice**: The success of the Bill will depend on detailed guidance covering display, consultation, removal processes and implementation arrangements.

**Balancing Rights**: Ensure the legislation appropriately balances cultural expression with the need for shared, inclusive and non-intimidating public spaces.

**Transparent Processes**: Notification, consultation and complaints procedures must be accessible, fair and transparent.

**Proportionate Enforcement**: Removal powers should be supported by engagement, mediation and clear operational procedures.

**Partnership Working**: Effective coordination between the Department, councils and PSNI will be essential for implementation.

**Resource Considerations**: Potential staffing, training and financial implications require further assessment.

**Next Steps**
On approval from members to submit responses from Council on clauses by closing date of 17th September 2026, outlining that this is subject to Council ratification.

**Summary**
Council supports the overall objective of the Display of Flags and Emblems Bill, particularly its focus on reducing intimidation and promoting inclusive shared spaces. However, the Council highlights a number of key issues requiring further scrutiny: clarity of definitions and decision-making criteria; detailed and practical guidance through the proposed Code of Practice; safeguards around the notification portal; proportional and community-based enforcement arrangements; clear protocols involving the PSNI; consideration of resource implications; and ensuring an appropriate balance between cultural expression, human rights, equality duties and public confidence in the legislation.

## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council **Approves** response submission to Department of Infrastructure.

**4.1 Responses to Clauses in Call for Evidence**

Below is list of all Flags and Emblems consultation questions and responses – they will be submitted on Citizen Space following Council approval (and call in).

**Clause 1: Removal of flags or emblems in the public interest**
**Do you agree with Clause 1 of the Bill?**
Clause 1 places a duty on the Department to remove flags or emblems that are displayed in a public place, if it is in the public interest to do so. The Clause details when a flag or emblem must be removed, and when it is considered appropriate to remove a flag or emblem. It also details what the Department must take into account when making a decision on whether or not to remove the flag or emblem.

**Please provide information to support your answer here.**
**Response:**
The Council supports efforts to ensure public spaces are free from intimidation, harassment and exclusionary practices and welcomes the intention of Clause 1 to provide a clear statutory framework for the removal of flags and emblems where it is in the public interest to do so. However, the Council considers that further clarification is required regarding the criteria to be applied by the Department, the role of local councils in consultation and community engagement, operational arrangements, resource implications, and safeguards to ensure consistency, transparency and compliance with human rights and equality obligations. The Council further recommends that detailed guidance is developed through the proposed Code of Practice and in consultation with local government.

The Council considers that any additional responsibilities arising from the implementation of the legislation should be accompanied by appropriate funding and resources.

**Clause 2: Sensitive places**
**Do you agree with Clause 2 of the Bill?**
The Bill allows for the removal of flags or emblems from the vicinity of sensitive places. Clause 2 provides information on what is considered a sensitive place: a place where public services are provided (prominent examples of which include schools, medical facilities, leisure centres, and libraries), and a shared communal place (including shopping centres, arterial roads, and public parks).

**Please provide information to support your answer here**.
**Response:**
The Council supports the principle of protecting shared and public service spaces from displays that may cause intimidation or division. The inclusion of schools, health facilities, leisure centres, libraries, parks and shopping centres as sensitive places is welcomed, as these facilities should be accessible and welcoming to all sections of the community.
However, the Council would seek:

Greater clarity on how a "sensitive place" and its "vicinity" will be defined.
A formal role for decision-making and appropriate safeguards should be in place to protect personal data and ensure the safety of those providing views through the portal.

Overall, the Council supports the principle of a transparent notification and consultation process but considers that detailed operational guidance will be essential to ensure fairness, consistency and public confidence and transparent decision-making across Northern Ireland.

Overall, the Council supports the objective of promoting inclusion and good relations while emphasising the need for clear guidance and engagement with local government.

**Clause 3: Procedure for / notification of, or giving views on, flags or emblems**
**Do you agree with Clause 3 of the Bill?**
Clause 3 requires the Department to put in place provision via an online portal for voluntarily notifying the display of flag(s) and/or emblem(s), and for this portal to allow members of the public to provide their views on the display of the flag or emblem, to ensure as far as practicable that displays remain in line with a Code of Practice based on that outlined in the report of the Commission on FICT. This information – both from those wishing to erect flags or emblems and those who have concerns about their erection – will provide the Department with details to be taken into consideration when weighing up the public interest test and cultural identity protections.

**Please provide information to support your answer here.**
**Response:**
The Council supports the proposal to establish a formal mechanism for notifying the display of flags and emblems and for gathering the views of local communities. A transparent process could help improve consistency, accountability and community engagement when issues arise regarding the display of flags or emblems.

However, the Council would highlight several considerations:

The process should be straightforward, accessible and available through both online and alternative channels to ensure participation from all sections of the community and those digitally excluded/isolated.
Clear arrangements will be needed to manage vexatious, repetitive or anonymous complaints and to ensure that decisions are evidence-based. The system should contain safeguards against misuse or disproportionate targeting of lawful cultural displays.
Councils should be recognised as key stakeholders and consulted where concerns relate to council-owned facilities or public spaces within their districts.
The Department should provide clarity on how public submissions will be assessed, weighted and incorporated into development of the portal.

**Clause 4: Code of Practice**
**Do you agree with Clause 4 of the Bill?**
Clause 4 places a requirement on the Department to issue a Code of Practice on the display of flags and emblems within twelve months of this part of the Bill coming into operation. This part of the Bill comes into operation six months from the date that the Bill becomes an Act. Therefore, the Code of Practice should be issued within eighteen months from the date that the Bill becomes an act. It also places an obligation on the Department to consult key stakeholders (including the NI Human Rights Commission, the Equality Commission for NI, and the PSNI) on the Code of Practice in advance of it being issued and, periodically, to review it.

**Please provide information to support your answer here.**
**Response:**
The Council welcomes the requirement for the Department to develop a Code of Practice, as it should provide a clear and consistent framework for the display of flags and emblems across Northern Ireland. The commitment to consult key stakeholders, including local councils, is particularly important in ensuring that the Code reflects local circumstances, promotes good relations and is practical to implement.

The Council would recommend that:

Councils are actively involved in the development, review and updating of the Code, given their responsibility for many public and shared spaces.
The Code provides clear guidance on issues such as appropriate locations, duration of display, commemorative displays, community consultation and circumstances where removal may be justified.
The guidance balances respect for cultural expression with the need to ensure public spaces are welcoming, inclusive and free from intimidation.
The review process includes regular engagement with councils and communities to assess the effectiveness of the Code and identify any emerging issues.
Adequate resources and training are provided to support consistent understanding and application of the Code by all relevant bodies.

Overall, the Council supports the introduction of a Code of Practice and the proposed consultation requirements, recognising that clear guidance will be essential to ensuring fairness, consistency and public confidence in the operation of the legislation.

**Clause 5: Offence of obstructing the Department in removal of flag or emblem**
**Do you agree with Clause 5 of the Bill?**
Clause 5 details the implications of obstructing the removal of a flag or emblem. The maximum penalty for such an offence is a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.

**Please provide information to support your answer here.**

**Response:**
The Council notes the introduction of an offence for obstructing the Department, or those acting on its behalf, in the lawful removal of a flag or emblem. The Council recognises that enforcement powers may be necessary to ensure the effective implementation of the legislation and to protect staff and contractors carrying out statutory duties.

The Council would, however, emphasise that:

Enforcement should be used proportionately and as a last resort, following appropriate engagement and communication with affected individuals and communities.
Clear operational protocols should be developed between the Department, PSNI and local councils to minimise the risk of confrontation and promote public safety.
Consideration should be given to the safety and welfare of staff or contractors involved in removal operations, particularly where there is potential for community tension.
Public awareness and education regarding the Code of Practice and the legislative requirements may help reduce the need for enforcement action.

Overall, the Council supports the need for measures to protect those carrying out lawful enforcement activities but would encourage a balanced approach that prioritises engagement, mediation and community relations wherever possible.

**Clause 6: Request for assistance from police**
**Do you agree with Clause 6 of the Bill?**
Clause 6 permits the Department to request the assistance of the PSNI in the removal of a flag or emblem if the Department feels that there could potentially be a breach of the peace, or if there is a concern that a person acting on its behalf may be obstructed from removing the flag or emblem.

**Please provide information to support your answer here.**
**Response:**
The Council recognises that there may be circumstances where PSNI assistance is necessary to ensure the safe and lawful removal of flags or emblems, particularly where there is a risk of disorder, community tension or obstruction of authorised personnel. The provision provides an important safeguard for the safety of those involved in enforcement activities and for the wider public.

The Council would, however, emphasise that:

PSNI involvement should be proportionate and based on a clear assessment of risk and potential impact on community relations.
Early engagement, communication and mediation should be prioritised, where appropriate, to reduce the likelihood of enforcement escalating tensions.
Clear operational protocols should be established between the Department, PSNI and local councils to ensure coordinated responses and effective communication with local communities.

Consideration should be given to minimising disruption to local residents, businesses and public services when removal operations are undertaken.
Lessons learned from enforcement activity should inform future guidance and the ongoing review of the Code of Practice.

Overall, the Council supports the provision for PSNI assistance where necessary to maintain public safety and prevent breaches of the peace, while stressing the importance of a proportionate, partnership-based approach that seeks to protect both community relations and public confidence in the implementation of the legislation.

**Clause 7: Interpretation**
**Do you agree with Clause 7 of the Bill?**
Clause 7 provides interpretations of the terms used in Clauses one to six of the Bill.

**Please provide information to support your answer here.**
**Response:**
The Council welcomes the inclusion of clear definitions and interpretation provisions within the Bill, as these are essential to ensuring consistency, transparency and legal certainty in the application of the legislation. The definitions help clarify the scope of the powers available to the Department and provide a common understanding for enforcement bodies, stakeholders and the public.

The Council would, however, recommend that:

Key terms such as "public place", "public street furniture" and "flag or emblem" are kept under review to ensure they adequately reflect changing forms of display and emerging issues.
Further guidance is provided within the Code of Practice to support consistent interpretation and application of these definitions across Northern Ireland.
Clarification is provided where there may be overlap between the responsibilities of the Department, councils and other public authorities.
Consideration is given to any unintended consequences arising from the broad definition of "flag or emblem", particularly in relation to temporary community displays, commemorative materials or cultural events.

Overall, the Council supports the inclusion of interpretation provisions and considers that clear definitions will be important in promoting fair, consistent and effective implementation of the legislation.

**Clause 8: Commencement**
**Do you agree with Clause 8 of the Bill?**

Clause 8 relates to when the clauses of the Bill come into operation. Clauses one, five, and six will come into operation on 1 January 2028; and the remaining clauses will come into operation twelve months, or as soon as is practicable after this date, from the date that the Bill receives Royal Assent and becomes an Act.

**Please provide information to support your answer here.**
**Response:**
The Council notes the proposed phased implementation of the Bill and welcomes the lead-in period provided before the enforcement provisions come into operation. The timescales should allow the Department sufficient opportunity to develop the Code of Practice, establish the notification process, undertake stakeholder engagement and raise public awareness of the new legislative framework.

The Council would recommend that:

The implementation period is used to engage meaningfully with local councils, communities and relevant stakeholders on the practical operation of the legislation.
Adequate guidance, training and communication arrangements are in place before enforcement powers commence.
Clear protocols are developed between the Department, councils and the PSNI to support consistent implementation and effective management of complaints and enforcement activity.
The Department monitors the effectiveness of the preparatory arrangements and retains flexibility to address any operational challenges that emerge prior to commencement.

Overall, the Council supports a phased commencement approach, recognising the importance of ensuring that appropriate guidance, stakeholder engagement and operational arrangements are established before the substantive powers under the Bill take effect.

**Clause 9: Short title**
**Do you agree with Clause 9 of the Bill?**
Clause 9 sets out the short title of the Bill.

**Please provide information to support your answer here.**
**Response:**
The Council notes that Clause 9 provides the short title of the legislation as the Display of Flags and Emblems Act (Northern Ireland) 2026. This is a standard legislative provision and raises no specific concerns from a local government perspective.
or councils in consultation where council-owned or managed facilities are affected.
Consideration of including additional shared community assets such as community centres, civic buildings and transport hubs.

ITEM 6

## Ards and North Down Borough Council

| | |
|---|---|
| Report Classification | Unclassified |
| Exemption Reason | Not Applicable |
| | If multiple: |
| Meeting | Active and Healthy Communities Committee |
| Date of Meeting | 09 September 2026 |
| Responsible Director | Director of Active and Healthy Communities |
| Responsible Head of Service | Head of Environmental Health and Regulatory Services |
| Report title | Food Control Service Plan 26/27 Update |
| Attachments | Appendix 1 - Food Control Service Plan 2026-27 |
| File Reference (if applicable) | |
| Legislation | Other<br>The Food Safety (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 |
| Resource Implications | None<br>Narrative: |
| Screening Requirements | *The Council will commit to consider the implication of all reports under the categories of Section 75, Rural Needs, Data Protection, Climate and Sustainability:*<br><br>Screening of report not required |
| Link to Corporate Plan Priority and Outcome | Priority 1: Economic<br>7. Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation<br>If multiple: |

**Background**

The Council delivers its Food Service Plan in line with its statutory duties under the Food Safety (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 and relevant retained EU food law, including Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 and Regulations (EC) No 852/2004 and 853/2004. These duties are also supported by associated legislation, including the Food Hygiene Regulations (Northern Ireland), the Food Information Regulations and the Official Controls Regulations (Northern Ireland).

In carrying out this work, the Council must have regard to the Food Law Code of Practice (Northern Ireland) and associated guidance issued by the Food Standards Agency. These set out the requirements for risk-based interventions, officer competence, enforcement activity and performance monitoring to help protect public health and consumers.

**Key Issues**

Delivery of the Food Service Plan 2026/27, which is attached as Appendix 1, will support the Council's statutory duties and Corporate Plan objectives by achieving the following outcomes:

- Protection of public health through the effective regulation of food hygiene and food standards, with a particular focus on higher-risk premises and activities.
- Increased compliance across food businesses through a consistent, risk-based programme of inspections, follow-up interventions and proportionate enforcement.
- Improved consumer confidence through targeted work on allergens, food information, and food authenticity.
- Timely and effective response to food complaints, food safety incidents, and infectious disease investigations in partnership with the Public Health Agency and the Food Standards Agency.
- Continued delivery of the new Food Standards Delivery Model, aligned with national and regional priorities.
- Support for economic growth by providing advice and guidance to food business operators, helping compliant businesses to thrive while ensuring fair competition.
- Continued assurance to the Food Standards Agency through compliance with the Food Law Code of Practice (Northern Ireland) and positive audit outcomes.
- Ongoing development of staff competence and resilience through training, supervision, and workforce planning.

The Food Control Service Plan 26/27 was first reported to Council in June, when the decision on whether to approve the plan was deferred until a response was made to the following questions:

1. In terms of food standards enforcement, can officers confirm that under this Plan no action will be taken to remove grey market goods deriving from GB as a result of the Protocol/Windsor Framework?

2. Does the EU law from which the need for this Plan derives in NI differ in any respect from what is in place in GB?

**Response**

1. The Council cannot provide a blanket assurance that no enforcement action would be taken in relation to goods coming from Great Britain, as any enforcement decision must be based on the relevant food law requirements applicable in Northern Ireland and the specific circumstances of any identified non-compliance. Authorised officers are required to discharge their statutory duties in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice (Northern Ireland), which requires enforcement activity to be proportionate, consistent, risk-based and evidence-led.

   The origin of a product is not, in itself, a determining factor in enforcement decisions. Any action would relate to identified non-compliance with legal requirements applicable to food placed on the market in Northern Ireland, particularly where there is a risk to consumers or where significant regulatory requirements have not been met. Enforcement action, where considered necessary, would therefore be directed at the nature and seriousness of the non-compliance rather than the fact that goods have been sourced from, or moved through, Great Britain.

   While regulatory divergence exists in some areas because Northern Ireland continues to apply certain EU goods legislation under the Windsor Framework, the legal position is complex and products moving from Great Britain to Northern Ireland may be subject to specific arrangements that permit their lawful sale in Northern Ireland. Whether enforcement action is appropriate would therefore depend on the particular product, the applicable legal requirements and the circumstances of the case.

2. The Council's food safety service is delivered in accordance with the Food Safety (Northern Ireland) Order 1991, which is domestic Northern Ireland legislation and provides the primary framework for food law enforcement in Northern Ireland. The Order is broadly equivalent to the Food Safety Act 1990, which applies in Great Britain, and both provide a similar basis for food law enforcement across the United Kingdom. Food Service Plans are a standard feature of food regulatory arrangements across the United Kingdom and are not unique to Northern Ireland.

**Next Steps**

Should the Food Control Service Plan be approved, to ensure effective delivery and continuous improvement, the following actions will be progressed during 2026-27:

- Implement the planned inspection and intervention programme, with workloads prioritised by risk and progress monitored regularly.
- Review and update the Scheme of Delegation to reflect current structures, roles, and decision-making arrangements, in response to the January 2026 FSA audit recommendation.
- Continue to explore and develop mobile working solutions and use of digital technology to improve efficiency, support flexible working, and reduce carbon emissions.
- Prioritise recruitment, retention, and development of qualified food officers, including expanded training opportunities and exposure to a wider range of premises.
- Strengthen partnership arrangements and information-sharing protocols, including completion of the revised Memorandum of Understanding with the Public Health Agency.
- Monitor emerging risks, changes in legislation, and updated FSA guidance, adapting the service approach where required.
- Review performance against the Food Service Plan throughout the year and report outcomes through appropriate management and committee structures.
- Carry out the annual review of the Food Service Plan to inform the development of the 2027-28 plan.

**Summary**

The Food Service Plan 2026-27 sets out how the Council will meet its statutory food law enforcement duties through a risk-based and proportionate approach. Delivery of the plan will protect public health, support consumer confidence, and promote compliance across food businesses, while contributing to the Council's Corporate Plan objective of ‘A Sustainable Borough’.

The report also provides clarification regarding the legislative framework governing food controls in Northern Ireland and the scope of enforcement activity delivered under the Plan. Progress will be monitored throughout the year, with key priorities including higher-risk inspections, effective response to complaints and incidents, continued implementation of the Food Standards Delivery Model, workforce development, and ongoing service improvement informed by audit findings and annual review.

## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council **Approves** the Food Control Service Plan 26/27, attached as Appendix 1.

Ards and North Down Borough Council

# Food Control Service Plan

**2026/27**

Ards and North Down Borough Council

# Introduction

This plan sets out how the Council will deliver its 2026/27 Food Service. This Service Plan has been produced in response to the Food Standard Agency's Framework Agreement on Food Law Enforcement which sets out how the plan should be structured and what the plan should contain. The Plan explains how the service will protect and promote food safety throughout the Borough using a combination of measures which include the enforcement of food safety law, sampling, advice, education and liaising with other organisations as well as aligning with the Councils corporate objectives. The mix of enforcement includes aspects that are demand driven, inspection driven, education driven, and intelligence driven. Our activities and procedures take account of the Food Law Code of Practice (Northern Ireland) and its supporting document the Food Law Practice Guidance (Northern Ireland).

# Table of Contents

1.Service Aims and Objectives

2. Links to Corporate Plan

3.Profile of Ards and North Down Borough Council

4. Organisational Structure

5.Scope of the Food Control Service

6.Demands on the Food Control Service

7. Service Delivery

8.Quality Assessment

9.Review

Appendix 1

# 1. Service Aims and Objectives

## Service Aim

The aim of the Food Service is to protect public health and consumer interests through the effective enforcement of food law, while supporting a safe, resilient, and sustainable local food sector within Ards and North Down Borough Council.

### Objectives

- To ensure food produced, handled, and sold within the Borough is safe and correctly described through proactive surveillance.
- To deliver a consistent, risk-based programme of food hygiene and food standards interventions.
- To support food businesses to achieve and maintain compliance by monitoring and reviewing premises that have been subject to previous enforcement action.
- To continue to implement the new Food Standards Delivery model and consider the identified National Priorities such as:
    - Ensure food is safe, authentic and accurately labelled
    - Prioritise the delivery of Official Controls across high risk sector including shellfish hygiene controls
    - Tackle food crime and have awareness of food crime indicators and the reporting routes.
- Actively work with our lower rated businesses to improve compliance.
- To respond to a minimum of 90% of food control service requests within 2 working days.
- To contribute to the Council's wider objectives for **A Sustainable Borough**

### Corporate Plan Alignment

- **Social Priority** – Improved wellbeing through protecting public health
- **Economic Priority** – Supporting compliant and resilient food businesses

# 2.Links to Corporate Objectives and Plans

The Food Service Plan supports delivery of the Council's **Corporate Plan 2024–2028**, which is underpinned by the vision of **A Sustainable Borough**, based on economic, environmental, and social wellbeing.

## Corporate Priorities Supported

| Corporate Priority | Food Service Contribution |
|---|---|
| Economic Growth | Regulation that supports consumer confidence and local food business sustainability |
| Environmental | Risk-based inspections, waste reduction, and sustainable service delivery |
| Social Wellbeing | Protection of public health, allergens enforcement, fairness and inclusion |

The Plan also contributes to:

- **The Big Plan (Community Plan)** outcomes related to health and wellbeing
- **Performance Improvement Objectives** including service quality, efficiency, and sustainability.

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

# 3. Profile of the Local Authority

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

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

Ards and North Down Borough Council covers a mixed urban and rural area with significant coastal, tourism, and seasonal trading activity. The Borough contains a diverse range of food businesses including:

- Restaurants and cafés
- Takeaways and mobile traders
- Retail food stores
- Manufacturers and caterers
- Seasonal and event-based operators

This profile presents varying levels of food safety risk and demand on the service, requiring a flexible, risk-based approach.

## 3.1 Food Business Establishment Profile

As at **1 April 2026**, the Council's food premises database contained approximately:

| Premises Type | Number of Premises |
|---|---|
| Primary producer | 64 |
| Manufacturer/Packer /Approved premises | 75 |
| Retail food (including supermarkets and small shops) | 350 |
| Restaurant/Other caterers | 946 |
| Importer/Exporter | 3 |
| Distributor/Transport | 21 |
| Other food businesses (outside the programme/new) | 97 |
| **Total food premises** | **1556** |

The diversity of premises presents a range of food safety and food standards risks, requiring a proportionate and risk-based approach to regulation.

## 3.2 Risk Profile of Food Premises

The current risk profile of food premises is broadly categorised as follows:

**Food Hygiene**

| FSA Risk Category | Approximate Number |
|---|---|
| Category A (highest risk) | 3 |
| Category B | 58 |
| Category C | 220 |
| Category D | 471 |
| Category E (lowest risk) | 707 |
| New / Unrated /Outside the programme | 97 |
| **Total** | **1556** |

This risk profile informs:

- Inspection frequencies
- Resource allocation
- Targeted intervention planning

**Food Standards**

| **FSA Risk Category**<br><br>**Frequency of inspection)** | **Approximate Number** |
|---|---|
| 1/3/6 months | 1 |
| 12 months | 13 |
| 24 months | 264 |
| 36 months | 353 |
| 48 months | 129 |
| 60 months | 182 |
| 72 months | 351 |
| 120 months | 180 |
| FSD/Outside the programme | 85 |
| **TOTAL**<br><br>(2 extra premises honey producers) | **1558** |

# 4. Organisational Structure

The Food Service is delivered within the **Environmental Health and Regulatory Service**, which is part of the Active and Healthy Communities Directorate which reports to the Council through the Active and Healthy Communities Committee

The service works closely with:

- Tourism
- Economic Development
- Waste & Cleansing

This integrated working supports the Corporate Plan commitment to efficient and joined-up service delivery.

Food Control Structure

The Food Control Service is managed by a Service Unit Manager who is allocated 0.8 FTE, and 5.4 Environmental Health Officers and 1.0 Sampling/Fish Hygiene Officer.

**Organisational Structure**

Head of Service
Environmental Health & Regulatory Services
Gareth Kinnear

Service Unit Manager
Julie Davidson 0.8 FTE

Senior Environmental Health Officers
1.86 FTE

Environmental Health Officers
3.56 FTE

Technical Assistant
1.0 FTE

**FTE 6.42** (Full time equivalent)

# 5. Scope of the Food Service

The Council provides a comprehensive service to consumers and food businesses in Ards and North Down.

The Food Service is responsible for:

- Food hygiene enforcement
- Food standards enforcement
- Allergen controls
- Investigation of complaints
- Food safety incidents and outbreaks
- Advice to new and existing businesses

This ensures statutory duties are met while supporting Council priorities for public health and economic resilience.

# 6. Demands on the Food Service

Key demands may include:

- Staffing levels and vacancies- recruitment and retention of suitably qualified officers may be an issue this year. Reliance on agency staff with a limited knowledge.
- Increasing and competing service demands such as an increase in home caterers and potential expansion of online/delivery only businesses
- Changes to any regulatory or policy regarding FSA priorities or new guidance.
- Service requests and complaints
- Food safety incidents

Risk profiling ensures resources are targeted where they will have the greatest public health impact, supporting efficient use of Council resources.

The table below shows the details of this year's inspection programme.

| Risk Category | Food Hygiene | Inherent Risk Profile Compliance Assessment | Food Standards |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | 3 | Priority 1/3/6 months | 0 |
| B | 60 | 12 months | 3 |
| C | 130 | 24 months | 247 |
| D | 223 | 36 months | 134 |
| E | 297 | 48 months | 25 |
| | | 72 months | 21 |
| **TOTAL** | **713** | **TOTAL** | **430** |

The Food Service Plan will be delivered in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice (Northern Ireland) and relevant guidance issued by the Food Standards Agency (FSA). Delivery will be based on a risk-based, proportionate approach to ensure that regulatory activity is targeted where it will have the greatest impact on public health and consumer protection.

Food hygiene inspections will be programmed and undertaken in line with statutory frequencies, with priority given to higher-risk food businesses. Flexibility will be retained to respond to emerging risks, intelligence-led concerns, food alerts for action, and non-compliance identified through complaints or other interventions. Where inspection backlogs occur, these will continue to be managed through prioritisation and the use of alternative, appropriate interventions where permitted by the Code of Practice.

Food standards and food safety activities will focus on ensuring food is safe, accurately described, and compliant with legal requirements. Particular emphasis will be placed on allergen controls, food information, and the prevention of food fraud. Reactive work, including food complaints, accidents, and notifications, will be investigated promptly and proportionately, based on risk assessment.

The programme will be delivered through a range of regulatory interventions, including inspections, revisits, advisory visits, sampling, enforcement action, and the provision of advice and guidance to food business operators. Supporting businesses to achieve and maintain compliance will remain a key element of service delivery, alongside the use of formal enforcement where necessary.

Effective partnership working will support delivery of the plan. This will include collaboration with the Food Standards Agency, Public Health Agency, DAERA where relevant, and neighbouring district councils. Information sharing and joint working arrangements will be used to address cross-boundary issues and improve consistency of enforcement.

Staff competence will be maintained through appropriate training, continuous professional development, and regular supervision in line with FSA requirements. Performance against the Food Service Plan will be monitored throughout the year, with progress reviewed and reported to ensure transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement in service delivery.

# 7.Service Delivery

Interventions are delivered in accordance with the FSA Framework Agreement and include:

- Risk-based inspections
- Alternative enforcement strategies where permitted
- Follow-up interventions to secure compliance

This approach supports:

- **Social Priority** – public health protection
- **Economic Priority** – fair and proportionate regulation

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

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

This supports **economic growth** by helping businesses operate safely and sustainably while reducing avoidable enforcement.

**7.1.**The service operates in line with the Council's Enforcement Policy and the principles of:

- Proportionality
- Consistency
- Transparency
- Targeting

This ensures fairness and supports trust between regulators and businesses.

**7.2.** Food sampling is undertaken:

- As part of planned programmes
- In response to intelligence or complaints
- In support of regional or FSA initiatives

Sampling supports consumer protection and food standards compliance.

**7.3.** Food-Borne Disease and Food Safety Incidents

Arrangements are in place for:

- Investigation of food-borne illness
- Management of food safety incidents
- Liaison with the Public Health Agency and FSA

This directly supports the **Social Priority** of protecting health and wellbeing.

**7.4.** Liaison with Other Organisations

The Food Service works in partnership with:

- FSA Northern Ireland
- Public Health Agency
- Other District Councils
- Internal Council services such as the food network we provide bespoke training for food labelling and composition.

Partnership working is essential to delivering **A Sustainable Borough.**

**7.5.** Promotion of Food Safety

The service contributes to:

- National food safety campaigns
- Local awareness initiatives
- Targeted communication with businesses and consumers

This supports long-term behaviour change and improved compliance.

**7.6**. Resources

The service is resourced to deliver statutory duties through:

- Qualified Environmental Health Officers
- Technical support staff
- Appropriate equipment and IT systems
- Administration team

Resource planning aligns with the Corporate Plan focus on efficiency and sustainability.

**7.7 Financial Allocation**

The allocation of the Environmental Health Protection and Development's budget on Food Control for the year 2026/27 includes the following:

| **Budget Allocation** | **2026/27**<br>**£** |
|---|---|
| Salaries | 660,200 |
| FSA Grant Money (including allocation for carrying out Shellfish Official Controls) | 136,143 |
| Sampling | 25,000 |
| Equipment | 1200 |
| Training | 600 |
| **Total** | **823,143** |

### 7.8 Staffing Allocation

The staffing resources for Ards and North Down Borough Council Food Control Service for 2026/27 are as follows:

**Resource Allocation Hours**

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

| Function | % Allocation | Hours |
|---|---|---|
| **Planned inspections programme** | 45% | **5,234 hrs** |
| **Reactive work (complaints, food poisoning)** | 20% | **2,326 hrs** |
| **Revisits & enforcement** | 10% | **1,163 hrs** |
| **Advice to businesses** | 5% | **582 hrs** |
| **Sampling & surveillance** | 5% | **582 hrs** |
| **Administration & reporting** | 10% | **1,163 hrs** |
| **Training, CPD, meetings** | 5% | **582 hrs** |
| **TOTAL** | 100% | **11,630 hrs** |

# 8.Quality Assessment

Quality assurance is achieved through:

- Internal monitoring and supervision
- Performance reporting
- Response to FSA audit findings

Continuous improvement is embedded within service delivery.
The Council is committed to maintaining professional competence through:

- Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- Training needs analysis
- Compliance with FSA competency requirements

# 9. Review

The Food Service Plan will be:

- Reviewed annually
- Reported through appropriate management arrangements
- Updated to reflect changes in risk, legislation, and Corporate priorities

## Review against the service plan for 25/26

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

### FSA Approved premises audit

The Food Standards Agency audit was completed successfully in January 2026 and provided assurance that effective systems and controls are in place to meet food safety legislation requirements. The audit recognised strong operational practice, effective oversight, and a positive food safety culture.

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that the Scheme of Delegation is reviewed to ensure it remains up to date and clearly reflects current roles, responsibilities, and decision-making arrangements.

In the year 2025/26 the Food Control Service achieved the following:

**Food Hygiene**

- Inspected all category A , B & C premises
- Investigated **77** food poisoning identifications on behalf of the Public Health Agency
- Reacted to and actioned **285** complaints and service requests related to premises hygiene or issues with food products.
- Collected **686** food samples for microbiological analysis.
- **138** new businesses received an onsite inspection
- **1** successful prosecution (£1800 + costs)

**Food Standards**

- **4** A rated premises inspected for food standards.
- Collected **98** food samples for chemical analysis.
- Investigated **84** complaints about allergens, composition, and labelling irregularities.
- Participated in Operation Opson regarding the composition of basmati rice
- Participated in national surveys for the presence of heavy metals in fresh vegetables and acrylamide in bakery goods.
- Successfully implemented the new Food Standards Delivery Model.

**Areas of Improvement**

Workloads will continue to be prioritised by risk and officers will be tasked with a target figure for inspections to be achieved within a calendar month.

In line with the Corporate Plan and the priority area of reducing carbon emissions we are working in developing ways mobile working, and the use of technology to help officers and ensure compliance with the Food Law Code of Practice. Areas for improvement identified are the development of mobile working applications which will involve sharing best practice and shadowing colleagues in the Republic of Ireland that have introduced mobile working.

Retention of qualified and competent food officers within the food section has been challenging and will be prioritised for 2026/27 by offering more training initiatives and ensuring all officers gain experience in a variety of premises.

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

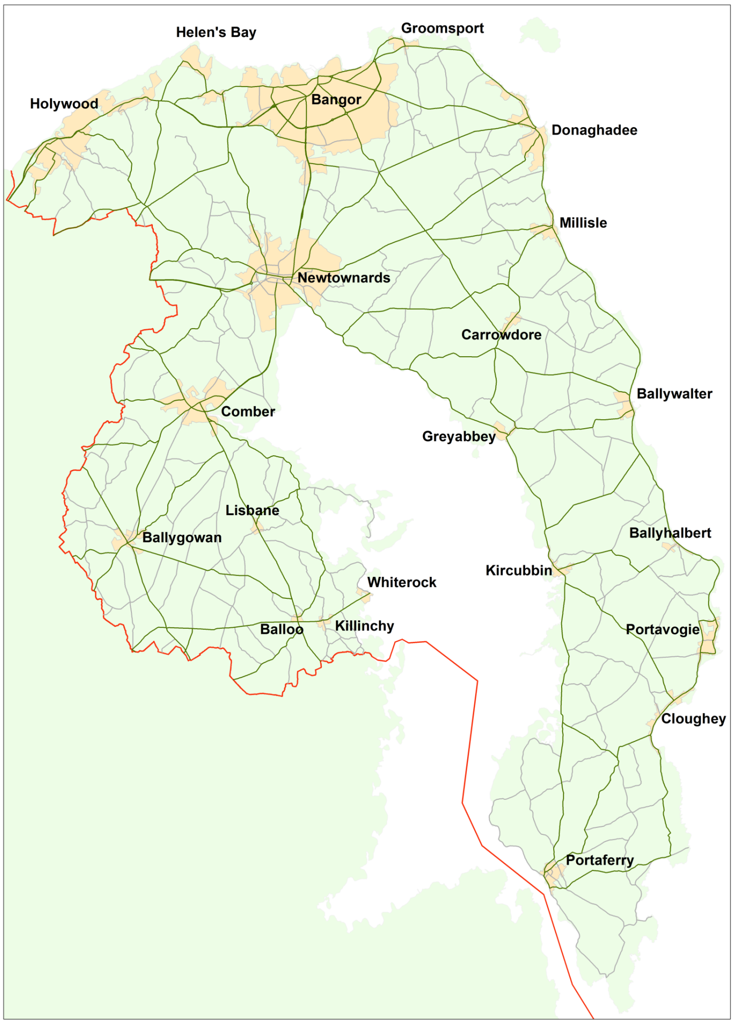
The channels and procedures for sharing information between Competent Authorities and agencies involved are set out in Memorandums of Understanding which are discussed and reviewed at Northern Ireland Food Managers. The MOU with the Public Health Agency for dealing with infectious disease notifications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

**Head of Environmental Health Protection and Development**

June 2026

Date adopted by Council: ________________

## Appendix 1


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

ITEM 7

## Ards and North Down Borough Council

| | |
|---|---|
| Report Classification | Unclassified |
| Exemption Reason | Not Applicable |
| | If multiple: |
| Meeting | Active and Healthy Communities Committee |
| Date of Meeting | 09 September 2026 |
| Responsible Director | Director of Active and Healthy Communities |
| Responsible Head of Service | Head of Environmental Health and Regulatory Services |
| Report title | Response to Notice of Motion 671 - Public Consultation Findings |
| Attachments | Appendix 1 Public Consultation Findings |
| File Reference (if applicable) | NoM 671 |
| Legislation | Other<br>Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011<br>The Dog Control Orders (Procedures) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 |
| Resource Implications | Budget and Staffing<br>Narrative: Dependent on next steps approved. |
| Screening Requirements | *The Council will commit to consider the implication of all reports under the categories of Section 75, Rural Needs, Data Protection, Climate and Sustainability:*<br>Screening of report not required |
| Link to Corporate Plan Priority and Outcome | Priority 2: Environmental<br>4. A vibrant, attractive, sustainable Borough for citizens, visitors, businesses and investors<br>If multiple: |

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

1. Produce a report outlining the costs and steps required to introduce a local restriction under the relevant provisions of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environments Act (Northern Ireland) 2011: Limiting the number of dogs that any one person may be in charge of to a maximum of four at any given time in public spaces.

2. Mandating that professional dog walkers must have dogs on leads at all times to ensure dog control and accountability for dog behaviours.

3. Include in the report, the provision and cost of a complementary public education campaign, to inform residents, recreational and professional dog walkers about the new limit, about what it means to have a dog under your control in public spaces (whether on or off lead), and what promoting responsible dog control and safety in shared spaces should be.

4. To write to the DAERA Minister to ask him to introduce, and provide funding support to Councils to enforce, mandatory registration of professional dog walkers to help to ensure suitable animal welfare standards, the provision of suitable training, experience, insurance, and public safety.

Subsequently, reports were brought to the January and March 2026 meetings of this Committee. Following the March meeting, it was agreed to proceed with carrying out a consultation to assess public opinion, with a range of options on what a future Dog Control Order (DCO) may look like. Additionally, it was agreed that officers bring a report on options for a responsible dog ownership and dog control education campaign. In May 2026, members approved the consultation document prepared by officers.

Following approval of the consultation document, officers undertook a public consultation exercise to seek views on the proposed approach and to inform the Council's consideration of any future Dog Control Order. Members are advised that the consultation was publicised through the Council's social media channels and website and was also advertised in local newspapers on two occasions to encourage public awareness and participation. The survey could be completed using an online form, with responses also accepted by email or by letter.

**Key Issues**

The public consultation was undertaken between 1 June and 5 July 2026 to seek views on a proposal to introduce a maximum limit of four dogs per person when walking dogs in public spaces across Ards and North Down. A total of 465 responses were received. A detailed summary of the consultation findings is attached as Appendix 1, with the main points highlighted below.

The majority of respondents (85%) indicated that they walk dogs within the Borough, with most respondents (78%) typically walking one or two dogs at any one time. 7% reported walking five or more dogs simultaneously.

Overall, the proposal to limit the number of dogs walked received more opposition than support. 69% of respondents either opposed or strongly opposed the proposed four-dog limit, while 29% supported or strongly supported it and 2% expressed a neutral view.

Those opposed to the proposal generally questioned whether a numerical limit would effectively address the issues identified. Common concerns included the potential impact on professional dog walking businesses, a perceived lack of evidence demonstrating a significant problem, and a view that existing dog control measures and enforcement should be prioritised. Many respondents stated that irresponsible ownership, dogs being off-lead, and dog fouling were more significant concerns than the number of dogs being walked. It should be noted that the Council has not received any complaints to date regarding an individual walking excessive numbers of dogs, or more generally the actions or practices of professional dog walkers.

Key arguments in support of the proposal centred on concerns regarding public safety, dog control, dog fouling, impacts on wildlife, and the difficulties associated with managing larger groups of dogs in shared public spaces. Respondents supporting the proposal frequently highlighted experiences involving uncontrolled dogs, intimidation of other users of parks and beaches, and concerns about interactions with children, cyclists and other dog owners.

When asked whether an alternative limit would be more appropriate, 49% agreed. Among those who provided an alternative figure, six dogs was the most frequently selected option, accounting for 48% of responses to that question. Many respondents referenced industry practice and insurance arrangements for professional dog walkers, which commonly permit up to six dogs.

Views on safety were mixed. While 42% of respondents felt that walking multiple dogs increases risks relating to dog control and public safety, 57% did not agree. Similarly, 61% did not believe that introducing a four-dog limit would improve safety or encourage more responsible dog handling in public spaces.

Responses from professional dog walkers indicated that the proposal could have a significant operational impact. Of those who identified as professional dog walkers and answered the relevant question, 67% currently walk more than four dogs at one time and would therefore be directly affected by the proposed restriction. More than three-quarters indicated that the proposal would have some or a significant impact on their business or daily routine.

If restrictions are introduced, 63% of respondents favoured limiting them to specific locations rather than applying them across all public spaces, with town centres identified as the most suitable areas for inclusion. A further 67% supported the availability of exemptions, particularly for assistance dogs, working dogs and multiple dogs from the same household.

The consultation also identified wider concerns relating to dog management within the Borough. Recurring themes included dog fouling, dogs being off-lead in inappropriate locations, discarded dog waste bags, the need for additional enforcement activity and dog wardens, and requests for more litter and dog waste bins in identified hotspot locations.

Key Conclusions

The consultation indicates limited support for the introduction of a universal four-dog limit in public spaces. A majority of respondents opposed or strongly opposed the proposal, and most did not consider that introducing such a limit would improve safety or responsible dog handling. On the basis of the consultation responses, and taking account of the absence of complaints received to date regarding excessive numbers of dogs being walked, the evidence available at this stage does not indicate a clear need for a Borough-wide numerical restriction.

It should also be recognised that responses to a number of later survey questions related to the potential design and implementation of a restriction, rather than indicating support for its introduction. Some respondents further commented that an explicit option to oppose the introduction of additional controls would have better reflected their views.

If Council is minded to progress a restriction, the consultation feedback suggests greater support for a more targeted approach, including application in specific locations, consideration of exemptions for assistance dogs, working dogs and dogs from the same household, and alternative arrangements for professional dog walkers. However, introducing exemptions may create practical challenges for enforcement, as officers would need to establish at the point of contact whether an exemption applies and whether sufficient evidence is available to support it. This could make the restriction more difficult to apply consistently, may lead to disputes or uncertainty in individual cases, and would need to be clearly addressed through any future scheme design, guidance and public communications.

The consultation also identified a recurring theme that improved enforcement of existing controls relating to dog fouling and dogs off lead should be prioritised, whether or not any new measures are introduced.

Any decision to introduce controls and/or the proposed education programme will have associated resource implications relating to implementation, communications, maintenance, monitoring and enforcement. These requirements will need to be considered as part of Members' decision-making process. The projected costs in the table below were first reported to this Committee in December 2025. Stage 1 has been removed from the table as it covered the consultation process.

Proposed Costs Summary

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

**Next Steps**
Following consideration of the consultation findings, Members are requested to determine whether any dog control measures should be introduced and, if so, the locations and nature of any such measures.

Members are also requested to consider whether an educational and awareness-raising programme, as proposed within the original Notice of Motion, should be developed and implemented either as a standalone approach or in conjunction with any approved control measures.

Subject to Members' decisions, officers will:

- Communicate the outcome of the consultation process and Committee decision.
- Develop proposals for any approved educational and awareness-raising initiatives.
- Progress any legal, operational and practical arrangements required to implement any restrictions or control measures approved by Members.
- Identify and report on the resource implications associated with the implementation, enforcement and ongoing management of any approved measures and/or educational initiatives.
- Monitor the effectiveness of any measures introduced and report back to Members as appropriate.

**Summary**
In March 2026 Members agreed that a public consultation process was undertaken to gather views on responsible dog walking and the potential introduction of dog control measures within the Borough. The consultation sought views from residents and stakeholders on a range of options and has generated a diverse range of responses.

This report presents the consultation findings, highlights the key issues raised and outlines the considerations arising from those responses. Members are requested to consider the findings and determine whether any dog control measures and/or an educational and awareness-raising programme should be progressed. Any measures approved by Members will have associated implementation, communication, monitoring and resource implications which will require further consideration.

## RECOMMENDATION

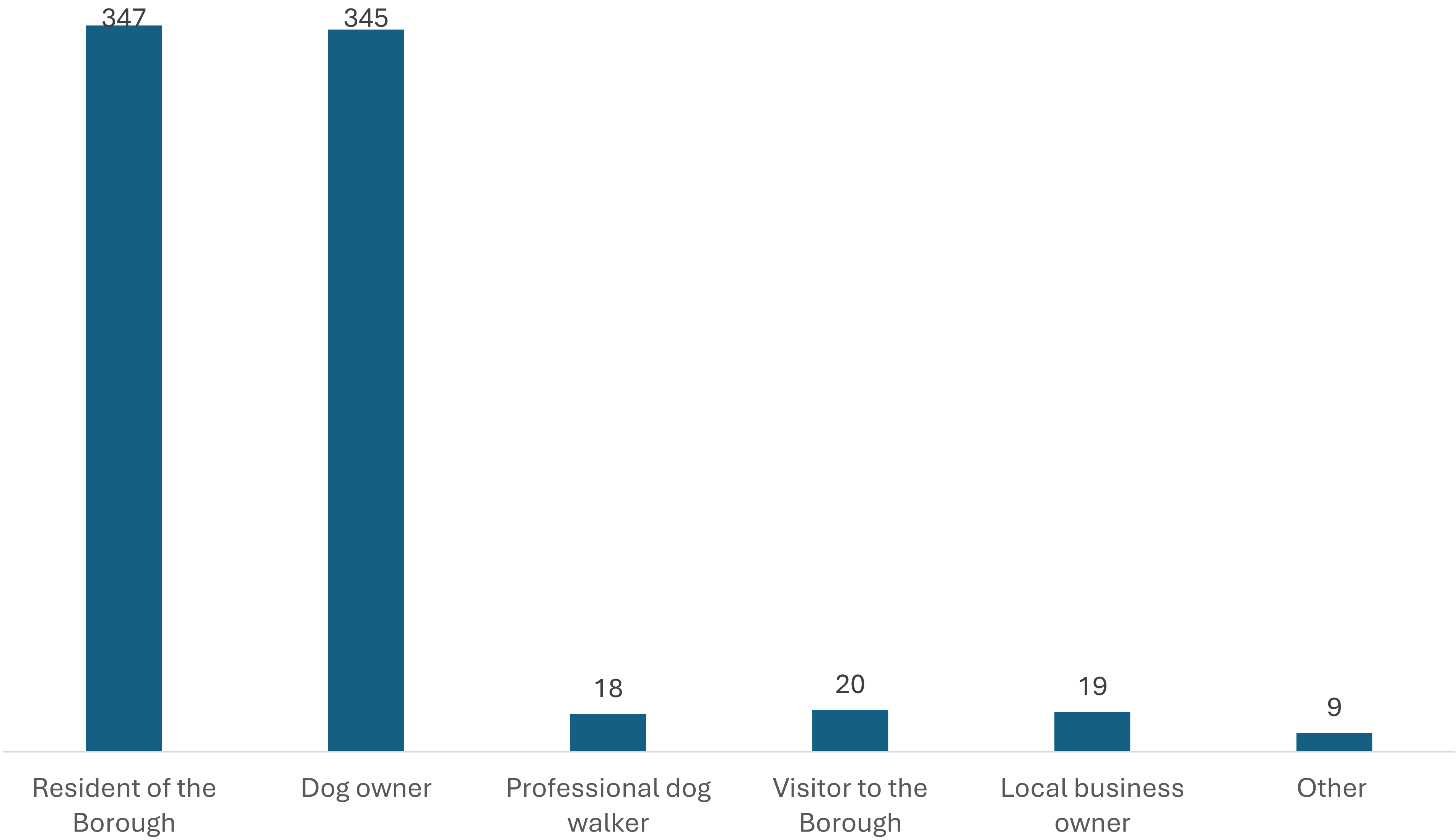
It is recommended that Council **Agrees** not to proceed with the creation of a Dog Control Order (DCO), restricting the number of dogs that may be walked by an individual in the Borough, having regard to the evidence gathered through the public consultation, the absence of complaints concerning this issue, and the potential resource implications associated with increased enforcement. It is further recommended that Council approves the introduction of an education campaign to promote responsible dog walking.

# Public Consultation Document – Responsible Dog Walking in Ards and North Down Proposal to Limit the Number of Dogs Walked at One Time in Public Spaces

465 Respondents

1st June 2026 – 5th July 2026

# Which of the following best describes you?

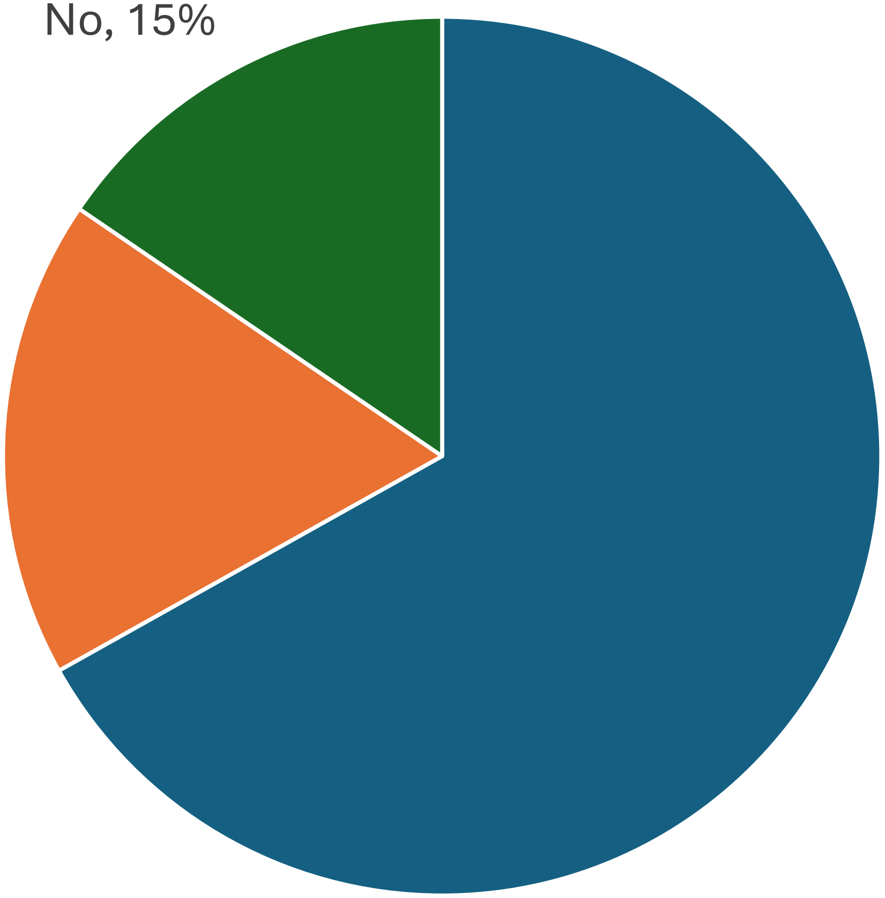



465 Respondents

Note: some respondents selected more than 1 category.

Multiple Choice

# Do you currently walk dogs in public spaces within Ards and North Down?

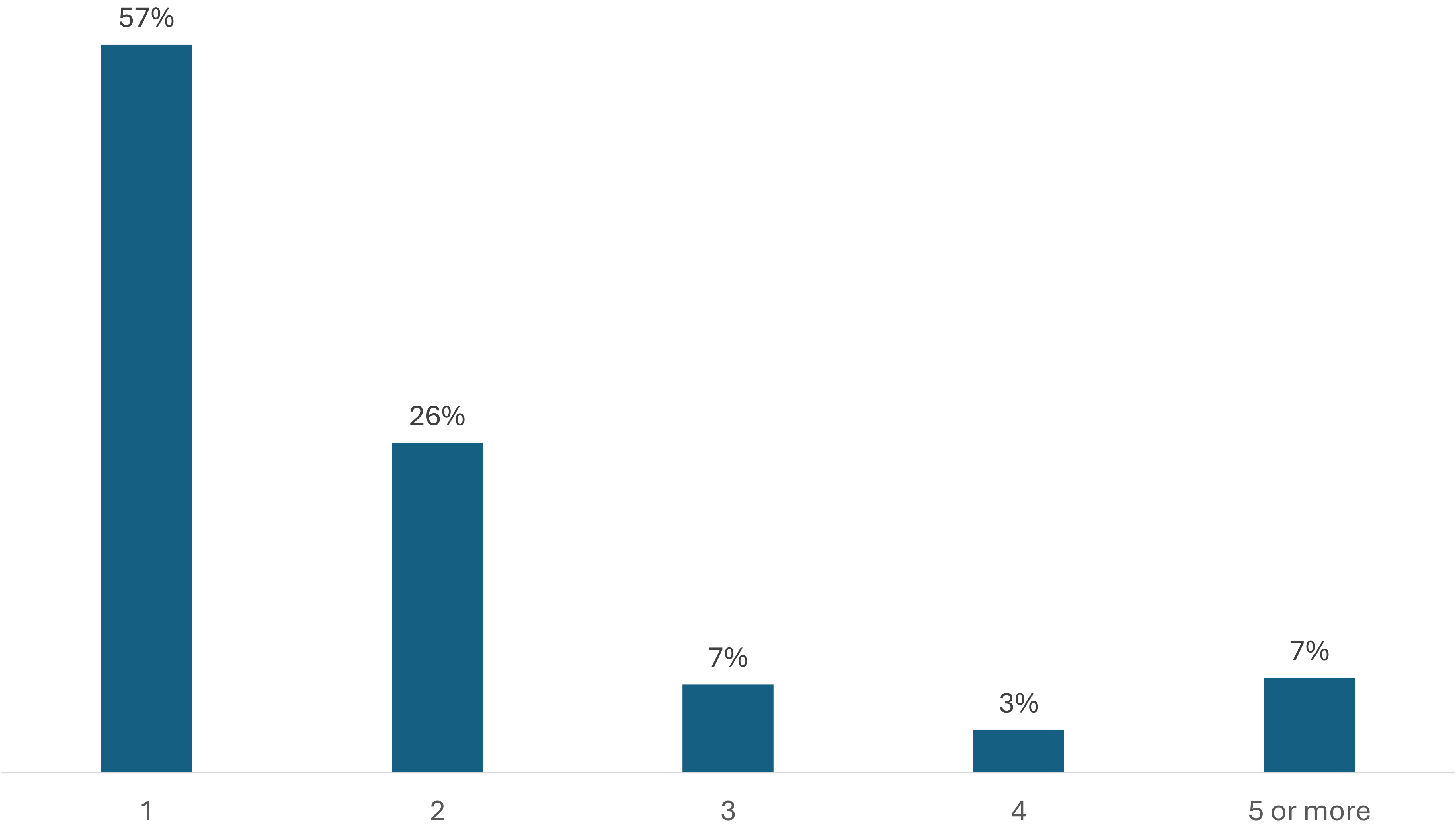



465 Respondents

85% of respondents walk dogs in the borough

Single Choice

# How many do you typically walk at one time?




393 Respondents

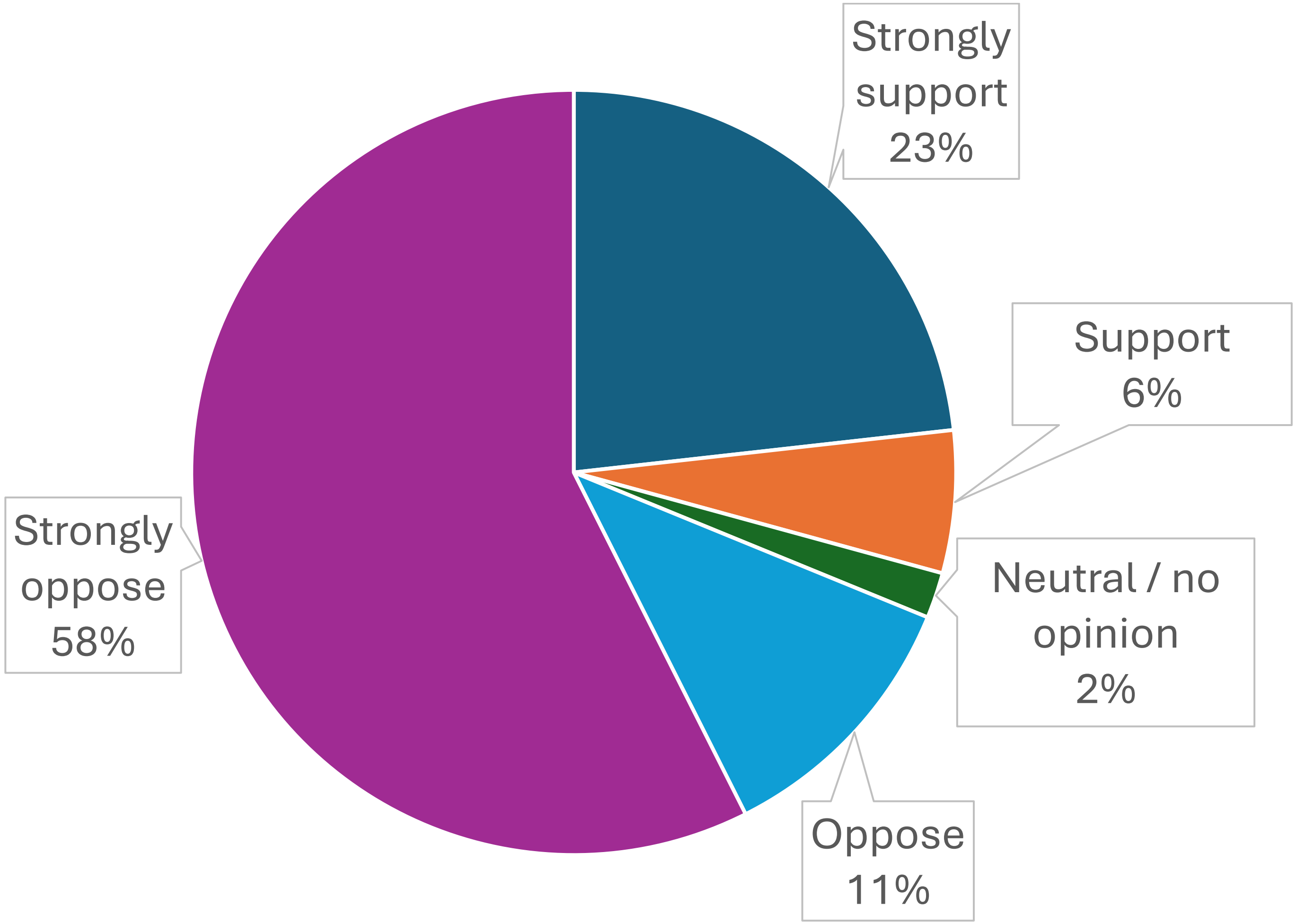
78% of respondents walk 1 or 2 dogs at one time.

Only 7% of respondents walk 5 or more dogs at one time.

Single Choice

Note: Those who answered 'No' to the previous question were not shown this question

# To what extent do you support or oppose the proposal to limit the number of dogs walked by one person in public spaces to the maximum of four?




465 Respondents

69% of respondents walk strongly oppose or oppose the proposal.

29% of respondents walk support or strongly support the proposal.

2% are neutral in their opinion.

Single Choice

# Strongly support:

"I encounter difficulty getting past them on the costal path as they cannot control all the dogs at once to allow safe passage"

"Concerns re ability to manage behaviour of more than 4 dogs. Fouling and impact on wildlife. A short lead restriction would also be useful"

"I absolutely applaud the council FINALLY seeking to take a stand on this issue. I encounter almost daily dogs being walked in packs on local beaches, letting them all off lead at once and not really having proper control. Too many dog attacks lately"

"I am regularly met by four dog walkers in a group on Groomsport beach every morning walking up 8 dogs each. Being met by 30 off lead dogs is daunting even for a dog lover never mind an elderly person or a family with small children."

"When a runner or cyclist encounters a large group of dogs being walked at one time there is a very real risk of incident and injury"

"I often meet dog walkers with 4+ dogs and they cannot claim to be in control of them. I have had dogs jumping up on me damaging clothes with the walker stating they are only being friendly. Dog fouling is also an issue with large groups."

# Support

"2 dogs per hand is enough to control, while those dogs may be well behaved, its not to assume other dogs are so well behaved.
I believe all dogs should be kept on a leash."

"Although I am a dog owner and walker I am very conscious that others are not dog lovers and many are wary so I try to walk my dogs at quiet times and there are always 2 of us, 1 dog each"

"Good idea but difficult to police"

"I think it should be considered regarding people who's lively hood consists of dog walking with more that four dogs at one time so that their income and lively hood is not affected. Therefore a separate survey should be carried out for those people."

"I am selecting this option as I believe generally a restriction should be in place. However, there should be an exception for professional dog walkers with insurance. But only if they have full and comprehensive insurance."

"It would help keep public areas clean as there will be less dog fouling."

# Neutral/No opinion

"I think the real problem is people letting dogs off lead or fouling and nothing being done about it."

"The number of people walking more than 4 dogs is very low. And I have never had any issues with the people walking multiple dogs"

"I support to a point however if a dog is out of control, then one is just as dangerous as four or five. Responsible ownership isn't a given if you only owe one dog. Nor does the responsibly wane the more dogs you own."

"If a professional dog walker can control more than 4 dogs on leads then I dont see restricting it to 4 being necessary. 6 maybe. To be honest I only know of several people with 4 dogs which are either all on leads or extremely well trained."

"It should be up to the individual to decide how many dogs they are capable of walking at one time. I feel animal welfare should be prioritised and the council should be looking into improving this."

# Oppose

"People who walk 4 or more dogs are the exception rather than the rule"

"I foster dogs and at times multiple dogs that have been rescued from puppy farms and they only know each other for them to gain confidence and be integrated into society it is paramount they are kept together to feel safe and for there recovery."

"The number of dogs walked at one time is an limportant issue. The lack of enforcement eg when dogs are meant to be on leads and aren't show that existing rules are not enforced, I have no confidence that adding more rules would provide any benefit"

"I don't believe anyone is stopping to pick up dog poo when they have 4 dogs in tow. It should be less than 4."

"Most of the problems are caused by dogs that are not on leads. Dog walkers generally have their animals under control. Dogs that are off lead are the most likely to cause incidents."

"I use a dog walker and worry this limit of 4 will reduce their ability to operate. It's hard enough to get slots without limits on numbers.

My experience is that dog walkers are responsible. So maybe they should be exempt or with larger limits."

# Strongly Oppose

"There is no clear evidence of a problem, and the measures appear disproportionate, ineffective, and unfair to owners, walkers, and dogs. Licensing and enforcement would be more appropriate than restrictions."

"This is a blunt proposal, with no evidence to back up any of the measures. It is designed to punitively impact professional dog walkers with no regard for business."

"I own 5 extremely well behaved dogs. This would impact their welfare.
In my experience dog owners with 4 or 5 dogs generally have them under close control. It is the 1 dog owners who cause problems by allowing them to run up to strangers."

"I feel like this is a sweeping measure to target a few individuals who do not act appropriately. The biggest issue in the borough is people not picking up dog foul, not dog behaviour."

"We employ a professional dog walker who is insured to walk 6 dogs and this limit will impact her financially. It will also affect our dogs enjoyment as they have their set days and own social circle and they enjoy meeting up with their friends"

"Realistically, this only affects professional dog walkers (local businesses). Their safe capacity is already self-regulated via insurance and their dogs are walked better than individuals'. The issue of dog fouling is not related to arbitrary numbers"

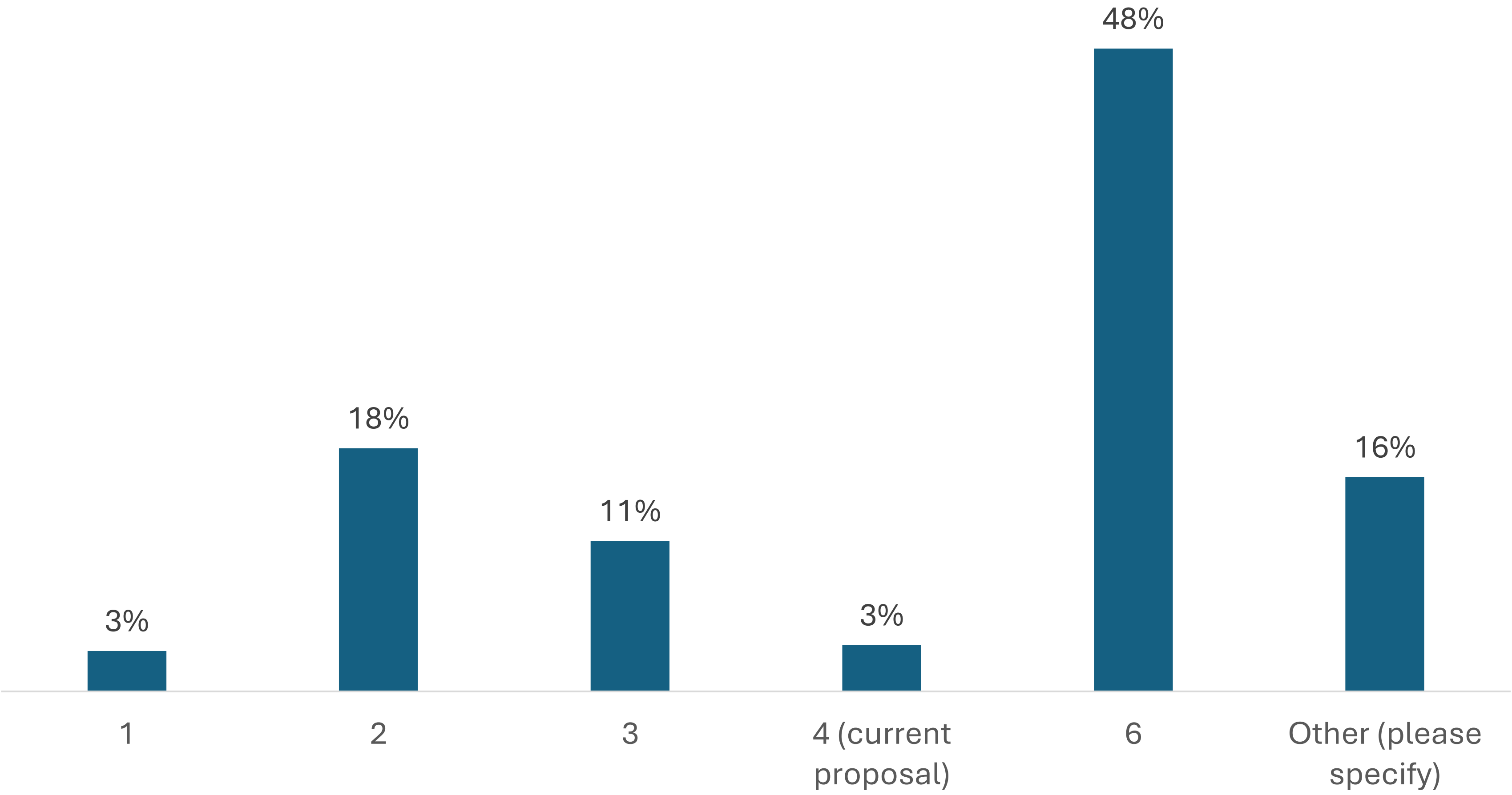
# Do you think an alternative maximum number of dogs that one person can walk at one time is more appropriate?


465 Respondents

49% of respondents think that another maximum number of dogs would be more appropriate

Single Choice

# What maximum number do you feel would be appropriate?

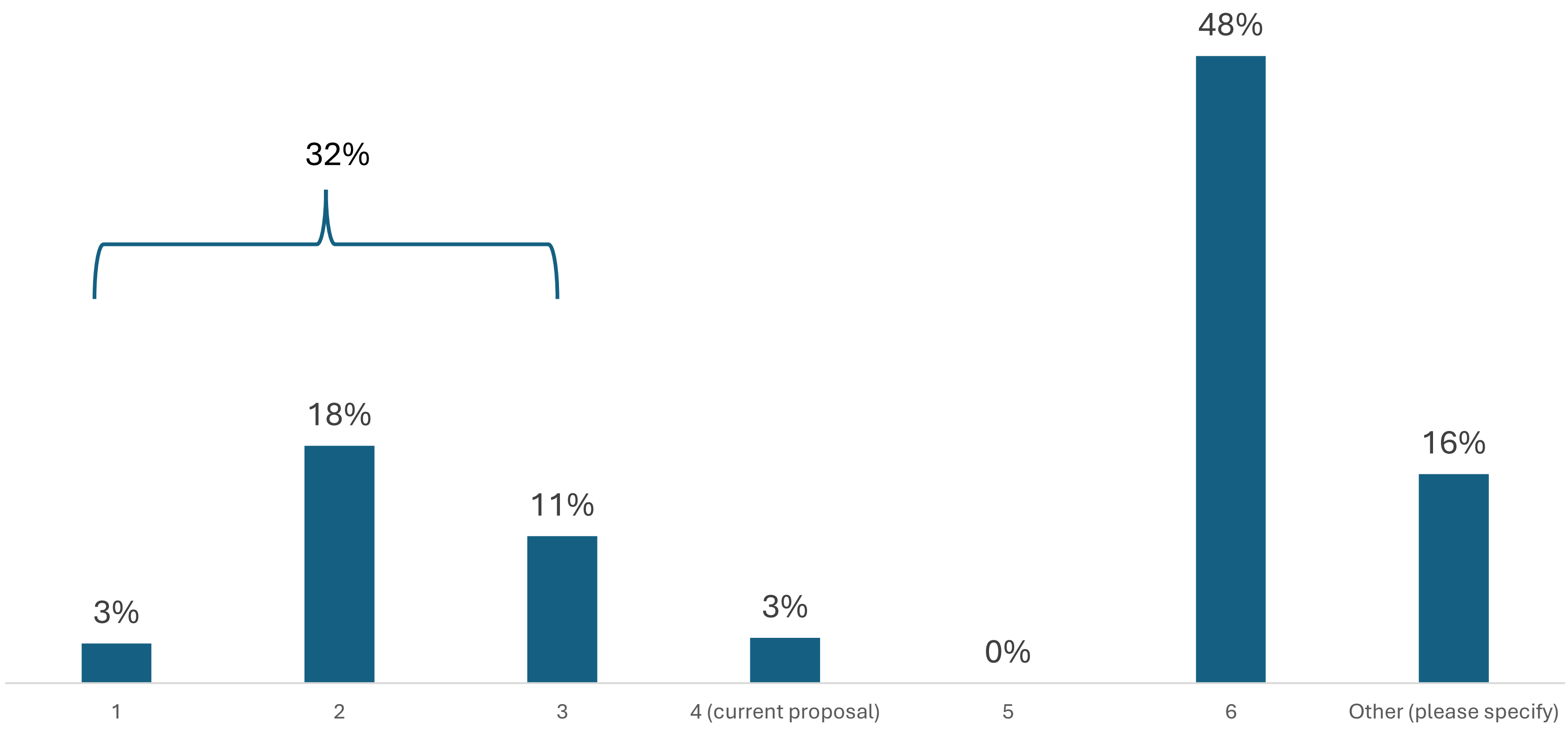



231 Respondents

48% of respondents think the maximum number of dogs walked at one time is 6

Single Choice

# What maximum number do you feel would be appropriate?




231 Respondents

Of those who answered this question, 48% felt that 6 was a more appropriate number.

32% felt that less than 4 dogs was a more appropriate number

Single Choice

# What maximum number do you feel would be appropriate? Other please specify

"2 off lead dogs or 4 dogs on leads for the safety of the public"

"Number is not the issue - it's the behaviour of the dog and the control the walker has"

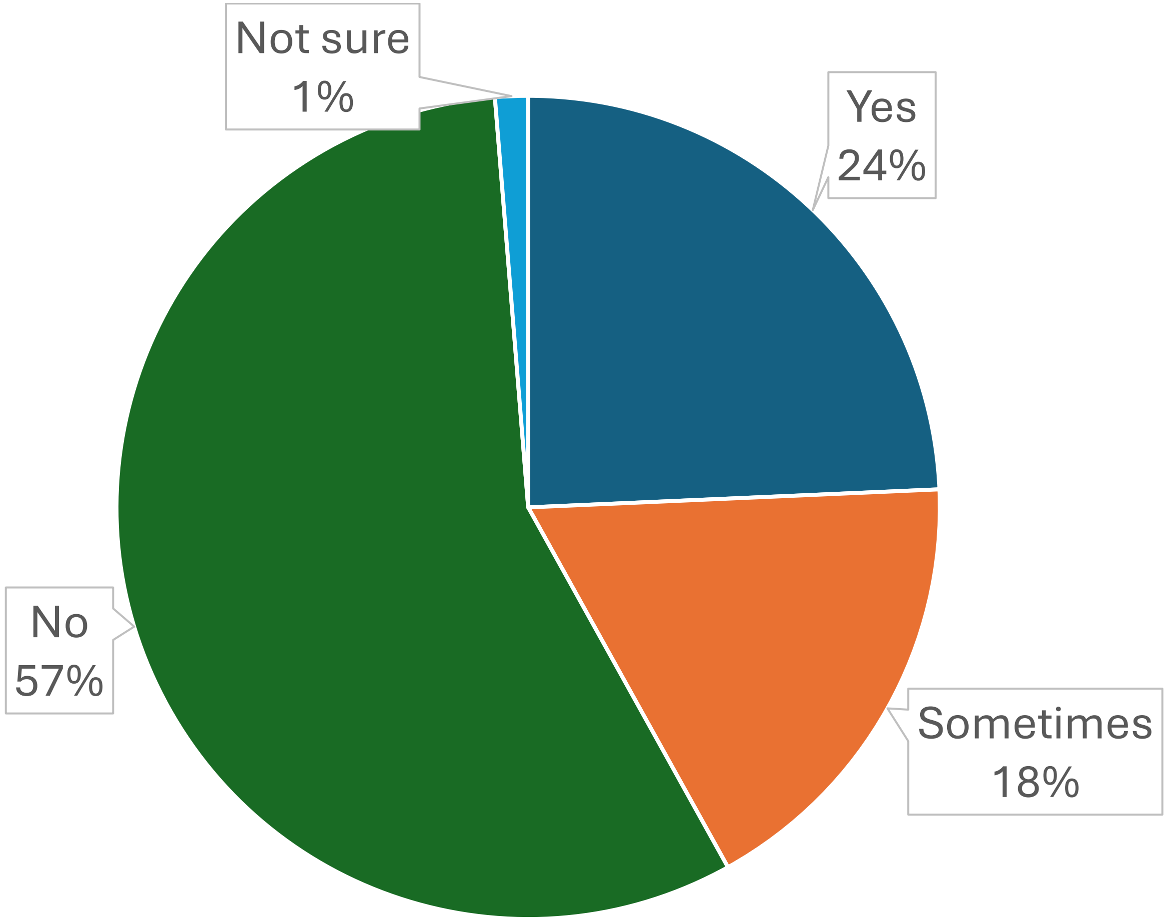
"No maximum. Just people using common sense"

"6 but only for professional dog walkers. Non professional should have a lower limit as they are more likely to have the issues described in the consultation documents"

"You can only control 2 dogs at time safely"

"Depends on the size of the dog, and the strength of the dog walker"

# In your experience, does walking multiple dogs at once increase risks related to dog control or public safety?




465 Respondents

42% of respondents think that walking multiple dogs can increase risks related to dog control and public safety.

57% do not believe this.

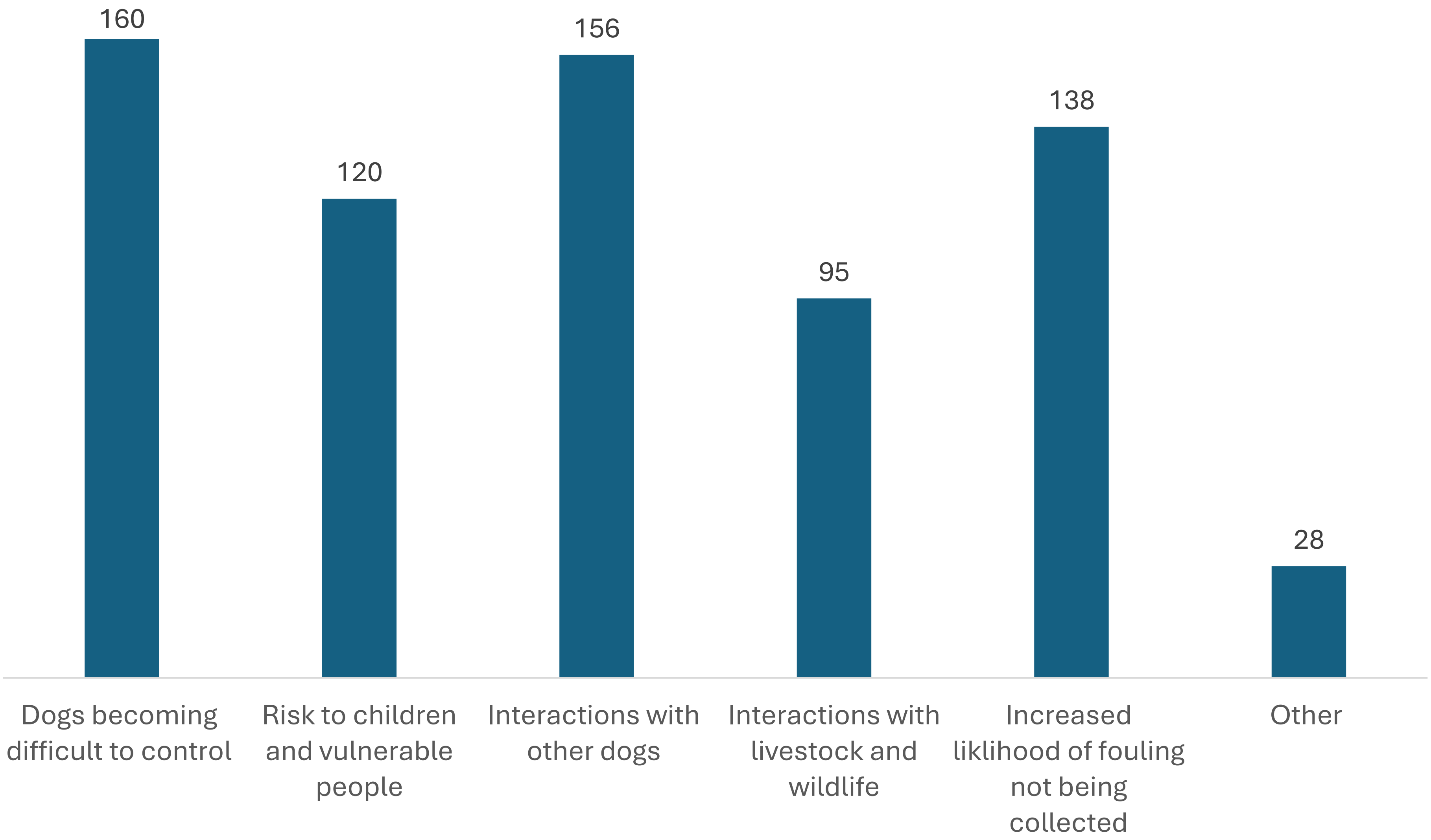
1% are unsure

Single Choice

Back to Agenda



# In your experience, does walking multiple dogs at once increase risks related to dog control or public safety?




Respondents felt that the risks of dogs becoming difficult to control and the interactions multiple dogs have with others as the biggest risk to public safety.

Multiple Choice

# Which risks do you feel are most significant – Other please specify

"I saw a group of 6 people in Castle Park with 25 dogs on the path. I just turned away, it was horrendous."

"My experience is on the Coastal Path and groups of dogs being walked together poses a real safety risk to other users in terms of trip hazards. No one can effectively control more than 3 dogs at one time"

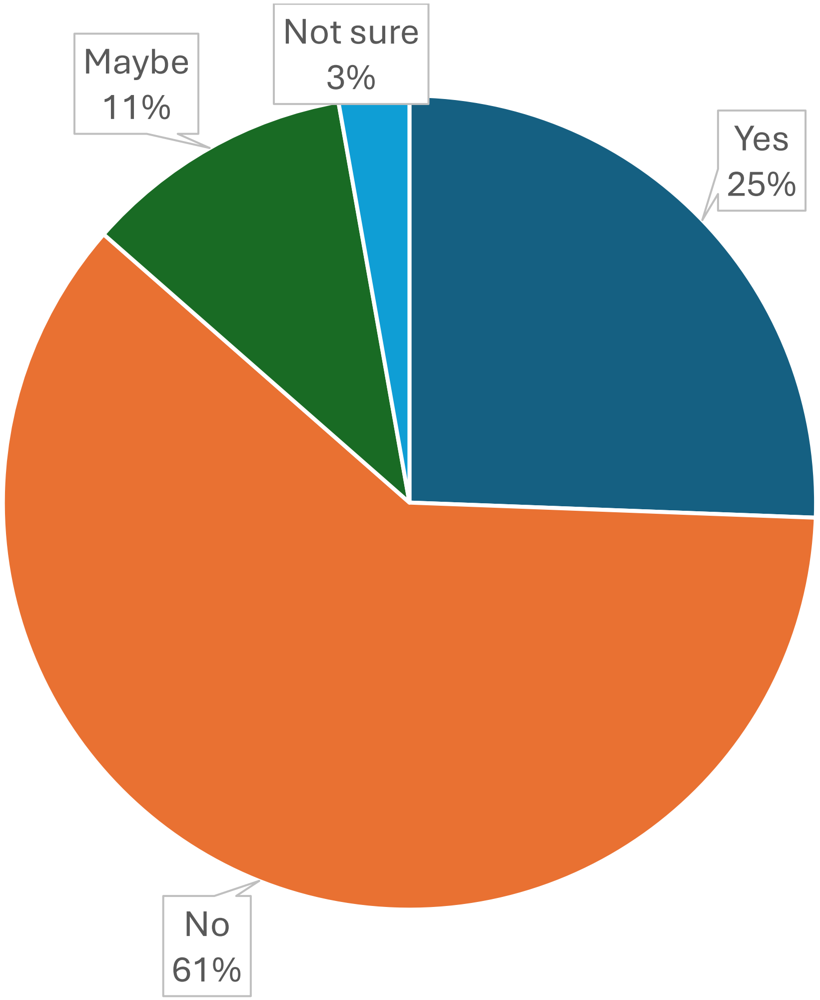
"Risk to horse riders, dogs not even being aggressive but run round under horses legs or jumping up. It's. Massive issue for us and it's really affecting being able to use off road areas which historically would have been safe for horse riders."

"Public spaces are for all residents to enjoy. We must respect that residents may be fearful of dogs and an individual approaching with a gaggle of dogs csn be very intimidating even if the individual dogs are declared as "friendly"."

"All dog owners should have to take obedience classes too to train their dogs."

"Increase in Dog attacks with four dogs approaching another dog on a threatening manner could escalate and cause a dog fight with the potential for 4 dogs attacking one dog."

# Do you feel that introducing a limit would improve safety and responsible dog handling in public spaces?

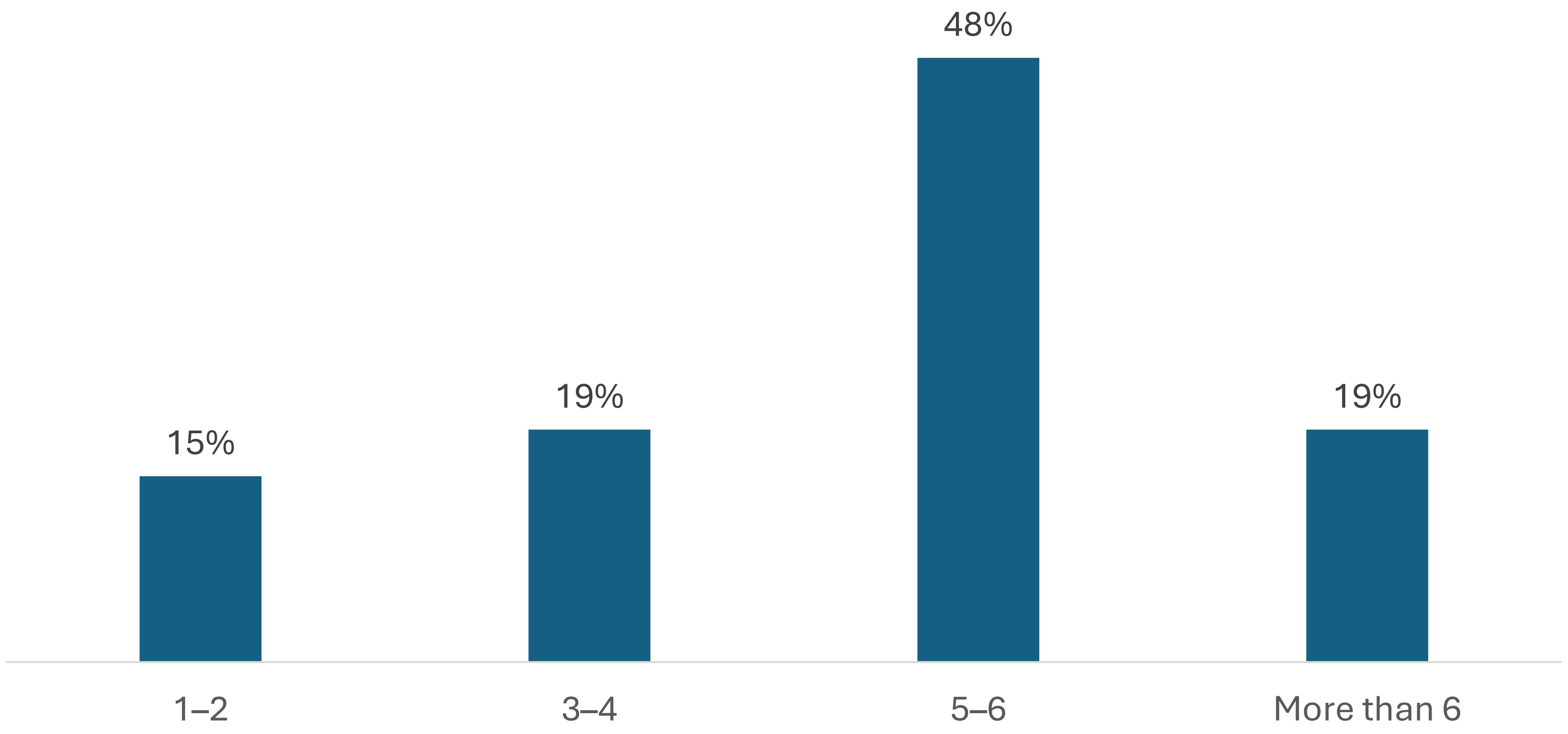



465 Respondents

61% of respondents do not feel that the introduction of a limit would improve safety and responsible dog handling in public spaces.

Single Choice

# If you are a professional dog walker, how many dogs do you currently walk at one time?



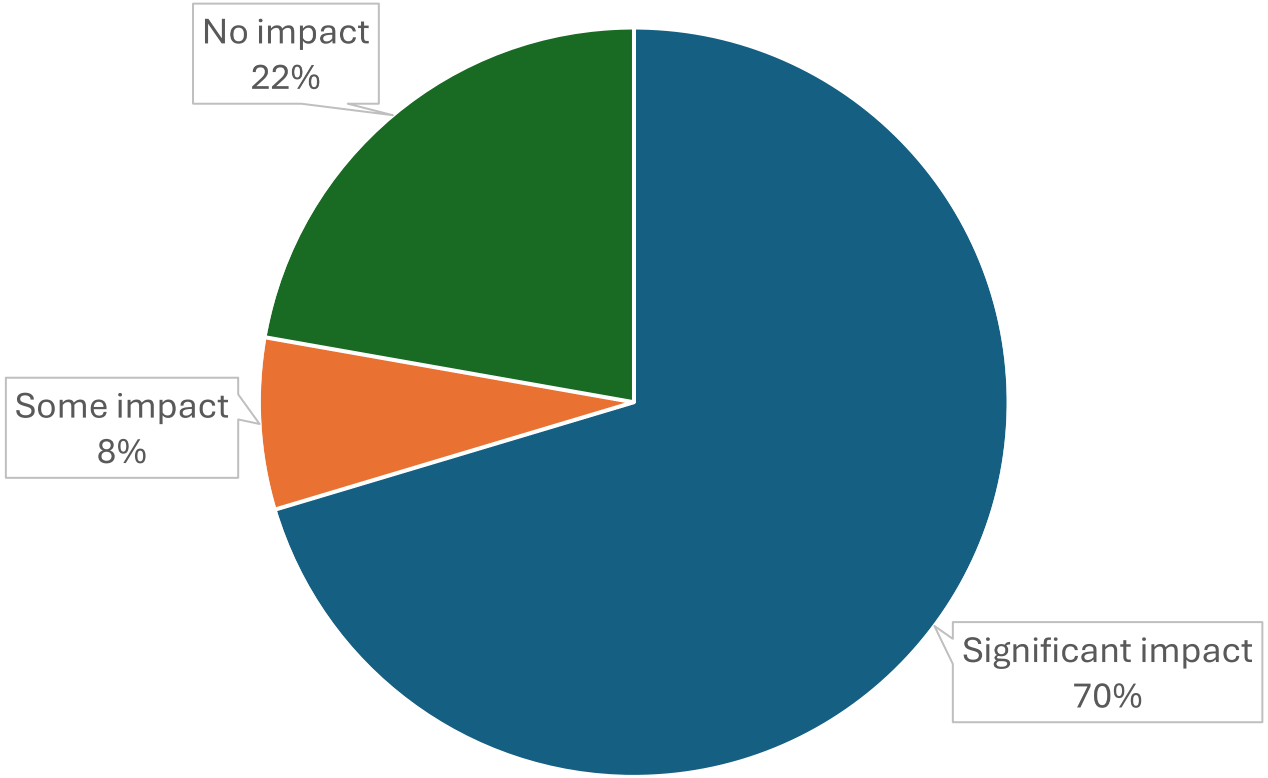

27 people responded to this question

48% walk 5-6 dogs at one time, and 19% walk more than 6 dogs at one time.

Thus, 67% would be affected by the proposed limit of 4 dogs.

Single Choice

# Would the proposal of four dogs per person have an impact on your business or daily routine?




27 respondents answered this question

The proposal would have <u>some impact</u> or a <u>significant impact</u> on over three quarters of respondents

# Would the proposal of four dogs per person have an impact on your business or daily routine?

"Reducing income by 20% has a significant impact yes . Fuel cost and car maintenance costs already climbing and with this as well my business would not be profitable ."

"It would reduce dog walking capacity by around 30%, meaning a 30% reduction in income. This would likely have to be made up by an increase in fees to customers."

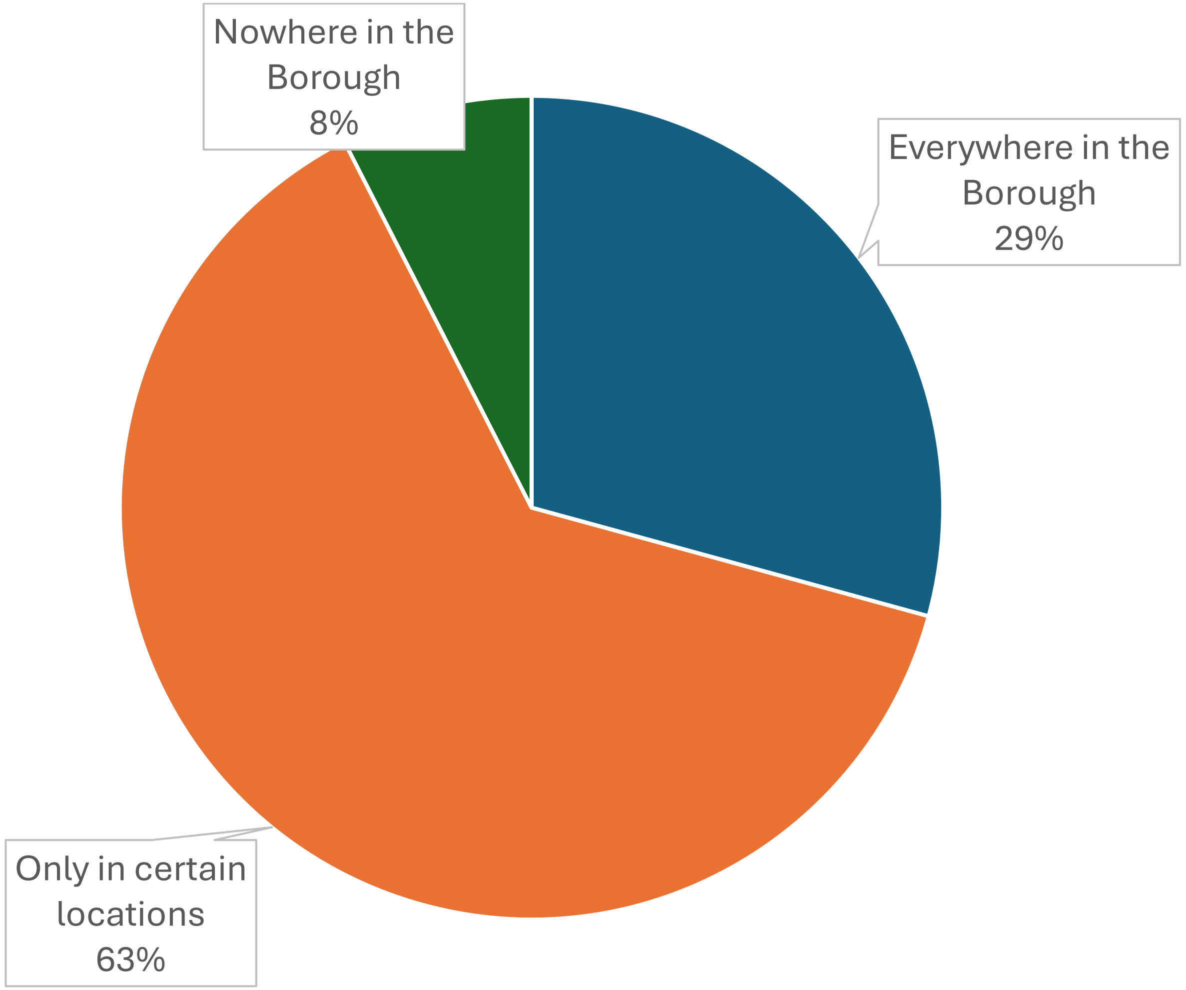
"I would have to close my business. I have helped hundreds of dog around the down area as a trainer. I walk many dogs that would be stuck in the house unwalked and if put forward there will be more dogs in shelters. Unwalked dogs become destructive."

"For those that walk bigger numbers it's going to impact their pocket however solution is just add another walk on to their day.  Safety over greed should be the priority"

"No impact as I focus on individual walks or same household. And will only take on dogs that i feel I am safe and able to control together. 4 is a lot! Any more is dangerous"

"I am a retired dog trainer and walker. I would never walk more than 4 dogs at a time. The dogs are not your dogs so while I know how to handle dogs I dont know how individual dogs will react in different situations if I have not trained them myself."

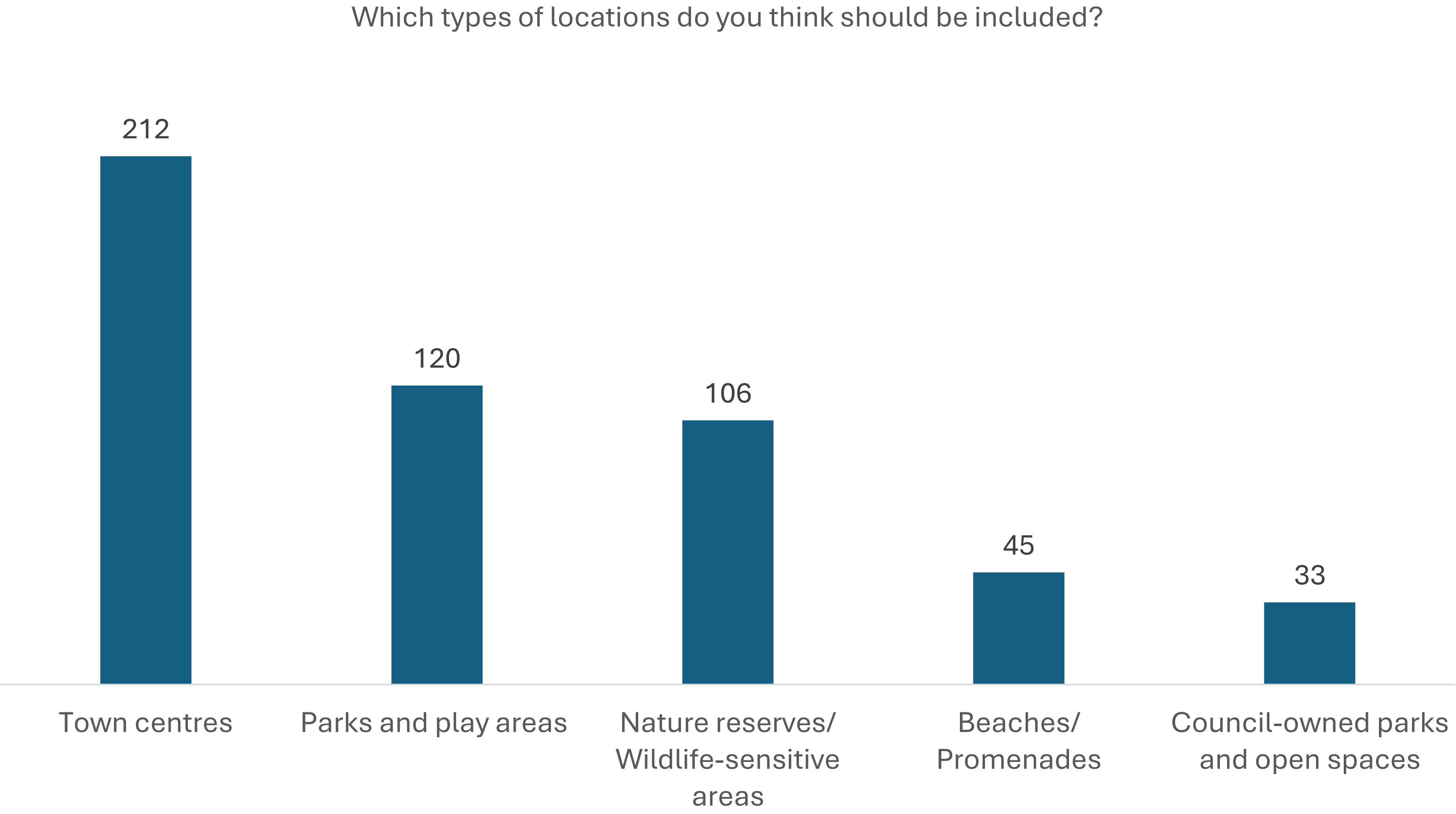
# Do you think the proposed limit on the number of dogs walked at one time should apply:




465 Respondents

63% of respondents felt that the proposed limit should apply in only certain locations.

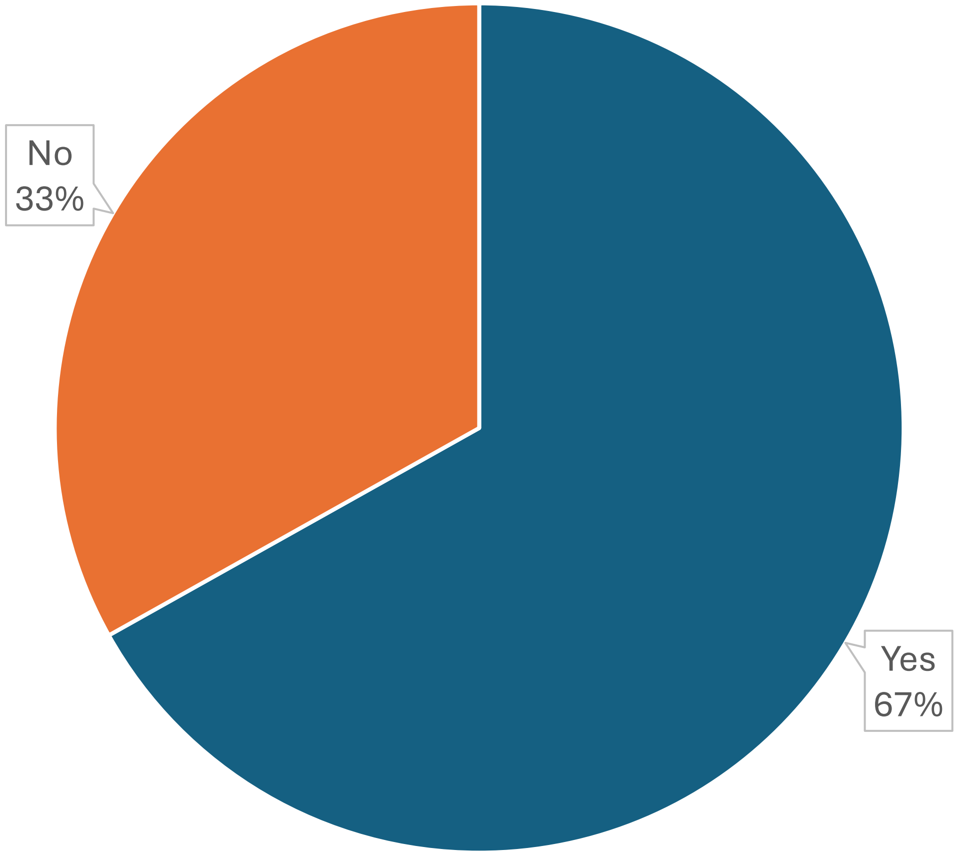
# Which types of locations do you think should be included?




“Town centres” were the most popular location

Multiple Choice

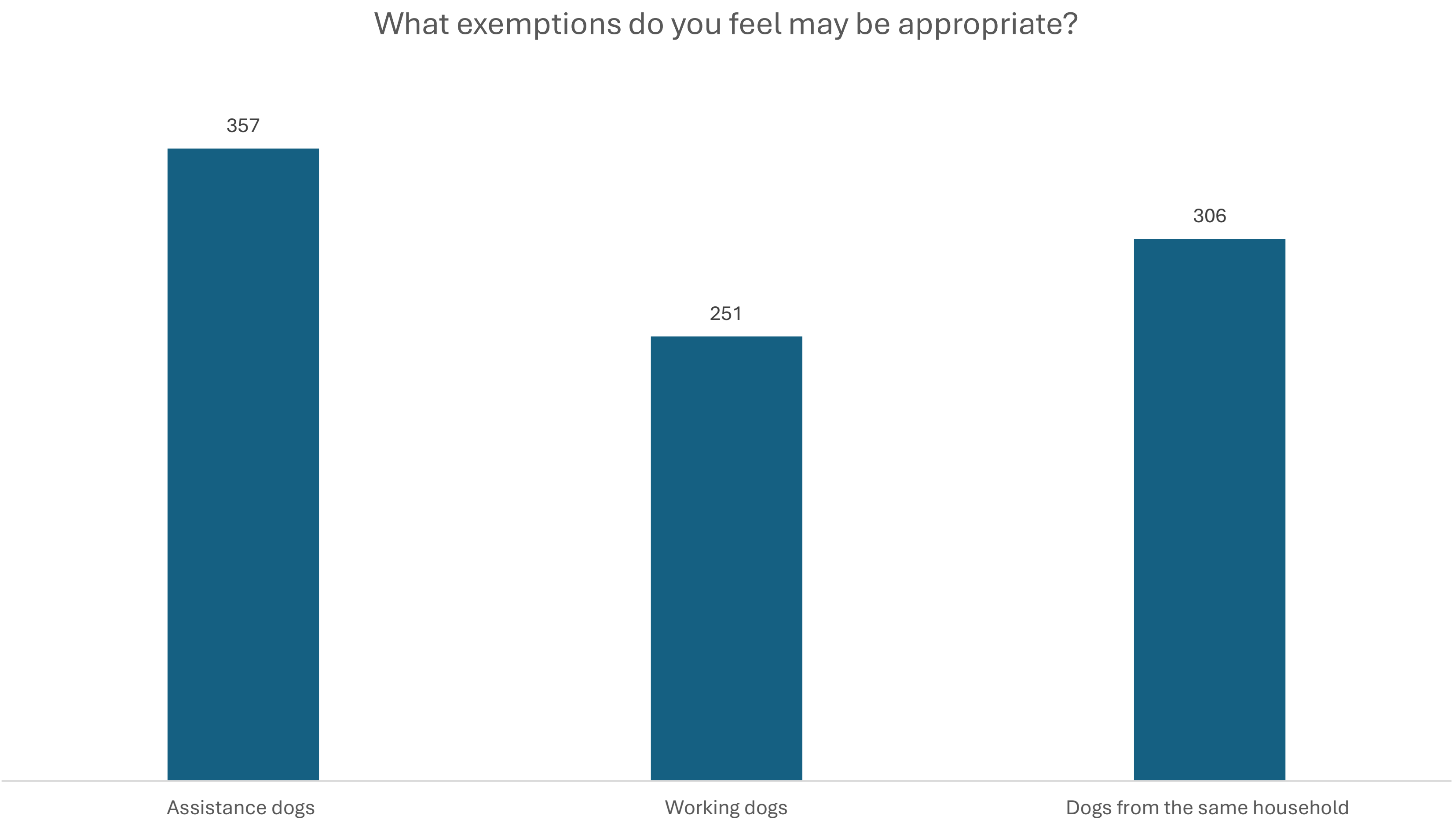
# Do you think exemptions should be considered?




465 Respondents

67% of respondents felt that there should be some exemptions to the proposal.

# What exemptions do you feel may be appropriate?




Respondents felt that exemptions should apply to assistance dogs, working dogs and dogs from the same households.

Multiple Choice

# What exemptions do you feel may be appropriate – other:

“insured and regulated dog walkers’

“Rescue centre dogs, foster dogs”

“No need as I don’t think it needs to happen at all”

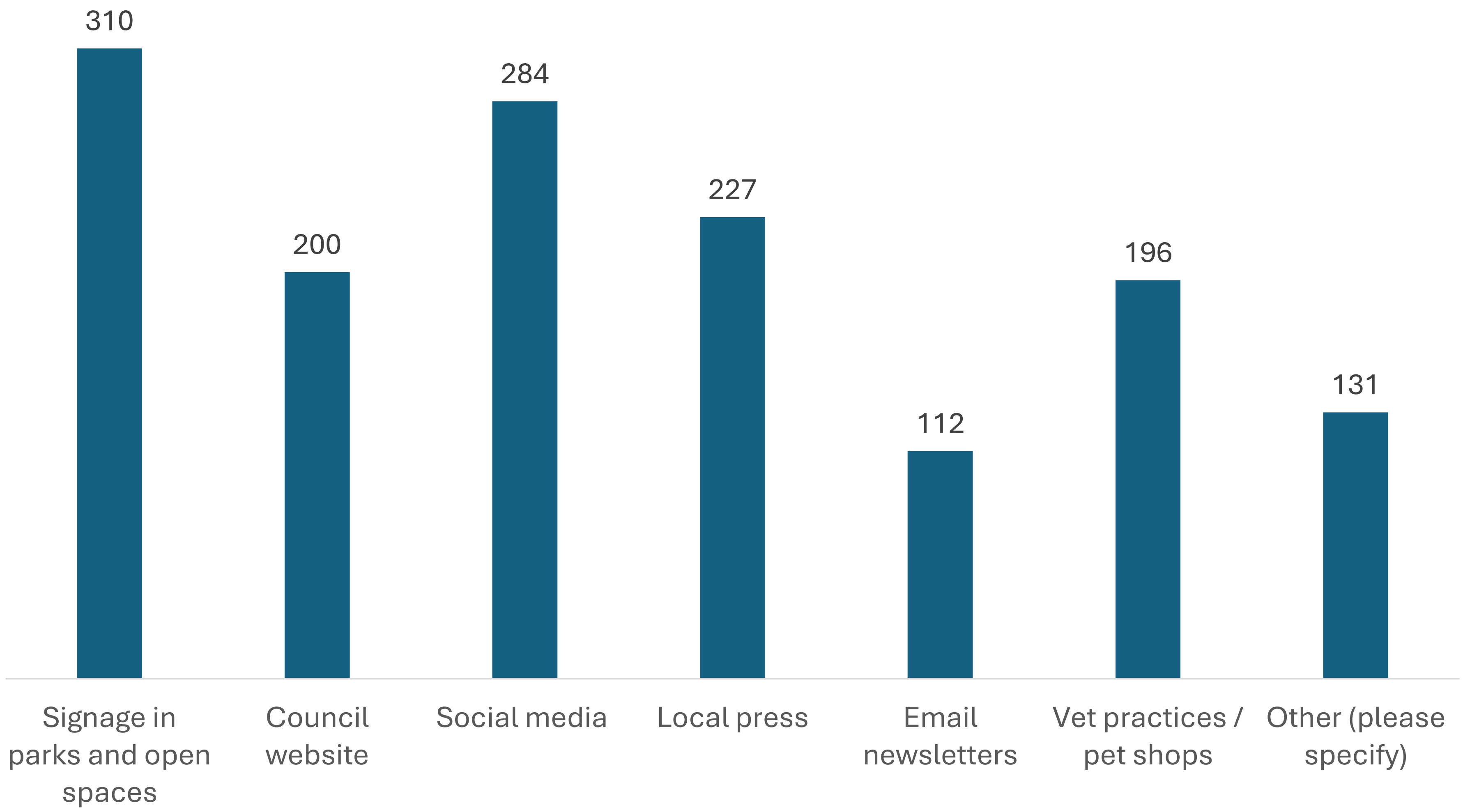
“I said no therefore none of these options apply, but as the form is not set up correctly I had to chose one option”

“Dogs/owners who are trained through the good citizen scheme”

“Disabled owners dogs and older peoples dogs being prof walked”

32 comments

# What would be the most effective ways for the Council to communicate any new rules?




Signage in parks and open spaces and Social media were the most popular methods of communicating any new rules.

Multiple Choice

# Do you have any further comments about the proposal or responsible dog walking in the borough?

"A focus on dog dirt around the borough would be a far higher priority and benefit from my point of view"

"A brilliant idea, long overdue."

"I'm not convinced the Council will be able/willing to provide the resources to enforce this"

"A very unpopular proposal from a council already struggling with public opinion. This wouldn't serve dogs, public or yourselves. If truly concerned about the impact of dogs in public spaces, i suggest you employ dog wardens to patrol hot spots."

"Dogs on leads, needs to be enforced more around the borough. I walk a dog and the number of dogs off lead and owners unable to recall them is unacceptable"

"As I have previously stated there is more risk associated with one poorly controlled dog than a well experienced walker walking 5 or 6 dogs"

"As a dog loving family we welcome the proposal. We find ourselves avoiding areas of the coast especially Ballyhome due to the irresponsible behaviour demonstrated by many."

# This section of the survey analysis focuses on Respondents who classified themselves as Professional Dog Walkers in Section 4

## Impact on Dog Walkers and Businesses

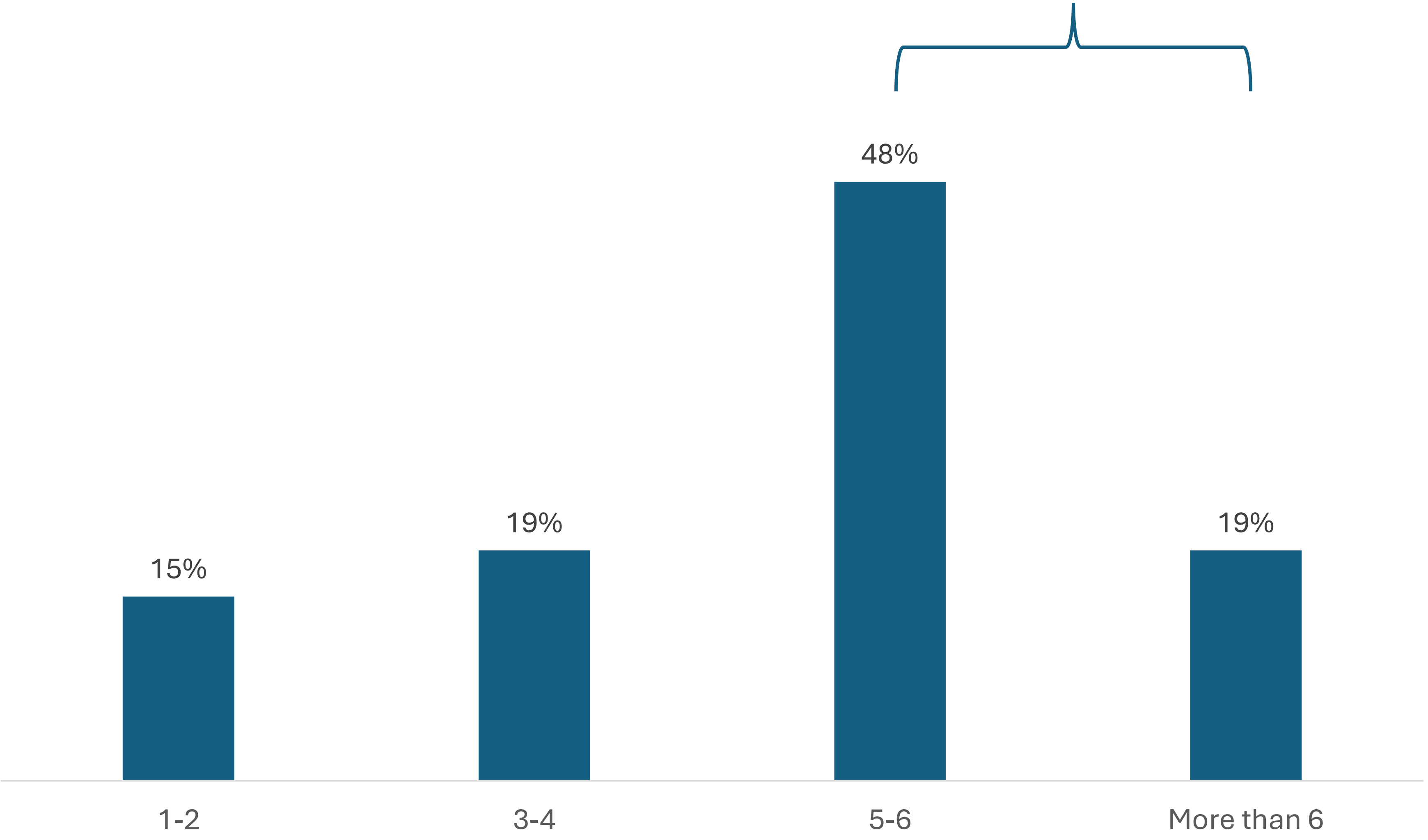
**If you are a professional dog walker, how many dogs do you currently walk at one time?**

(Required)

- ○ Not a professional dog walker
- ○ 1–2
- ○ 3–4
- ○ 5–6
- ○ More than 6

1st June 2026 – 5th July 2026

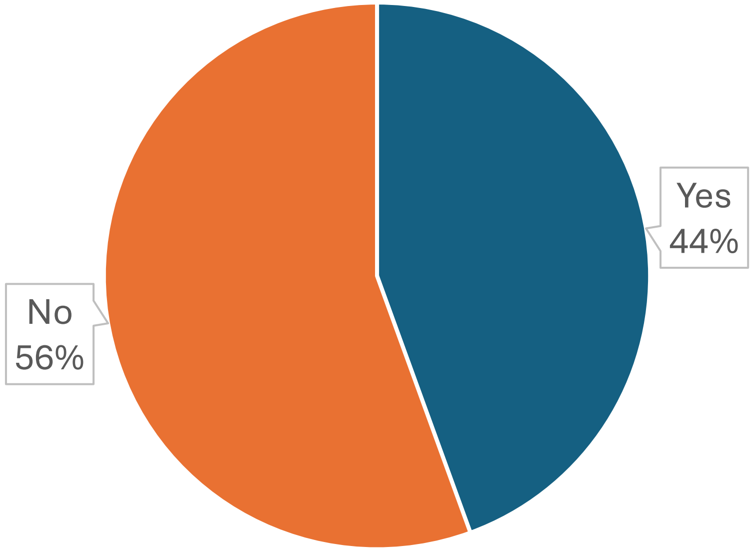
# If you are a professional dog walker, how many dogs do you currently walk at one time?




67% of those who answered this question walk more than 4 dogs at one time.

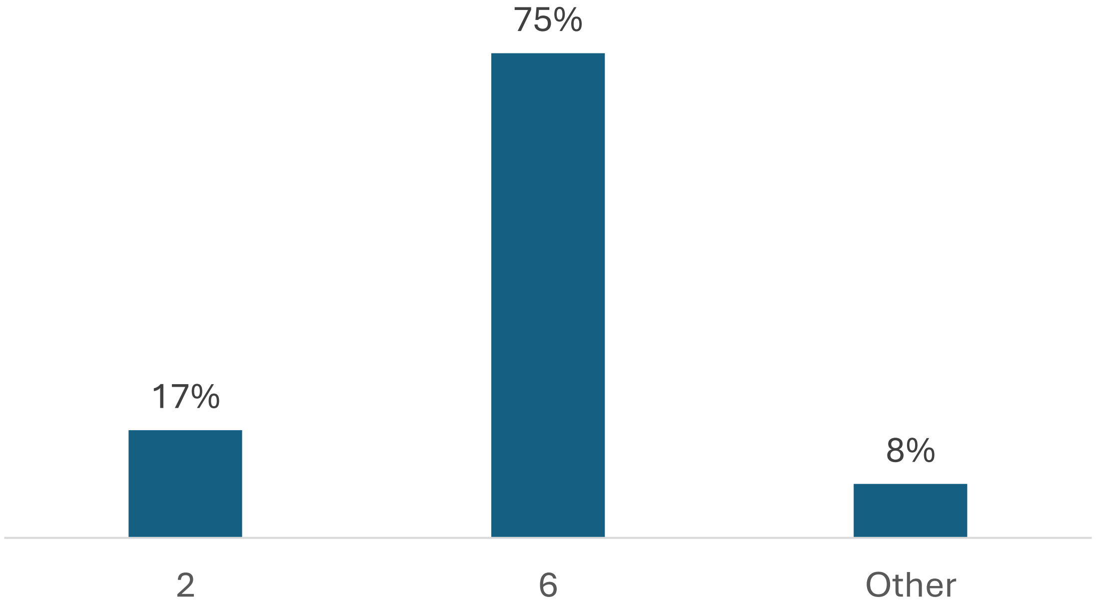
Single Choice

Do you think an alternative maximum number of dogs that a person can walk at one time is more appropriate?




Single Choice

What maximum number do you feel would be appropriate? - Appropriate max




Single Choice

What maximum number do you feel would be appropriate? - Please explain the reasons for your answer above

"Most insurance company's place 6 at the maximum and they will have based this on years of claims and experience"

"I am insured to walk six dogs. To reduce the number to four is unnecessary. It will adversely impact the dogs, clients and my business "

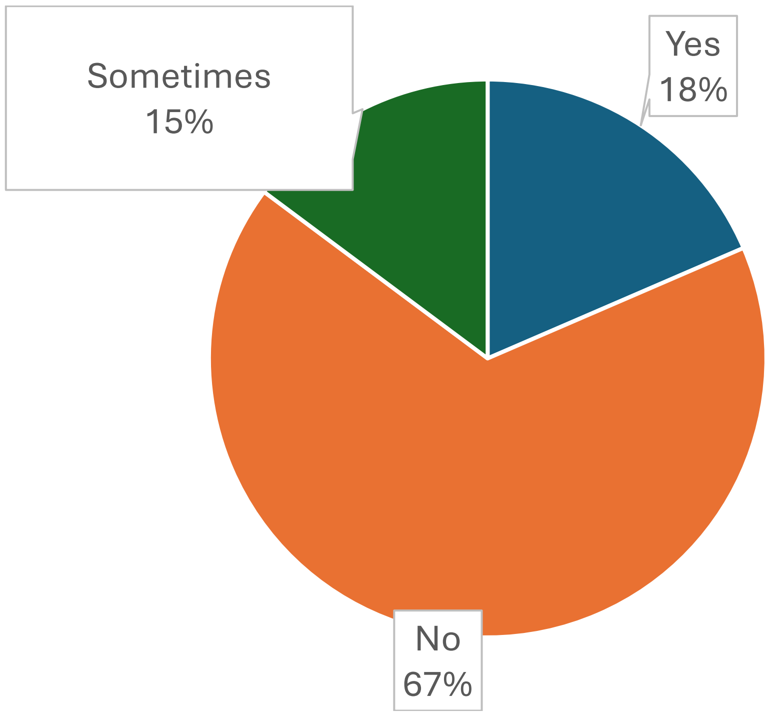
"If the dogs are trained and you know what you're doing and how to handle them then it is quite easily done. I have full control of 6 dogs no problem, if I didn't I wouldn't have them off lead, as my own choice."

"I walk 6 dogs together daily and they have the time of life's in a nice controlled manner. I have never had a complaint yet. My insurance company also states 6 dogs so not exactly sure where the research for 4 dogs has come from" "

"6 dogs can be walked responsibly . This has been the number deemed suitable by all professional dog walker insurance companies for many years . Why is your risk assessment different ?"

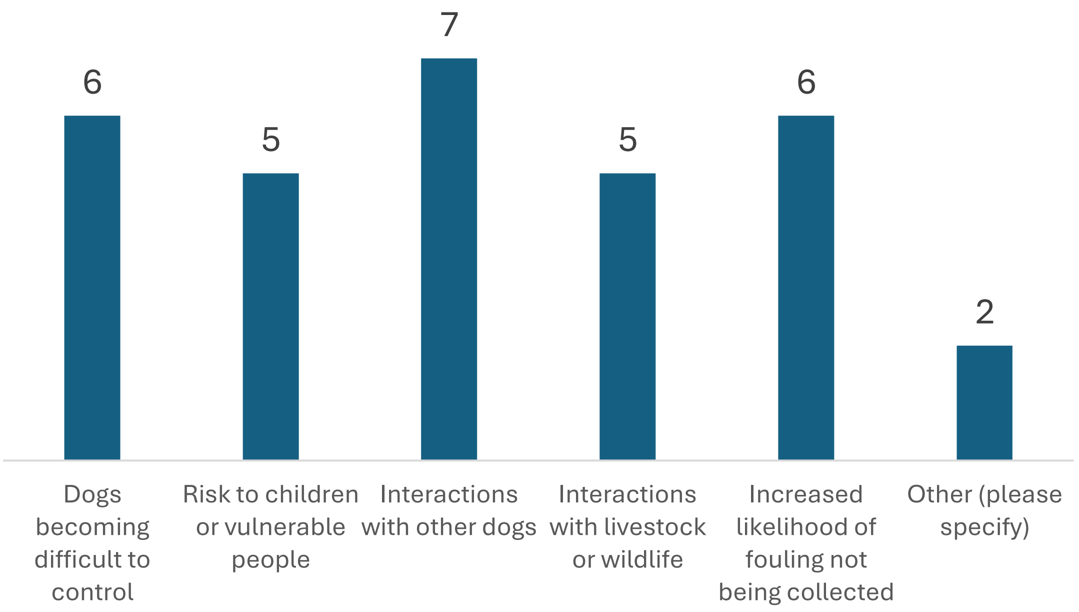
"Paid dog walkers insurance covers them for 6 dog. The insurance industry has determined that 6 dogs is a safe number for one person"

In your experience, does walking multiple dogs at once increase risks related to dog control or public safety?



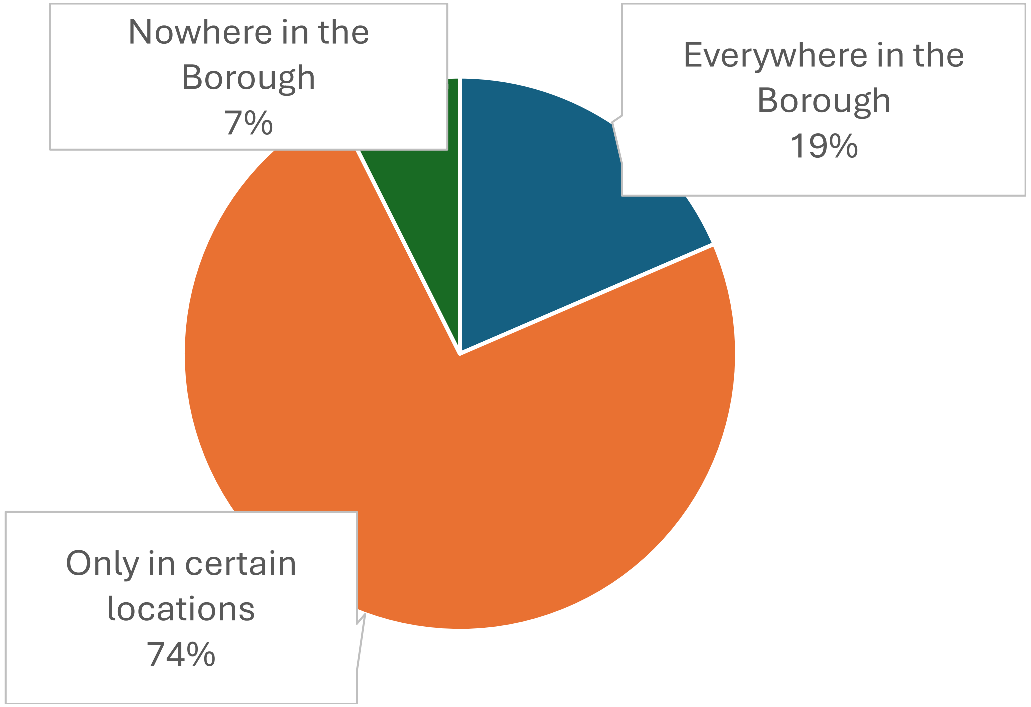

Single Choice

Which risks do you feel are most significant? (Select all that apply)



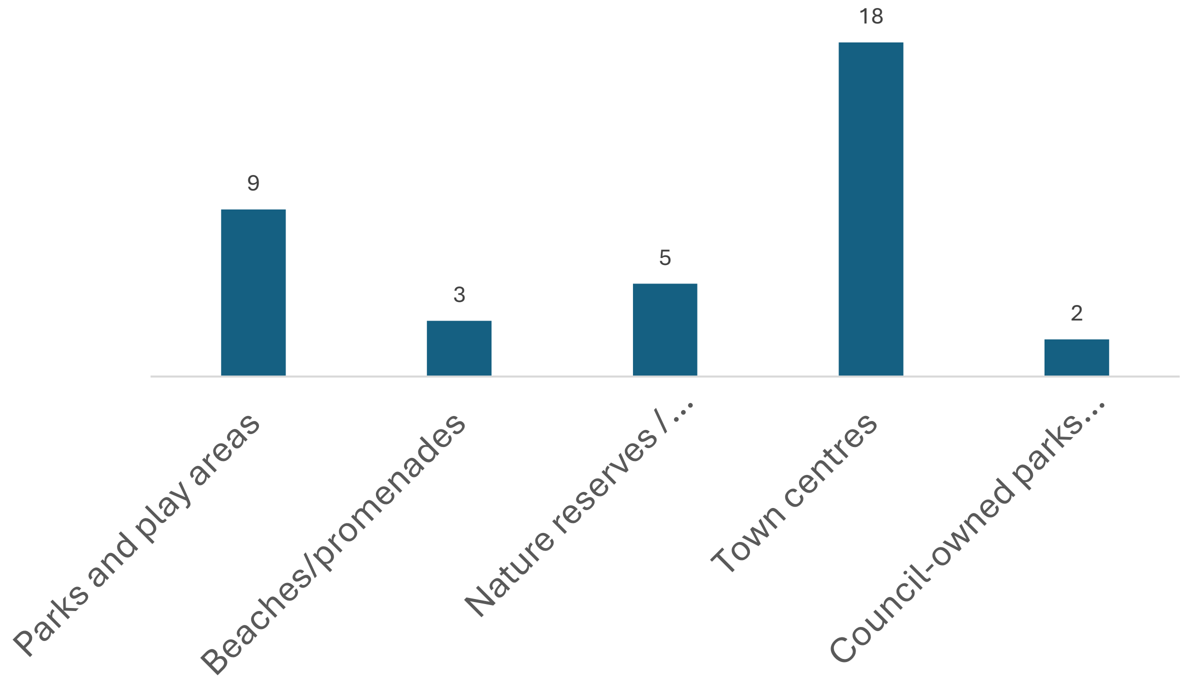

Multiple Choice

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



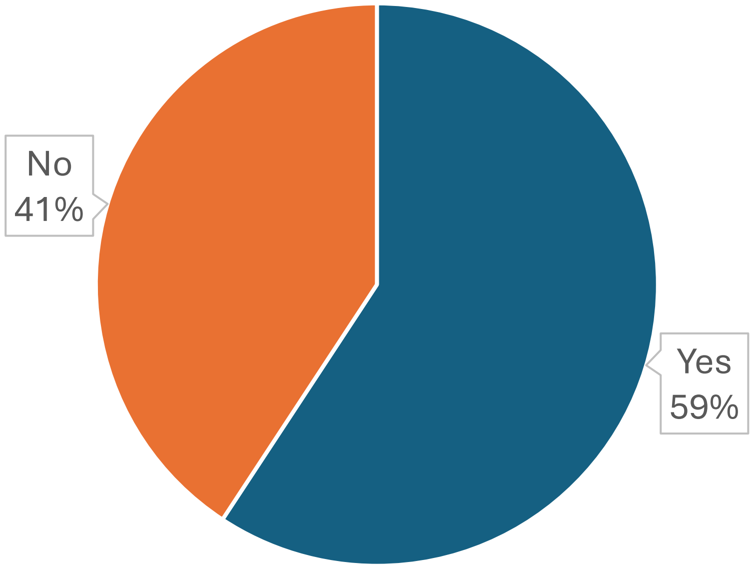

Single Choice

Which types of locations do you think should be included? (Select all that apply)



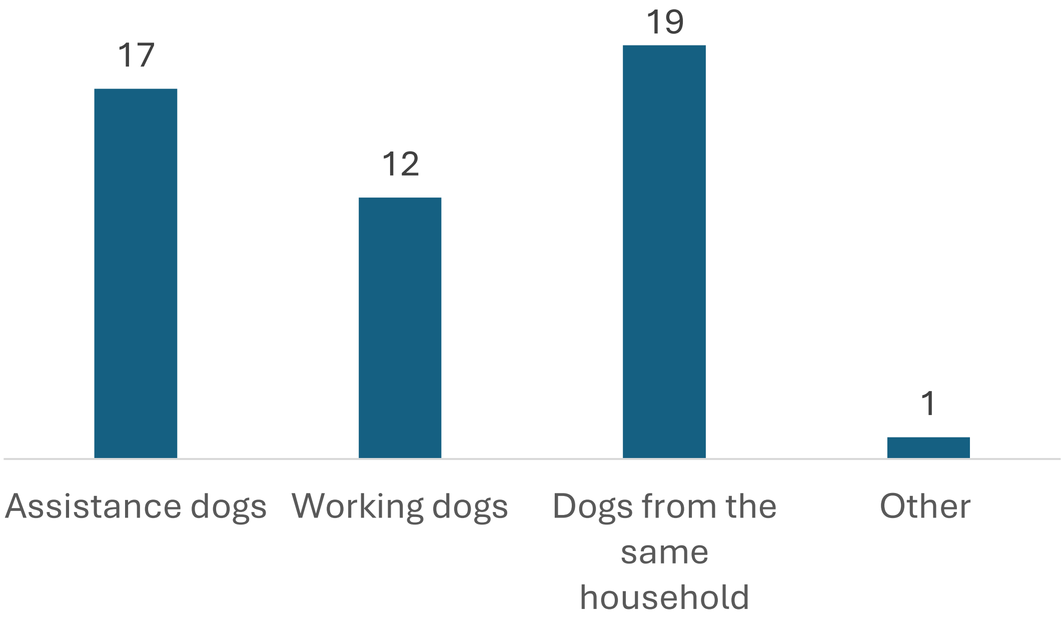

Multiple Choice

Do you think any exemptions should be considered?



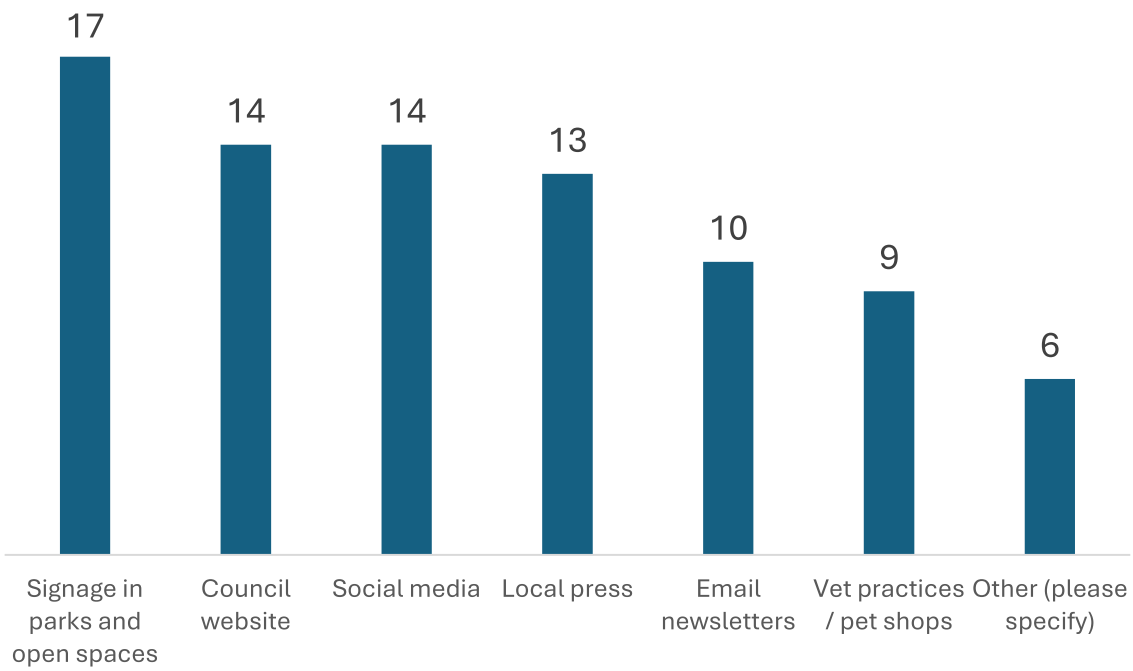

Single Choice

What exemptions do you feel may be appropriate?




Multiple Choice

## What would be the most effective ways for the Council to communicate any new rules?




Multiple Choice

# Other notable remarks from the survey

# Other notable remarks from the survey

Dog fouling

50 remarks

Dogs off lead

25 remarks

Lack of bins

8 remarks

Cloughey , New Greenway
Circular Road, Bangor
Forest Area, Portaferry

Discarded poo bags

7 remarks

Need for more Dog Wardens

7 remarks

# Other notable remarks from the survey

"More enforcement needed in the area with dogs off lead!!"

"You need more wardens solely concentrating on fouling. Not dog licences or littering."

"Holywood  Seapark has a problem with dog faeces. Put more wardens  on the ground and have on the spot fines for dog fouling."

"I live on Bangor Marina and it is rife with dog fouling. I also see so many dogs off lead"

"We do need more poo bins especially in Cloughey"

"It would be brilliant just to ensure dogs in public areas are

1. properly licenced with tags.
2. kept on leads when required.
3. owners pick up pooh and dispose of it properly."

"Increase the number of bins to discourage used poop bags being discarded"

"If truly concerned about the impact of dogs in public spaces, i suggest you employ dog wardens to patrol hot spots."

"Dogs not on leads - sort that out."

# Other notable remarks from the survey – via email

"This is a broad brush approach which targets everyone, not the irresponsible walkers"

"Given the increase in dogs as pets since Covid, has the council increased the number of dog wardens accordingly?"

"From research of industry standards, most professional liability insurance policies cover up to 6 dogs"

"How would it ever be possible to police this limitation but more importantly, it is extremely unfair to those dog walkers who are responsible, have a good group of happy dogs under control"

"I would like to say this is a step in the right direction to consider further restrictions on dog-walking which has become such a problem for many communities"

"At the moment there are many areas within the Borough where the bylaws pertaining to dog walking a flaunted daily and enforcement officers are rarely seen"

"I believe a fairer approach would be to introduce a registration or licensing scheme for professional dog walkers, where the number of dogs permitted is linked to have adequate insurance, proven experience and demonstrate competence"

Back to Agenda

Supporting information for slides 12 & 13



# What maximum number do you feel would be appropriate?

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Other | Not answered |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly support | 7 | 36 | 22 | 7 | | 1 | | 35 |
| Support | | 2 | 2 | 1 | | 4 | 2 | 17 |
| Neutral/ No opinion | | | | | | 2 | | 7 |
| Oppose | | 1 | 1 | | | 23 | 8 | 20 |
| Strongly oppose | | 3 | 1 | | | 81 | 27 | 155 |
| **Total** | 7 | 42 | 26 | 8 | | 111 | 37 | 234 |

Unclassified

ITEM 8

## Ards and North Down Borough Council

| | |
|---|---|
| Report Classification | Unclassified |
| Exemption Reason | Not Applicable |
| | If multiple: |
| Meeting | Active and Healthy Communities Committee |
| Date of Meeting | 09 September 2025 |
| Responsible Director | Director of Active and Healthy Communities |
| Responsible Head of Service | Head of Environmental Health and Regulatory Services |
| Report title | UK Wide Fireworks Consultation |
| Attachments | Appendix 1 - Draft Consultation Response |
| File Reference (if applicable) | |
| Legislation | Other<br>Pyrotechnic Articles (Safety) Regulations 2015 (as amended)<br>Explosives (Fireworks) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2002 |
| Resource Implications | Budget and Staffing<br>Narrative: Some of the proposed changes could increase the need for inspections, test purchasing, intelligence sharing, online monitoring, seizure, safe storage and disposal of fireworks, and investigation of illegal sales. |
| Screening Requirements | *The Council will commit to consider the implication of all reports under the categories of Section 75, Rural Needs, Data Protection, Climate and Sustainability:*<br>Screening of report not required |
| Link to Corporate Plan Priority and Outcome | Priority 3: Social |

If multiple:

| | |
|---|---|
| | 5. Safe, welcoming and inclusive communities that are flourishing<br>If multiple: |

**Background**
The UK Government has launched a consultation on proposed reforms to the regulation of fireworks and pyrotechnic products. While fireworks continue to play an important role in public events, community celebrations and personal milestones, concerns have increased regarding their negative impacts on individuals, communities and animals.

The Government has previously introduced a range of non-legislative measures, including public awareness campaigns, guidance for community fireworks displays, and engagement with retailers and trade associations. However, it considers that these measures have not fully addressed public concerns, resulting in increasing calls for legislative reform through public petitions, parliamentary activity and representations from stakeholders.

The consultation seeks evidence and views from a broad range of interested parties, including consumers, emergency services, public safety bodies, veterans' organisations, fireworks retailers and importers, professional pyrotechnics businesses, healthcare professionals, local authorities, animal welfare organisations and the devolved administrations. The consultation applies across the United Kingdom. However, it recognises that certain aspects of fireworks legislation are devolved in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

A link to the host page for the consultation is provided below:
Fireworks and pyrotechnics in the UK - GOV.UK

**Key Issues**
The consultation proposals are intended to address the principal harms associated with the misuse of fireworks while preserving their use for legitimate and responsible purposes. The key issues identified by the Government include:

- Excessive noise and disturbance.
- Risks to public safety and personal injury.
- Anti-social behaviour involving fireworks.
- Distress caused to vulnerable individuals, including those with sensory sensitivities and veterans affected by post-traumatic stress.
- Impacts on domestic animals, livestock and wildlife.
- Risks to property and wider community safety.

In Northern Ireland, the sale and use of fireworks are already subject to more stringent controls than elsewhere in the UK through the Explosives (Fireworks) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2002. These regulations restrict the sale of Category F2 and F3 fireworks to members of the public unless they hold a licence issued by the Department of Justice. Possession and use of these fireworks is also restricted, and sales may only be undertaken by registered retailers.

Local councils are responsible for enforcing fireworks labelling requirements and act on behalf of the Department of Justice in assessing applications for fireworks display licences, providing advice on whether licences should be granted for non-council events.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) is responsible for enforcing legislation relating to illegal sales and use of fireworks, including sales by unregistered retailers or sales to persons who do not hold the necessary licence.

**Next Steps**
The UK Government has stated that it wishes to gather evidence from across all parts of the United Kingdom before determining whether amendments to the regulatory framework are required.

Environmental Health and Regulatory Services has prepared a draft consultation response for submission to the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS), reflecting the Council's experience of the regulation, sale and use of fireworks within Northern Ireland and the potential implications of any proposed changes.

In developing the response, consideration has also been given to the concerns previously expressed by Council through Notice of Motion No. 692, which highlighted the impact of fireworks on animal welfare, vulnerable individuals and local communities. The response therefore reflects local concerns regarding the distress and harm that can arise from the inappropriate use of fireworks, while recognising the need for a proportionate regulatory approach that balances public safety, animal welfare and the continued responsible use of fireworks for cultural and community celebrations.

**Summary**
Environmental Health and Regulatory Services has prepared a response for submission to OPSS regarding the UK Government consultation on proposed changes to the Pyrotechnic Articles (Safety) Regulations 2015.

The consultation seeks views on measures aimed at reducing the harms associated with fireworks misuse while maintaining their availability for safe and responsible use during cultural, community and celebratory events. The principal proposals are to:

- Restrict higher-noise fireworks from general public sale, making them available only to professional users.
- Add high-risk pyrotechnic products to the existing list of prohibited products under the Pyrotechnic Articles (Safety) Regulations 2015.
- Review the classification and regulation of lower-risk fireworks and pyrotechnic products to ensure regulatory controls are proportionate to the risks they present.

The Council's response has been informed by both operational experience and the concerns previously raised through Notice of Motion No. 692 regarding the impacts of fireworks on residents, animals and local communities. The Government will consider the evidence received through the consultation before deciding whether changes to the existing regulatory framework are required.

## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council **Approves** the draft consultation response, attached as Appendix 1.

APPENDIX 1

Department for Business & Trade

Office for Product Safety & Standards

# Consultation: fireworks and pyrotechnics in the UK

# Response form

## Introduction

Fireworks are enjoyed by many for celebrations and cultural events. However, their use has become a growing concern, as seen from public complaints, parliamentary debates, and petitions calling for stronger controls due to the negative impacts on neighbourhood safety, vulnerable people, and animals.

This consultation explores these issues, in support of the UK Government's Safer Streets Mission to tackle anti-social behaviour. The goal is to find an approach that preserves the enjoyment of fireworks for celebrations while preventing harm and distress to others.

### Why are we consulting

Before making any changes to fireworks regulations, we are seeking views on our proposals to ensure we receive all relevant evidence and perspectives. This will allow us to refine the policy to reduce unintended consequences and maximise the potential benefits. We are seeking views on proposals to:

- restrict the availability of noisier fireworks to the general public, with louder products only available to professional users.
- add products deemed to be carrying unacceptable risks to the list of existing banned pyrotechnic products set out in regulation 33 of the Pyrotechnic Articles (Safety) Regulations 2015 (as amended)
- review the regulations for fireworks and pyrotechnic products currently classified as lower risk to better reflect the different levels of risk they pose

**Please complete this form and return to:**
**fireworksconsultation@businessandtrade.gov.uk**

**Consultation Closes: 23:59 on 7 October 2026**

## Confidentiality and data protection

DBT is committed to protecting the privacy and security of your information. Details on how we collect and process your personal data in accordance with data protection legislation when you respond to one of our public consultations are provided in the Confidentiality and data protection section of the consultation document.
https://www.gov.uk/consultations/fireworks-and-pyrotechnics-in-the-uk

You can also read the Public consultations privacy notice.  Wherever possible please avoid including any additional personal data in free-text responses beyond that which has been requested or which you consider it necessary for DBT to be aware of.

| **Your Details** | |
|---|---|
| **1. Your name** | |
| **2. Your email address** | |
| **3. Are you responding:** | |
| As an individual? Please go to 'Consultation Questions' | |
| On behalf of an organisation? Please continue | ✓ |
| **4. Name of organisation** | Ards and North Down Borough Council |
| **5. Number of employees** | |
| 1 to 9 | |
| 10 to 49 | |
| 50 to 249 | |
| 250 or more | ✓ |
| **6. Type of organisation** | |
| Business | |
| Trade Association | |
| Test House or Laboratory | |
| Consumer Body | |
| Charity, community or campaign group | |
| NHS or healthcare organisations | |
| Local Authority and Trading Standards | ✓ |
| Fire and Rescue Service, police or security | |
| Devolved Government or Government Body | |
| Other (Please specify) | |

| **Consultation Questions** | |
|---|---|
| **1.** Are there any other particular F2 and F3 fireworks products that you think the general public should not be allowed to buy? Please state which products and give your reasons. | |
| **Products:** | N/A |
| **You can provide reasons in the space below.** | |
| The Explosives (Fireworks) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2002 restrict the sale of Category F2 and F3 fireworks to members of the public unless they have been granted a licence by the Department of Justice. The possession and use of fireworks is similarly restricted, and these categories of Fireworks can also only be sold by registered retailers. | |
| **2.** If more products are added to the regulation 33 banned list, what consequences might there be for consumers, industry, enforcement authorities, professional users, and others? Please give your reasons | |
| **You can list consequences and provide reasons in the space below.** | |
| As previously stated all Cat F2 and F3 Fireworks cannot be sold to members of the public unless they are in possession of a licence granted by DoJ. The impact of adding more products to the banned list would therefore be limited, but in our view should not be detrimental.<br><br>For consumers, the main positive consequence would be improved protection from products most likely to cause injury, nuisance, anti-social behaviour, distress to vulnerable people and animals, or property damage.<br><br>For industry, including importers, distributors and Department of Justice registered retailers operating in Northern Ireland, there may be costs in removing affected stock, changing product ranges, updating compliance checks and ensuring staff understand which products can no longer be supplied. The consequences may be greater for seasonal retailers or smaller businesses. However, a clearer banned list could assist reputable businesses by reducing ambiguity, supporting consistent advice to licence holders, and helping prevent unsafe or non-compliant products entering the legitimate Northern Ireland market.<br><br>As regards enforcement in Northern Ireland, local authorities are responsible for enforcing requirements relating to labelling of fireworks, and act as agents of the Department of Justice in assessing applications for firework display licences, to advise whether a licence should be granted to operators of non-council events. The PSNI are the enforcing authority for illegal sales and use of fireworks, including sales from non-registered retailers or sales to persons not in possession of a licence.<br><br>For these authorities, the impact could be mixed. A clearer list of banned products could help local authorities, Trading Standards, the Department of Justice, PSNI and other relevant agencies take action where prohibited products are found. It may also support more consistent advice to retailers, licence applicants and the public. However, additional banned products could increase the need for inspections, test purchasing, intelligence sharing, online monitoring, seizure, safe storage and disposal of fireworks, and investigation of illegal sales. This is particularly important in Northern Ireland because unlawful possession or use can | |

occur outside the licensing system and may involve products obtained from unregistered or illegal sources.

A possible negative consequence is that some individuals may try to obtain banned items through illegal sellers, online sources, cross-border routes or informal supply. This is already a concern in Northern Ireland, and any expansion of the banned list should be accompanied by strong public information and intelligence-led enforcement.

**3.** Do you agree that regulation 33(1)(g) should be amended to make explicit that a firework comprising more than one shot tube is banned from sale to the general public? Please give your reasons.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Agree** | ✓ |
| **Neither agree nor disagree** | |
| **Disagree** | |

**You can provide reasons in the space below.**

The wording of Regulation 33 is not currently clear on this point and clear wording would reduce ambiguity for suppliers, retailers, licence applicants and enforcement authorities. This would also make it easier to advise businesses and the public on what may lawfully be supplied.

This is particularly relevant in Northern Ireland because most fireworks may only be purchased, possessed and used under a valid fireworks licence issued by the Department of Justice, and retailers must be registered and should only supply fireworks in accordance with that licensing framework. Making the prohibition explicit would help ensure that a licence is not misunderstood as allowing access to multi-shot tube products where those products are intended to be outside public supply.

From an enforcement perspective, explicit wording would assist local authorities, Trading Standards, the Department of Justice, PSNI and other relevant agencies by making it clearer when a product should not be supplied to members of the public. It would also support more consistent checks of retailers, investigations into illegal supply, and public messaging around fireworks safety. Multi-shot tube products can present greater risks where they are misused, used in inappropriate locations, or obtained outside the licensing system. A clear prohibition should therefore support public safety, reduce nuisance and anti-social behaviour, and help protect vulnerable people, animals and property.

**4.** Do you agree that the age limit for purchasing Christmas crackers should be removed? Please give your reasons.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Agree** | ✓ |
| **Neither agree nor disagree** | |
| **Disagree** | |

**You can provide reasons in the space below.**

In practice, Christmas crackers are a low-risk seasonal product and are widely used in family, hospitality, school, community and workplace settings. Removing the specific age limit would be proportionate and would reduce unnecessary complexity for retailers and consumers.

This should not remove the need for Christmas crackers placed on the Northern Ireland market to meet the relevant product safety, labelling and conformity requirements. Retailers and suppliers should still ensure that products are safe, correctly labelled and suitable for normal consumer use.

**5.** Are there any other specific F1 and P1 pyrotechnics that should have their regulatory requirements increased or decreased? Please state which products, what regulatory requirements you think they should have and give your reasons.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Products:** | Marine/Distress flares, smoke canisters |

**You can provide reasons in the space below.**

Ards and North Down Borough Council would be supportive of increased restrictions on the supply of pyrotechnic articles such P1 & T1 e.g. marine flares, smoke cannisters etc. to the general public as these articles regularly appear at sport grounds and other similar events where they create safety hazards to persons.

**6.** Do you agree the decibel level of fireworks consumers use should be lowered? Choose one of the following options:

| | |
|---|---|
| No, the maximum noise limit for fireworks should remain at 120 dB (A,imp) | |
| Yes, to 110 dB (A,imp) (reducing perceived loudness by approximately half) | |
| Yes, to 100 dB (A,imp) (reducing perceived loudness by approximately three-quarters) | |
| Yes, to 90 dB (A,imp) (reducing perceived loudness by approximately seven-eighths) | ✓ |
| Don’t know | |

**7.** What might be the positive impacts of reducing the maximum decibel level of fireworks available to the general public? Please explain your answer, providing evidence where possible.

**You can provide your answer and explanation in the space below.**

Reducing the maximum decibel level of fireworks available to the public in Northern Ireland could have significant positive impacts for residents, animals and local communities. Fireworks are already subject to tighter controls in Northern Ireland through the fireworks licensing system, but noise from lawful private use and illegal or informal use can still cause distress, particularly when fireworks are set off unexpectedly in residential areas. A lower maximum noise limit would reduce the intensity of sudden explosive bangs and should therefore reduce nuisance, fear and sleep disturbance for people living nearby.

A reduction to 110 or 100 dB is unlikely to have a material benefit which would outweigh the regulatory requirements to enforce this change. At 110 or 100 dB there is still a strong likelihood of human startle and disturbance where such fireworks are set-off in a residential environment and particularly when the ignition is unexpected and not part of a display. Given the sensitivity of animals to such sounds a reduction to 110 or 100 dB would not prevent adverse impacts. Therefore, we recommend that the limit is set to 90 dB so that any such change can have noticeable beneficial effect.

In Northern Ireland, this would complement the existing licensing regime by making permitted public-use fireworks less harmful to neighbours, vulnerable residents, livestock, pets and wildlife. The measure would be most effective if introduced alongside clear Department of Justice licensing guidance, retailer advice, public awareness campaigns and continued action against illegal supply.

While reducing the noise levels of fireworks placed on the market legally will have an impact on these licensed displays, in NI the majority of ASB and impacts on the public and pets occurs from the use of illegally sold and obtained fireworks, which would not be impacted by such a change.

Ards and North Down Borough Council has observed that the number of small private licensed displays has been reducing over the years, and most displays are larger licensed events run by professional operators. It is also noted that professional displays will remain ‘louder’.

**8.** What might be the negative impacts of reducing the maximum decibel level of fireworks available to the general public? Please explain your answer, providing evidence where possible.

**You can provide your answer and explanation in the space below.**

The main impact for lawful consumers is likely to be reduced choice. In Northern Ireland, consumers already need a valid fireworks licence to buy, possess and use most fireworks, and only the fireworks listed on the licence may be purchased. A lower noise limit could therefore, mean that some products currently available through registered retailers are no longer available for licensed private use, or that licence applications and retailer advice need to be updated.

There may also be consequences for registered fireworks retailers, importers and suppliers operating in Northern Ireland. Businesses may need time to identify affected stock, amend product ranges, obtain alternative lower-noise products, update staff training and ensure that products supplied to licence holders meet the revised requirements. Seasonal businesses may be particularly affected if changes are introduced close to Halloween or New Year, when stock is often ordered well in advance. If lower-noise products are more expensive or less readily available, costs could be passed on to consumers or reduce the viability of some lawful sales.

Manufacturers and suppliers may need to produce, source or relabel fireworks specifically for the UK market, including Northern Ireland. This could affect supply chains for retailers that currently obtain products through EU-linked routes and may create transitional issues where old stock remains in circulation. There is also a risk that products not intended for the revised UK market could continue to be supplied, whether through existing stock, online sales or informal routes. Clear transitional arrangements, supplier guidance and adequate lead-in time would therefore be needed to minimise additional burdens on port authorities, Trading Standards, local authorities and other enforcement bodies.

| |
|---|
| A further risk is displacement into illegal supply. If consumers perceive the lawful licensed market as too limited, some may seek louder fireworks through unregistered sellers, online routes or cross-border informal supply. This could undermine the intended safety benefits because illegal products may be untested, incorrectly labelled, poorly stored or unsuitable for domestic use.<br>Professional display operators may experience increased demand if louder products are limited to professional use, which could be positive for organised displays but may also create capacity, cost and scheduling pressures around peak periods. Community groups, sports clubs and local event organisers in Northern Ireland may face higher costs if they move from licensed private use to professional displays. This could reduce the number of lawful community celebrations or encourage smaller informal displays if professional provision is not affordable or available.<br>There may also be enforcement implications. Local authorities, Trading Standards, the Department of Justice, PSNI and other agencies may need clear technical guidance on how the revised decibel limit will be checked, recorded and enforced. Short-lived firework noise can be difficult to investigate after the event, and evidence from animal welfare organisations has noted that the nature of firework noise can make it difficult to locate the source. If the rule is not simple to understand and enforce, there may be inconsistent advice to businesses and the public.<br>It should be noted that it is not practically possible to measure the noise from a firework in 'field conditions' and that all enforcement of a maximum noise level will have to be achieved through a retail offence checked by compliance statements and, if necessary, testing. Testing will be required to be undertaken in controlled conditions and will incur costs to the enforcing authority.<br>Finally, the benefits for animals and vulnerable people may be reduced if the public assumes that "low noise" means "silent" or harmless. Animal welfare bodies note that there are no truly silent fireworks and that bright flashes and unpredictability can still cause distress. Therefore, any reduction in decibel limits should be accompanied by clear public messaging, retailer advice, continued promotion of organised displays and alternatives where appropriate, and strong action against illegal supply. On balance, the negative impacts appear manageable if there is a suitable lead-in period, clear guidance and coordinated enforcement across Northern Ireland. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **9.** How much lead in time would businesses need to prepare for the changes proposed in this consultation and why? Please state a lead in time in months or years, and explain your answer, providing evidence where possible. | |
| Lead in time in months or years: | 12 months aligning with buying times for Halloween |
| **You can provide your explanation in the space below.** | |
| Businesses would need sufficient time to understand the final legal requirements, review product lines, update purchasing arrangements, train staff, amend sales procedures and ensure that only compliant products are supplied to licence holders.<br>A 12-month period is also necessary because fireworks are a seasonal product and the main retail period in Northern Ireland is the run-up to Halloween. Stock is likely to be ordered well in advance, and retailers may otherwise be left with products that can no longer be lawfully sold. A full year would allow businesses to run down existing lawful stock, source alternatives such | |

| | |
|---|---|
| as lower-noise fireworks, update supplier contracts and avoid introducing changes immediately before the busiest sales period.<br><br>A shorter lead-in time could increase the risk of non-compliance, wasted stock, inconsistent advice and displacement into illegal supply. A reasonable transition period would help reputable businesses adapt while allowing enforcement authorities, Trading Standards, PSNI and local councils to prepare consistent public messaging and enforcement activity. |
| **10.** What other things should we consider when setting a lead in time? You may wish to reference the impact on people who buy fireworks, enforcement bodies, police or the general public. |
| **You can provide your answer in the space below.** |
| As stated previously in Northern Ireland the public can only buy category F2 and F3 fireworks if they hold a licence for a display, and from a registered retailer. Enforcement regarding illegal sales falls to the PSNI and the practicalities of enforcement of the proposed changes must be considered, along with the impact on the resources of enforcement bodies. |

**Please email this response form to:**
**fireworksconsultation@businessandtrade.gov.uk**

Unclassified

Ards and North Down Borough Council

**ITEM 9**

## Ards and North Down Borough Council

| | |
|---|---|
| Report Classification | Unclassified |
| Exemption Reason | Not Applicable<br>If multiple: |
| Meeting | Active and Healthy Communities Committee |
| Date of Meeting | 09 September 2025 |
| Responsible Director | Director of Active and Healthy Communities |
| Responsible Head of Service | Head of Environmental Health and Regulatory Services |
| Report title | Consultation on Restricting Promotions of Products High in Fat, Sugar and Salt |
| Attachments | Appendix 1- Draft Consultation Response |
| File Reference (if applicable) | N/A |
| Legislation | Other<br>The Food Safety (NI) Order 1991 |
| Resource Implications | Budget and Staffing<br>Narrative: If enforcement responsibility falls to ANDBC additional staffing may be required due to the amount of businesses that may fall into scope, the complexity of determining this and other key factors and the progamme of education and enforcement that will come from this. |
| Screening Requirements | *The Council will commit to consider the implication of all reports under the categories of Section 75, Rural Needs, Data Protection, Climate and Sustainability:*<br>Screening of report not required |
| Link to Corporate Plan Priority and Outcome | Priority 3: Social<br>6. Opportunities for people to be active and healthy<br>If multiple: |

**Background**

The Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland and the Department of Health have launched a public consultation on proposals to introduce restrictions on the promotion of products high in fat, sugar and salt (HFSS). The consultation seeks views on proposals to restrict volume price promotions, such as multibuy offers, and the placement of HFSS products in prominent locations in stores and online to support healthier shopping environments and shift the balance of promotions to increase the affordability of healthier options.

Similar restrictions are already in place in England and Wales, and Scotland will be introducing similar restrictions in October 2026

**Key Issues**

Obesity remains a significant public health challenge in Northern Ireland and is associated with an increased risk of a range of serious health conditions.

Evidence shows that:

- Volume-based price promotions, such as multibuys, significantly increase purchasing and overconsumption of HFSS food, particularly among children.(1)
- Placement of HFSS products in prominent locations increases impulse purchasing and contributes to unhealthy dietary patterns.(2)
- The consumption of HFSS food and drink is a key driver of overweight and obesity, which in turn increases the risk of diet related noncommunicable diseases including type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and some cancers. (2)

The purpose of this consultation is therefore to seek views on proposed measures to:

- Reduce people’s exposure to HFSS promotions and impulse purchase drivers.
- Support healthier shopping environments and shift the balance of promotions to increase the affordability of healthier options.
- Ensure Northern Ireland maintains policy coherence with the rest of the UK food market to minimise complexity for industry.

While the draft response is supportive of the proposed measures, should enforcement responsibility fall to local councils, there may be significant resource implications for the Council. These would include the need to identify which businesses and products fall within scope, assess complex compliance requirements, and gather sufficient evidence to support any enforcement action. There would also be an extensive programme of education required prior to implementation.

The draft response also outlines that councils may not be the most appropriate body to enforce this due to our remit for food law enforcement being primarily focused on food safety and enforcement to be prioritised to high risk areas such as hygiene and allergens instead it is suggested that Trading Standards may be better places as they already have responsibilities for marketing, pricing and advertising standards.

[1]Public Health England (2015) Sugar Reduction: The evidence for action - Annexe 4: An analysis of the role of price promotions on the household purchases of food and drinks high in sugar https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7f9a6040f0b623026907cd/Annexe_4._Analysis_of_price__promotions.pdf

[2]Department of Health and Social Care (2020; updated 2025). Impact assessment: Restricting checkout, end of aisle and store entrance sales of HFSS products. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1008423 /impact-assessment-restricting-checkout-end-of-aisle-and-store-entrance-sales-of-HFSS.pdf

**Next Steps**
The consultation is available at https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-restricting-promotions-products-high-fat-sugar-and-salt-hfss

A draft consultation response is attached as Appendix1 for your consideration.

## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council **Approves** the draft consultation response.

# Appendix 1

## Consultation on restricting promotions of products high in fat, sugar and salt

**Launch date:** **29 July 2026**
**Respond by:** **21 October 2026**

**This document will be of most interest to:**

- Large retailers, supermarkets, convenience stores and non-grocery retailers that also sell food (DIY shops, clothing stores and pharmacies).
- Online retailers selling food and drink products.
- Out-of-home food businesses.
- Trade associations representing food retail, food manufacturing and the out-of-home sector.
- Public health organisations, NGOs and consumer advocacy bodies.
- Local councils.
- The general public.

## Purpose of the consultation

In Northern Ireland, the Food Standards Agency and the Department of Health are considering the introduction of legislative restrictions on the promotion and placement of food and drink high in fat, sugar and salt (HFSS). Regulations to restrict the promotion of HFSS products by location and volume price have already been implemented in England and Wales, and Scotland are introducing restrictions in October 2026.

Evidence shows that:

- Volume-based price promotions, such as multibuys, significantly increase purchasing and overconsumption of HFSS food, particularly among children[1].

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[1] Public Health England (2015) Sugar Reduction: The evidence for action - Annexe 4: An analysis of the role of price promotions on the household purchases of food and drinks high in sugar https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7f9a6040f0b623026907cd/Annexe_4._Analysis_of_price_promotions.pdf

- Placement of HFSS products in prominent locations increases impulse purchasing and contributes to unhealthy dietary patterns[2].

- The consumption of HFSS food and drink is a key driver of overweight and obesity, which in turn increases the risk of diet related noncommunicable diseases including type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and some cancers[2].

The purpose of this consultation is therefore to seek views on proposed measures to:

- Reduce people's exposure to HFSS promotions and impulse purchase drivers.

- Support healthier shopping environments and shift the balance of promotions to increase the affordability of healthier options.

- Ensure Northern Ireland maintains policy coherence with the rest of the UK food market to minimise complexity for industry.

**Please note that it is advised that respondents should first read the consultation document before attempting to respond to these consultation questions.**

## How to respond

The consultation will be open for 12 weeks from Wednesday 29 July 2026. Responses should be received by 23:59 on Wednesday 21 October 2026.

Responses can be submitted via the online questionnaire available at https://consultations2.nidirect.gov.uk/doh-1/consultation-on-restricting-promotions-of-hfss

Alternatively, please send your response via the form below to Executive.Support@food.gov.uk

Or write to:

Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland

10A-C Clarendon Road

Belfast BT1 3BG

[2] Department of Health and Social Care (2020; updated 2025). Impact assessment: Restricting checkout, end of aisle and store entrance sales of HFSS products. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1008423/impact-assessment-restricting-checkout-end-of-aisle-and-store-entrance-sales-of-HFSS.pdf

**Questions asked in this consultation:**

**1.** Are you responding on behalf of an organisation?

Yes ☒

No ☐

**2.** If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please state what type of organisation it is.

Retailer ☐

Out of home food business ☐

Trade association ☐

Public health organisation ☐

NGO ☐

Consumer advocacy body ☐

Local council ☒

Community and voluntary organisation ☐

Not applicable ☐

Other (please add your organisation below) ☐

**3.** Do you agree that restrictions on the promotion and placement of products high in fat, sugar and salt (HFSS) should be introduced in Northern Ireland?

Yes ☒

No ☐

Not Sure ☐

**4.** Do you agree that a legislative approach should be considered for Northern Ireland similar to England, Scotland and Wales?

Yes ☒

No ☐

Not Sure ☐

**5.** Are there any considerations specific to Northern Ireland that should be taken into account regarding the proposals in this consultation?

***Northern Ireland (NI) Councils are structured differently from those in England. English authorities were able to use Trading Standards officers employed by Local Authorities, which means that Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) do not always have the enforcement burden, depending on the type of Authority (County Council/District Council/Unitary Authority). Here in NI, Trading Standards are a separate entity from Local Councils, employed by the Department for the Economy. Consideration should be given to the NI Trading Standards Service being designated to enforce these Regulations when made. Trading Standards have responsibilities for marketing, pricing and advertising standards, which this area of work may be more suited to. It is the opinion of Ards and North Down Borough Council that NI Councils would not be able to effectively enforce these regulations without significant financial support and appropriate guidance. NI Council Environmental Health Officers have enforcement powers in relation to food safety and food standards matters, of which this is neither. In addition, NI Council EHOs are already facing resource and workforce constraints. Officers must abide by an enforcement code that is based on proportionality of risk which prioritises resources on regulations addressing the highest health and safety risks, such as, food safety and allergens. In the absence of additional allocated Government funding for enforcement of the new Regulations, it is inevitable that regulations addressing high risk would take precedence over HFSS regulations because they involve immediate and clear threats to public health. This could mean that enforcement of HFSS regulations by NI EHOs would be primarily advisory based. Environmental Health Departments in NI have recently been subject to a number of changes in relation to Food Hygiene and Standards procedures, which have taken up much resource and are still being embedded e.g. the Food Standards Delivery Model and changes to the Food Law Code of Practice. Adding an additional enforcement remit to these Environmental Health teams without***

***additional resources, will place further stress and pressures to existing high workloads.***

***Northern Ireland is unique in its retail landscape. Most small retail businesses here operate under a franchise arrangement or trade under a symbol group banner. Therefore, most small local retailers e.g. Spar, Costcutter, Nisa etc. will fall within the scope of the volume restrictions, despite them not meeting the staff and area exemptions individually. Ards and North Down Borough Council believes that smaller retailers and franchise stores are likely to be less familiar with the regulations and may face greater challenges in achieving compliance. Unlike larger retail chains, they may have limited resources available to support implementation. FSA research indicated that for Ards and North Down Borough Council, 60.6% of grocery premises will be in scope for volume restrictions, to say nothing of placement and free refill restrictions. This has the potential to create a large body of work for NI Council EHO's to educate and enforce in these premises. For these reasons, Ards and North Down Borough Council would welcome further refinement of this aspect of businesses in scope.***

**6.** Do you agree with the proposed product categories that would be subject to HFSS promotion restrictions in Northern Ireland?

Yes ☒

No ☐

Not Sure ☐

**7.** Do you agree that non-prepacked products should remain out of scope (consistent with England, Wales and Scotland), except for soft drink refills?

Yes ☒

No ☐

Not Sure ☐

**8.** Which approach should be used to determine which products are in scope of restrictions? Option 1) Use the existing 2004/05 Nutrient Profiling Model; Option 2) Use the updated 2018 Nutrient Profiling Model; or Option 3) Use the 2004/05 Nutrient Profiling Model and review at a later date.

Option 1 ☐

Option 2 ☒

Option 3 ☐

**9.** Do you have evidence on the challenges or operational issues businesses may face if the 2018 Nutrient Profiling Model is applied in Northern Ireland, including impacts on product classification?

***As stated above in Q5, most small local retailers here in NI e.g. Spar, Costcutter, Nisa etc. will fall within the scope of the volume restrictions, despite them not meeting the staff and area exemptions individually. It is the belief of Ards and North Down Borough Council that smaller retailers and franchisee stores will be less familiar with the regulations and more likely to encounter challenges in complying. Unlike larger retail chains, they have limited resources available to support implementation.***

***Learning from the implementation of equivalent regs in England, ("It was a force for good but…": a mixed-methods evaluation of the implementation of the high in fat, sugar and salt (HFSS) legislation. (Elsevier Journal on Food Policy)) has shown that retailers described difficulties in accurately classifying products as HFSS or non-HFSS due to the complexity of the Nutrient Profiling Model (NPM). Reliance was made on suppliers to provide the necessary information. Retailers also reported that significant effort was required to train staff across all areas of the business. This report stated that there is a critical need for an open, regularly updated food composition database to support consistent implementation, compliance, enforcement and timely evaluation of the legislation.***

***The BMC research article "If government is saying the regulations are important, they should be putting in funding to back it up." An in‑depth analysis of local authority officers' perspectives of the Food (Promotion and Placement) (England) Regulations 2021' found that English Local Authorities said the new regulations are more complex because they require officers to understand how to calculate NPM scores to determine compliance. Officers found that determining compliance was a time-consuming and arduous task because each individual store needed assessment at three levels: in-scope business (depending on store size and number of employees), in-scope locations within stores, and in-scope products at those locations. It will therefore be a challenge to effectively and consistently advise and educate businesses, particularly smaller businesses on such complex issues.***

***Ards and North Down Borough Council believes that in light of the findings of the English evaluations above, the Nutrient Profile Model will pose difficulties due to its complexity, will be time consuming for officers to***

***correctly classify in-scope and out-of-scope products, and will require a dedicated resource to deliver.***

**10.** Do you agree with the proposal to restrict multibuy and volume promotions (e.g., “3 for 2”, “BOGOF”, extra-free offers) for HFSS products in Northern Ireland?

Yes ☒

No ☐

Not Sure ☐

**11.** Do you agree with restricting the placement of HFSS products in the following in-store locations: a) store entrances; b) covered external areas; c) checkouts and queuing areas; and d) aisle ends?

Yes ☒

No ☐

Not Sure ☐

**12.** Do you agree that equivalent restrictions (both volume price and location) should apply to online retail environments (e.g., homepages, pop-ups, checkout pages)?

Yes ☒

No ☐

Not Sure ☐

**13.** Do you agree with prohibiting free refills of sugar sweetened soft drinks in Northern Ireland?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Not Sure ☒

**14.** Do you agree that the volume price and location restrictions should apply only to retailers with 50 or more employees?

Yes ☒

No ☐

Not Sure ☐

**15.** Do you agree that location restrictions should apply only to stores with a relevant floor area of 2,000 square feet or more?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Not Sure ☒

**16.** Should specialist retailers that sell one type of food product e.g. chocolatiers or confectioners, be exempt from location restrictions?

Yes ☒

No ☐

Not Sure ☐

**17.** Do you agree with the proposed exemptions (e.g., micro and small businesses, care homes, educational settings)?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Not Sure ☒

**18.** Do you have evidence on how the proposals may impact small and micro-businesses that may be in scope due to an association with a franchise or symbol group?

***As stated above in Q5 and Q9, most small local retailers here in NI e.g. Spar, Costcutter, Nisa etc. will fall within the scope of the volume restrictions, despite them not meeting the staff and area exemptions individually. It is the belief of Ards and North Down Borough Council that smaller retailers and franchisee stores will be less familiar with the regulations and more likely to encounter challenges in complying. Unlike larger retail chains they have limited resources to support implementation.***

***As regulators within an enforcing authority, Ards and North Down Borough Council is not in a position to comment in detail on the costs, savings or administrative burdens that may arise for businesses. However, there may be perceived financial impacts on small businesses that are independently owned but under a symbol franchise. These perceived impacts may come***

***from costs in training staff, potential lost revenue from product offers, and possibly financial impacts from enforcement sanctions due to challenges in achieving compliance.***

**19.** Do you agree that local councils should be the enforcing authorities for HFSS promotion restrictions in Northern Ireland?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Not Sure ☒

**20.** Which enforcement approach do you consider most appropriate for Northern Ireland, and why? Option 1) Enforcement through improvement notices and criminal prosecution only; or Option 2) Explore the introduction of monetary sanctions as an alternative to criminal prosecution (while progressing the policy initially with the approach outlined in Option 1).

Option 1 ☒

Option 2 ☐

Why did you choose option1 or 2

***Ards and North Down Borough Council regard that neither option is ideal. Option 1 will require amendments to existing food law as improvement notices can only be served for food hygiene or food standards matters, of which this is neither. In addition, only authorised and competent food officers can issue improvement notices. This will put pressure on Food Safety teams within Environmental Health Departments as no other officers or technical support staff would have the necessary competencies in place. The effective enforcement of the Regulations would necessitate the provision of additional funding and resources. In the event of non-compliance, Option 1 may necessitate criminal proceedings at cost and resource for Councils and a criminal conviction for businesses, but allows for an incremental approach to enforcement with advisory actions available in the first instance.***

***Option 2 may be initially perceived to be less onerous and be a source of revenue generation. However, Ards and North Down Borough Council foresees difficulties in issuing on-the-spot monetary sanctions due to the complexity of the legislation, including the assessment of in-scope products and floor space calculations, which could create uncertainty for officers, increase the risk of inconsistent enforcement and may put officers***

***in a difficult enforcement position. This option would also require the introduction of new legislation.***

**21.** If local councils were to enforce the policy, what resources do you think would be required to support enforcement?

***As described in earlier questions, NI Councils are facing resource and workforce constraints and in line with their enforcement policy / Food Law Code of Practice already have to prioritise those regulations addressing the highest risk to health. Enhancing enforcement activity will require additional funding to provide the necessary staff capacity for busy Environmental Health Departments to deal with this. If option 1 for enforcement is selected, improvement notices under existing food law regulations are required to be served by authorised officers. Qualification requirements mean that this must be an EHO rather than a technical or support officer. Provision of central training would also be required to increase officer confidence in interpreting the regulations and guidance in assessing business non-compliance. Setting up a central Nutrient Profile Model score calculator that is accessible to both businesses and officers, aiming to promote consistency, prevent confusion, and offer technical guidance on products falling within the relevant categories would be required. Ards and North Down Borough Council feels that the Nutrient Profile Model is complex and would take significant officer time and training to interpret and advise businesses proficiently.***

***Consideration could be given to adopting a model similar to that of Tobacco Control enforcement within Northern Ireland where dedicated, ringfenced, funded officers are responsible for enforcing requirements relating to the display and placement of tobacco products within retail premises. This approach enables officers develop expert knowledge on legislation, enabling a consistent approach and reduces the burden within Environmental Health Departments.***

**22.** Do you have evidence on any challenges that may affect the ability to enforce the policy in a proportionate and consistent way in Northern Ireland?

***As outlined in Q5, Ards and North Down Borough Council believes that NI Council EHOs are already facing resource and workforce constraints. Officers must abide by an enforcement policy / Food Law Code of Practice that is based on proportionality of risk and prioritises resources on regulations addressing the highest risk to health, such as, food safety and allergens. In the absence of additional allocated Government funding for enforcement of the new Regulations, it is inevitable that regulations addressing a risk to health would take precedence over HFSS regulations.***

***This could mean that enforcement of HFSS regulations by NI EHOs would be primarily advisory based.***

***Ards and North Down Borough Council believes that NI Councils will require appropriate funding and comprehensive training if these regulations are to be introduced and enforced in Environmental Health Departments. For consistent enforcement, a central Nutrient Profile Model score calculator that is accessible to both businesses and officers, aiming to promote consistency, prevent confusion, and offer technical guidance on products falling within the relevant categories would be required as outlined above in Q21. Ards and North Down Borough Council also believes that training referred to must enable officer confidence when interpreting regulations, guidance and assessing business non-compliance.***

***Ards and North Down Borough Council welcome centralised dedicated Government support e.g. from the Food Standards Agency to assist with consistency of approach. However, Ards and North Down Borough Council are concerned that such oversight may incur additional burdens to local authorities in terms of audits or returns to be submitted, when they are already subject to scrutiny on official food controls and any addition to this would be unwelcome.***

***Ards and North Down Borough Council feels that the proposed rules are complex and do not align with existing regulatory frameworks, such as those governing Sunday trading. In NI, Sunday trading legislation applies to stores with a floor area exceeding 3,014 square feet, whereas the proposed Regulations would introduce a lower threshold of 2,000 square feet. This difference will require officers to adopt new rules that are not consistent with existing enforcement practices and officers would need to identify ways to obtain and interpret data on store dimensions, layouts, and employee counts. The BMC research article analysing local authority officers' perspectives of the Food (Promotion and Placement) (England) Regulations 2021 shows that English Authorities have experienced similar issues.***

**23.** Do you agree that a lead in period of 12 months is appropriate to allow preparation for implementation of the policy?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Not Sure ☒

**24.** Are there specific operational barriers that should be considered when determining implementation timelines?

***Ards and North Down Borough Council feels that, if enforcement falls to NI Councils, a 12-month implementation timeline may be insufficient. This is because, depending on the enforcement model adopted, amendments to legislation will be required. If funding is provided for extra resource, time for staff recruitment will be needed. Time will also be required for the development and publication of good quality technical guidance for both businesses and enforcement officers. This will be especially important in relation to the Nutrient Profile model which is complex. As described in Q9 and Q22, a centralised NPM score calculator, or database would be desirable and as such would take time to develop. Significant time spend will be required for officer training to ensure consistency of approach and understanding of the rules, so that appropriate advice can be delivered to affected businesses. As outlined in Q5, NI has many small retailers which will fall under the rules due to being part of a franchise arrangement or trade under a symbol group banner. Therefore, more time will be needed ahead of implementation to support these smaller businesses.***

**25.** Do you have evidence on the potential health impacts of the proposed restrictions in Northern Ireland?

***Ards and North Down Borough Council are aware of the health impacts of overweight and obesity. Council is cognisant of the NI Department of Health Obesity strategic framework (Healthy Futures) and the Department of Health-Health Survey Northern Ireland: First results 2024/25.***

***Ards and North Down Borough Council is also aware of the findings of the Elsevier Journal on Food Policy 2026 evaluation of the implementation of the high in fat, sugar and salt (HFSS) legislation in England. This evaluation found that the HFSS legislation marks a substantial shift in the UK government's approach to addressing obesity by enforcing changes to the retail food environment. However, it highlighted challenges in implementation and enforcement, namely the need for clearer, timely guidance, adequate support and access to data, and more co-production to ensure the legislation is effective and contextually appropriate. One of its recommendations was to ensure healthier food is more accessible and affordable. Future legislation should go further, by not only restricting placement and promotion of less healthy foods but by increasing the affordability and accessibility of healthier foods through incentivisation and promotion in prominent locations. This is particularly important to support healthier purchases among lower-income households.***

**26.** Do you have evidence on how the proposed restrictions may impact businesses, including compliance costs, operational and supply chain impacts, product reformulation, and competitiveness between larger and smaller retailers?

***As outlined in Q5 and Q18, Ards and North Down Borough Council believes that many small retailers in NI will be affected by this Legislation, despite them not meeting the staffing or floor space scope. As regulators within an enforcing authority, Ards and North Down Borough Council is not in a position to comment in detail on the costs, savings or administrative burdens that may arise for businesses. However, there may be perceived financial impacts on small businesses that are independently owned but under a symbol franchise. These perceived impacts may come from costs in training staff, potential lost revenue from product offers, and possibly financial impacts from enforcement sanctions due to challenges in achieving compliance.***

***Ards and North Down Borough Council is aware of the findings of research published by the Elsevier Journal on Food Policy, ("It was a force for good but…": a mixed-methods evaluation of the implementation of the high in fat, sugar and salt (HFSS) legislation.) This research highlighted businesses impacts, including excessive staff training costs, costs due to changes to business layouts in order to comply e.g. whole store refits and moving products to different locations" (i.e., off aisle ends). This research also detailed how retailers aimed to use novel approaches to promote in-scope HFSS products without violating the legislation, including using "digital advertising" amongst other things. This was perceived to not be in the spirit of the Legislation and created some competitive practices between retailers. Product reformulations were also highlighted as part of this research which generated significant costs to manufacturers in order to bring their products out of scope.***

**27.** Do you have evidence on the potential impacts of the proposed restrictions on consumers, including impacts on household food budgets, consumer perceptions of fairness and choice, the extent to which promotions influence purchasing behaviour, and whether the restrictions may support healthier default choices for families?

***Ards and North Down Borough Council have no specific evidence in relation to this area. However, we believe there will be a perceived impact on customer food budgets in that less discount offers may be available in retail outlets. The fact that the legislation covers such a wide range of foods may exasperate this and Ards and North Down Borough Council would have concerns that the cost of the consumer 'shopping basket' may increase.***

***XXXDC is of the opinion that increasing the affordability and accessibility of healthier foods through incentivisation and promotion of these in prominent locations would be more desirable. This is particularly important to support healthier purchases among lower-income households.***

**28.** What impacts, if any, do you think the proposed policy would have on people on the basis of their: age, sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, disability, gender reassignment and marriage/civil partnership?

No comment

**29.** Are there population groups or communities who may be disproportionately affected, positively or negatively, by the proposals. Please list below

No Comment

**30.** Do you have any additional comments or evidence not covered elsewhere in this consultation?

***Ards and North Down Borough Council responses on specific questions where there is no space for comments are outlined below.***

***Q3- Restriction of free refills of sugar-sweetened soft drinks. Ards and North Down Borough Council believes that this is not common practice in NI, therefore this aspect may have minimal impact.***

***Q12- Ards and North Down Borough Council query how enforcement bodies would effectively monitor / police this as this may pose difficulties. Much officer time and resource would be required to monitor online retail environments. What is the expectation for NI Councils in this respect?***

***Q14- Ards and North Down Borough Council refer to answers in questions 5, 9 and 18 in as far as this exemption will not be applicable to many small businesses in Northern Ireland that operate under a franchise or symbol group banner. Ards and North Down Borough Council considers this to be detrimental to these businesses and will significantly increase resources required for NI Councils to enforce the Legislation.***

***Q15- Ards and North Down Borough Council would comment as Q14 above.***

***Q17- Ards and North Down Borough Council considers that thought should be given to the inclusion of educational facilities. Some secondary level schools may have till end sales of in scope products and have a large customer base of children.***

***Q19- Ards and North Down Borough Council refers to the answer given in question 5. Whilst NI Councils support the principle behind this legislation and appreciate the need for action, Ards and North Down Borough Council would not be able to effectively enforce these regulations without significant financial support and appropriate guidance. Consideration should be given to other enforcement bodies where these Regulations may be a better fit to their current remits.***

***Ards and North Down Borough Council also have the following questions/comments which we do not feel have been explained in the document:***

- ***50 or more employees- Is this people or FTE positions? Ie. will part-time or casual staff count?***
- ***Other retailers that sell food or drink are included in scope e.g. DIY Stores, pharmacies, clothing stores and garden centres. NI Council EHO's are generally not routinely present in these types of establishments to perform official food controls. This is because they are very low risk in terms of food safety and the NI Food Law Code of Practice allows alternative enforcement strategies for these types of businesses. Having to visit to enforce these Regulations in these types of businesses will therefore pose an additional burden on Environmental Health Departments.***
- ***Section 4 of the consultation document lists impacts for health, business and the consumer. Impacts on the proposed enforcement authorities are not considered.***

## Thank you

We thank all respondents for their engagement with this consultation and for providing their views and evidence.

Ards and North Down Borough Council

ITEM 10

## Ards and North Down Borough Council

| | |
|---|---|
| Report Classification | Unclassified |
| Exemption Reason | Not Applicable |
| | If multiple: |
| Meeting | Active and Healthy Communities Committee |
| Date of Meeting | 09 September 2026 |
| Responsible Director | Director of Active and Healthy Communities |
| Responsible Head of Service | Head of Leisure |
| Report title | Portaferry Sports Hall Floor Update |
| Attachments | Appendix 1 - Ground Penetrating Radar survey Portaferry Sports Centre |
| File Reference (if applicable) | CW 74 |
| Legislation | Other<br>Recreation and Youth Services Order (1986) |
| Resource Implications | None<br>Narrative: |
| Screening Requirements | *The Council will commit to consider the implication of all reports under the categories of Section 75, Rural Needs, Data Protection, Climate and Sustainability:*<br><br>Screening of report not required |
| Link to Corporate Plan Priority and Outcome | Priority 3: Social<br>6. Opportunities for people to be active and healthy<br>If multiple: |

**Background**
Members may recall from the previous Portaferry Sports Centre (PSC) update on the 15th April 2026 to this Committee which explained that the Department of Education (DE) had provided written confirmation that they would provide budget for the intrusive investigations on the PSC Sports Hall floor issue.

**Sports Hall floor update**
Subsequently, Leisure and Estates officers in collaboration with the school arranged a Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) survey to be completed on 1st July 2026. The purpose of the survey was to detect and map any potential voiding under the floor slab.

The survey reported that there were no signs of any structural issues or subsidence beneath the floor slab and the GPR data was consistent throughout the survey. This is positive news and alleviates the previous concern that structural remedial works were required. Currently, two potential options are being considered as next steps;

1. Remove the sports hall floor and inspect screed integrity, provide renovating self-levelling screed over the existing screed and provide new sports hall floor.

2. Remove the sports hall floor and screed, provide new screed and sports hall floor.

Whilst Option 2 is likely to require a longer period of closure, it is understood that the longevity of this type of repair is likely to be more robust than option 1.

To complement the information gleaned from the GPR survey and to ensure an informed decision making process is achieved regarding Option 1 or 2, a small intrusive opening of the surface of the floor to determine the exact composition of the layers of the floor was completed on the 14th August 2026. At the time of writing this report officers await the results of this process and will provide a further update when this information is available.

The GPR survey is included in this report as Appendix 1 for reference.

**Key Issues**
Whilst progress is now underway towards a resolution to the floor issue it is acknowledged that the disruption to PSC users from Leisure's perspective is still relevant. The other 2 courts are still being used to provide fitness classes and other activities in the hall, and the school holidays have mitigated the impact for the school temporarily. It is noted that there will be a period of complete closure of the Sports Hall to enable the repair works to be completed, (Option 1 or 2). Communications with PSC Leisure customers and the school will be actioned as soon as the information is available, officers will attempt to mitigate the impact as much as possible for their users.

**Next Steps**
Officers have been in contact with DE and provided the GPR survey for their information. The GPR survey, further process on the 14th August, and any subsequent recommendation and estimated costs by the contractors will be

communicated with DE as soon as possible to enable them to complete their business case required to proceed with the next steps.

**Management Agreement update**

Members may recall that officers from Leisure in collaboration with other Council officers have been working towards updating the Management Agreement between the 'Trustee of St Columba's College and Ards and North Down Borough Council in respect of Dual Use of the sports facilities located at St. Columba's College, Portaferry', (PSC).

In July 2026 officers received a Trustee approved version of the agreement by the Diocese of Down and Connor.

**Next steps**

Officers are now reviewing this version of the agreement to ensure alignment with the operational and strategic use of PSC, in addition to ensuring clarity on points such as liability and responsibility for maintenance issues and costs given the recent challenges on this issue. Further Council discussions are required on the agreement before discussions with the Trustees take place. The Committee will be kept informed on this process. To ensure a mutually beneficial and robust agreement is achieved it is anticipated that the new agreement will be introduced effective from the 1st April 2027.

**Summary**

Ongoing communication within various Council departments and external partners are gaining momentum towards the resolution of the Sports Hall floor issue and Management Agreement at PSC.

## RECOMMENDATION

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

GEOTEC

geophysical surveying

# Ground Penetrating Radar survey

**2607s013**

**Portaferry Sports Centre**

**Client: McDowell Construction**
**7 Ballykeigle Road**
**Comber**
**County Down**
**BT23 5SD**

**David Todd** **July 2026**

**GEOTEC SURVEYS LIMITED**
**46 Tullymacnous Road, Killyleagh**
**County Down. BT30 9PW**
**Email: geotec@geotecsurveys.com**
**Website: www.geotecsurveys.com**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS:**

**REPORT SUMMARY: ........................................................................ 3**

**OBJECTIVES: ........................................................................ 4**

**OPERATIONS: ........................................................................ 4**

**RESULTS: ........................................................................ 6**

**REPORT SUMMARY:**

- **Site:** Portaferry Sports Centre
  3 Cloughey Road
  Portaferry
  County Down
  BT22 1ND

- **Client:** McDowell Construction
  7 Ballykeigle Road
  Comber
  County Down
  BT23 5SD

- **Geotec Job Number:** 2607s013

- **Purpose of Survey:**

  The purpose of the survey is to detect and map any potential voiding under the floor slab.

- **Geotec Personnel:**

  Data collection: David Todd.
  Data processing & Interpretation: David Todd

- **Survey Dates:**

  Wednesday 1st July 2026

- **Ground Type:**

  Reinforced concrete slab topped with insulation and rubberised paint.

- **Bedrock:**

  Hawick Group Sandstone overlain by Till. No nearby public borehole records available.

- **Geophysical Techniques Used:**

  Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR).

- **Equipment used:**

  GSSI SIR4000 with 350MHz hyper-stacking antenna.

- **Survey Area:**

  Approximately 500m²
  See accompanying AutoCAD drawing, (2607s013).

**OBJECTIVES:**

The purpose of the investigation is to detect and map any voids under the reinforced concrete floor.

**OPERATIONS:**

David Todd of Geotec Surveys attended site on the morning of Wednesday 1st July 2026 at Portaferry Sports Centre. The site was reviewed and point of work risk assessments carried out to establish a safe method of work.

Once site familiarisation had taken place, and a survey method determined, data collection began. Data was recorded orthogonally at 1m intervals throughout.

In addition to GPR data collection, a topographical survey of the area was carried out to record and display the changes in level across the unit. The GPR results have been overlain on the topographic data, and the results are displayed on the accompanying AutoCAD drawing (2607s013.dwg). The topographic data has been micro-contoured at 1cm levels but no significant change in level was present across the site.

The GPR data recorded was of good quality along the quay. A GSSI SIR4000 GPR System utilising a 350MHz hyper-stacking antenna was used.

The GPR and topographical survey systems were taken back to our office in Killyleagh, Co. Down for downloading and data processing.

**Ground Penetrating Radar:**

Ground Penetrating Radar, also known as GPR, is a non-invasive technique used to characterise the subsurface makeup and investigate underground features/structures such as foundations, voids, utilities and other sub-surface obstructions, including tanks etc.

The GPR consists of an antenna, containing a transmitter and a receiver, a survey wheel and a GSSI Sir System computer. As the antenna is pulled along a traverse, electromagnetic (EM) waves of very high frequencies are transmitted into the subsurface. These pulses are reflected off interfaces or objects which differ in electrical properties, namely the dielectric constant and the conductivity, to the surrounding material.

When the reflected signals are received by the antenna they are digitised and recorded. The time taken for the signals to return to the surface is used as a measure of distance to the target, i.e. the depth, with the resulting data displayed on a radargram. This radargram is created by plotting the "echoes" side-by-side to produce patterns and can be viewed immediately on the Sir System LCD screen.

The depth of penetration of the EM pulses is dependent on the frequency used and the nature of the material being surveyed. Since the dielectric constant of water is very high in comparison to most dry geological materials, the presence of clay rich soil, saline groundwater or a high porosity within the host material can limit the exploration depth by attenuating the radar signals.

Also, the signals will not penetrate materials of high electrical conductivity and therefore the GPR is most effective when working with low conductivity media such as sand and frozen ground.

The higher the frequency of the EM pulse the higher the resolution of the recorded data. However, higher frequencies are more rapidly absorbed; therefore, a greater depth penetration is achieved by the use of lower frequencies. Hence, a compromise is made before commencing the survey between depth penetration and the resolution required, to determine the necessary frequency and therefore the size of antenna to be used.

Although the GPR can measure the reflection time accurately, the velocity of the EM waves varies considerably through different media. Therefore, to determine the depth of the target it is necessary to know the dielectric constant of the survey area. Another way to determine the depth however is known as "ground-truthing" and relies on being able to view the radar image of an object of a known depth and comparing this to any other recorded targets.

Although the high resolution of the GPR makes it a powerful tool for near-surface geophysical exploration there are a number of constraints/limitations which must be noted.
As previously mentioned, the trade-off between depth penetration and achievable resolution, along with the water content of the host material may pose a limitation on the GPR survey.

Another factor to be considered is the area under investigation which needs to be relatively smooth and flat due to the small clearance between the surface and the antenna in order to obtain the best possible data in a continuous line. Furthermore, the presence of backfilling, cobbles or rebar adversely affects the resolution and penetration due to backscattering of the radar signals. Also, detectability of features depends on the electrical properties of the target feature and the host material being significantly different.

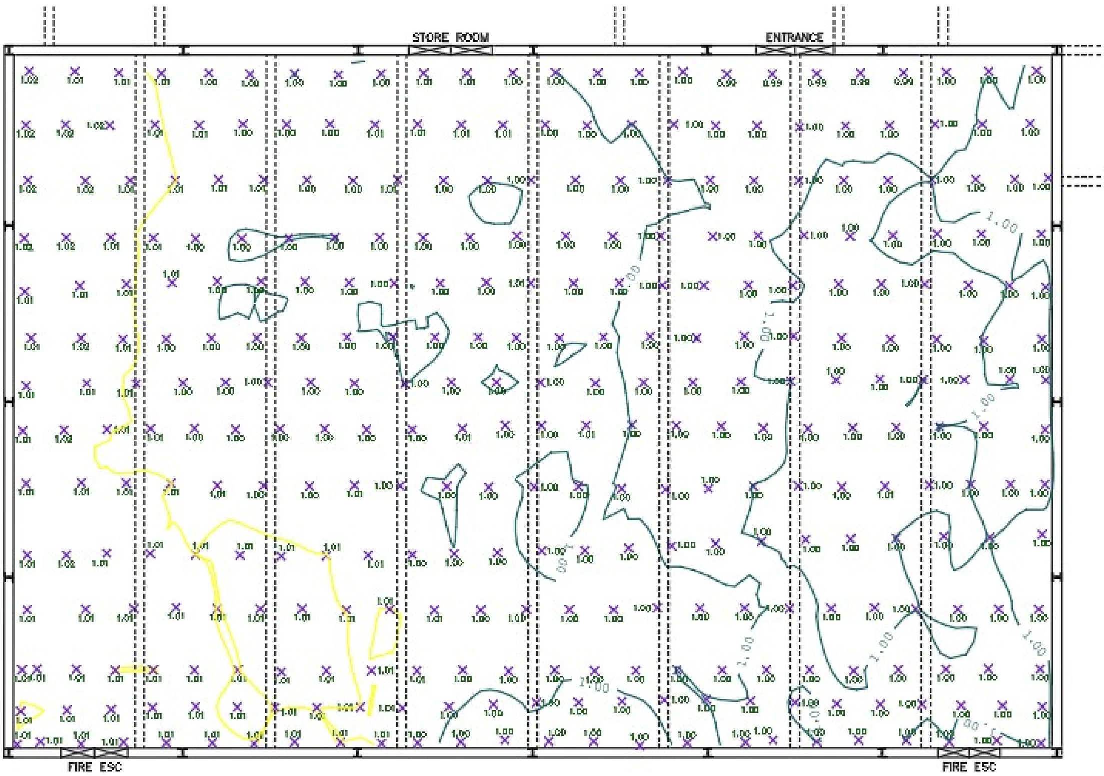
For this particular survey, a GSSI SIR-4000 system utilising a 350MHz antenna was chosen for the data acquisition due to its depth penetration of up to 3.0m. Each individual file will have a slightly different depth penetration due to specific conditions.

The survey wheel on the GPR system was also calibrated on site and the data was monitored in real time on the LCD screen to maintain highest possible data quality. GPR settings and gain sensitivity were fixed across all areas of the survey to enable data to be directly compared.

**RESULTS:**

Micro-contouring

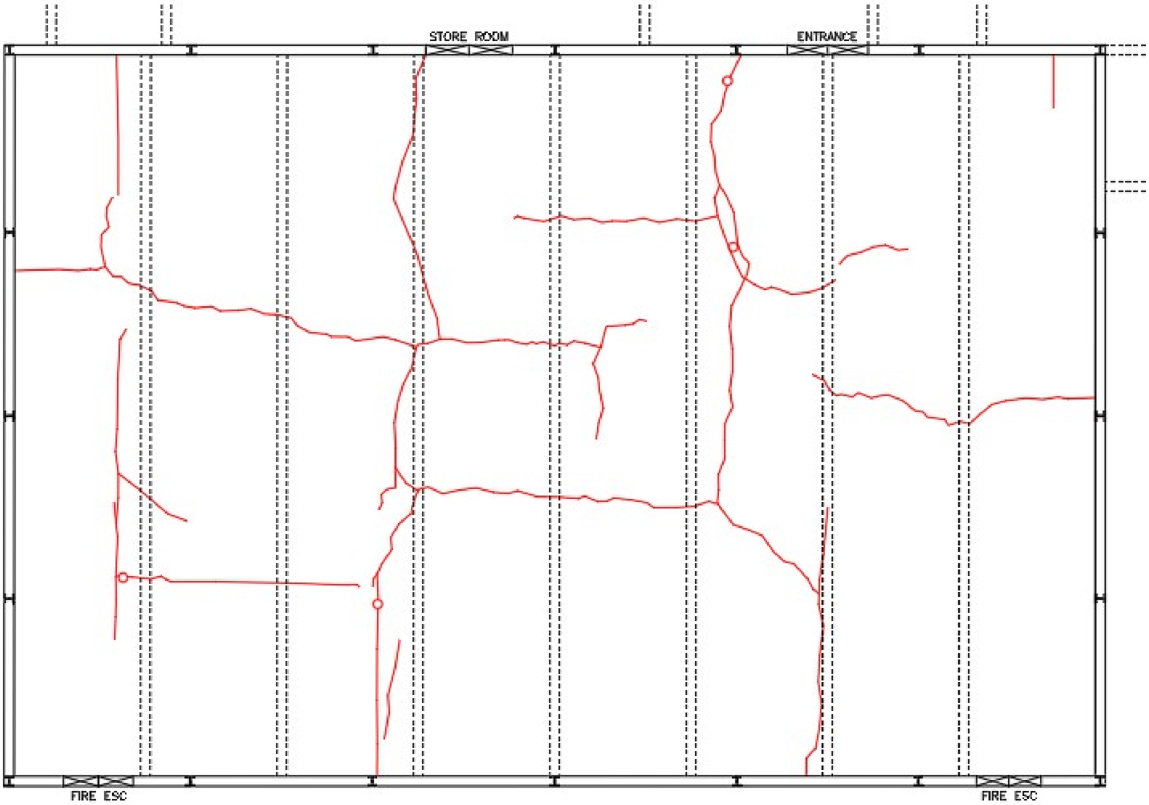
The level data was consistent throughout. The micro-contouring shows no pattern or areas of concern.




Extract from AutoCAD drawing showing levels and micro-contouring.

## Surface defects

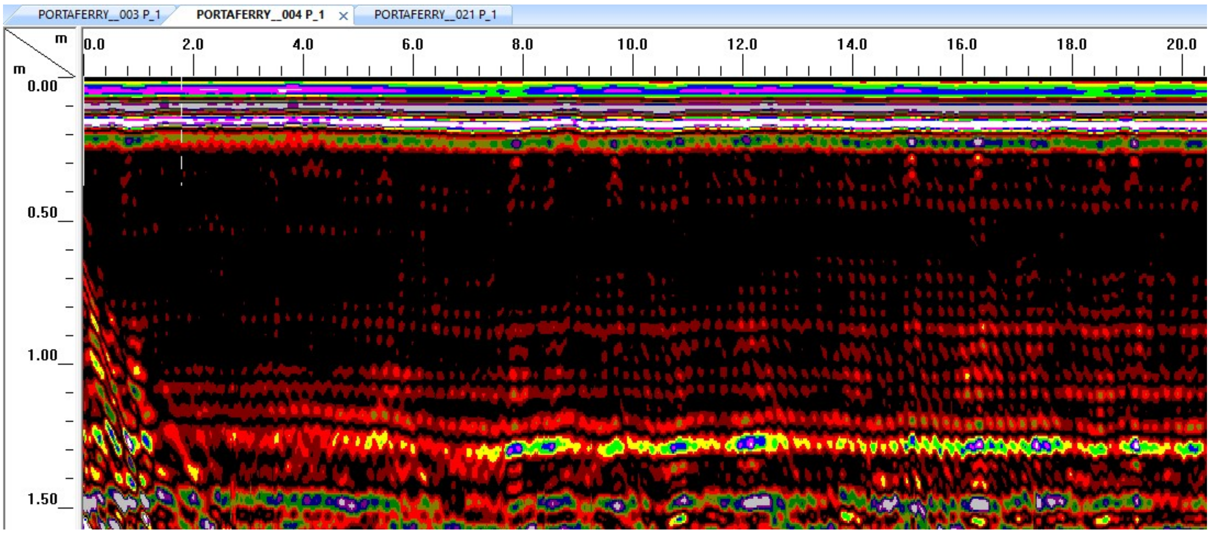
The visible cracks on the floor surface were recorded along with the level information. When displayed with the positioning of the support beams, some overlap occurs.




Extract from AutoCAD drawing showing cracks and support beam positions.

## Potential Voiding

The GPR data was entirely consistent throughout the area and there were no signs of any structural deficiency.




Extract of GPR data consistent throughout.

There was nothing noted by either the level micro-contouring survey or the GPR survey to suggest structural issues or subsidence beneath the floor slab.

I would note that the temperature inside the hall was notably warmer than outside at the time of the survey. Large swings in temperature on a daily basis could lead to expansion and contraction of the rebar in the floor slab, which might be the cause of the surface cracking.

As in any method of indirect measurement and non-invasive surveys, these results depend upon the interpretation of the information and quality of data collected.

**GEOTEC SURVEYS LIMITED**

David Todd
Survey Manager

July 2026

Unclassified

Ards and North Down Borough Council

# ITEM 11

## Ards and North Down Borough Council

| | |
|---|---|
| Report Classification | Unclassified |
| Exemption Reason | Not Applicable |
| | If multiple: |
| Meeting | Active and Healthy Communities Committee |
| Date of Meeting | 09 September 2026 |
| Responsible Director | Director of Active and Healthy Communities |
| Responsible Head of Service | Head of Leisure |
| Report title | Response to Notice of Motion 711 - Invictus Games |
| Attachments | N/A |
| File Reference (if applicable) | LEI34 |
| Legislation | Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 |
| Resource Implications | Budget<br>Narrative: Consideration of additional budget |
| Screening Requirements | *The Council will commit to consider the implication of all reports under the categories of Section 75, Rural Needs, Data Protection, Climate and Sustainability:*<br><br>Screening of report not required |
| Link to Corporate Plan Priority and Outcome | Priority 3: Social<br>6. Opportunities for people to be active and healthy<br>If multiple: |

**Background**
Members may recall Notice of Motion 711 which states, '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'.

**Update**
The Invictus Games is an international biennial event overseen by the Invictus Games Foundation (IGF) which is an independent charity. The inaugural Games were held in London, 2014 involving 14 nations and the Games have now grown as a result of events in Orlando, Toronto, Sydney, the Hague, Dusseldorf, Vancouver/Whistler. The next Games are to be held in Birmingham in July 2027.

The ethos of the Games is unique in that participants are not chosen solely because of their ability, but because their participation will help them in their recovery journey of injury or illness suffered as a result of service to their country. It is anticipated that 25 nations will compete at the Games in July 2027 with approximately 550 participants from various Armed Forces that are wounded, injured or made sick (WIS) during service to their country. Next year's event will involve nine core sports, with each nation able to bring in new elements (for 2027, the UK will be introducing Pickleball, the fastest growing sport in the World; Laser Run (a biathlon involving running /pushing and shooting) and eSports.

For reporting purposes, the NoM has been separated into two parts.

a) 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

Officers have contacted Invictus Games through their website to enquire on the partnership and sponsorship opportunities of the Games. Details of the partnership and sponsorship opportunities are listed below.

**Champions Programme**
The Champion's Programme is specifically designed for SMEs and provides a means to support the Invictus Games Birmingham 2027 and the Armed Forces community. Details of the 3 levels of the programme are summarised below however it appears they do not directly support the athletes:

Bronze £500

- The organisation's name is listed on the online Champions Programme Roll of Honour

- A recognition certificate
- Access to priority booking for Invictus Games Birmingham 2027 tickets at The NEC
- 10x virtual Places at a Champions Programme leadership event, connecting the core values of the Games with those of the businesses supporting the Games
- The first 100 sign-ups receive two Festival Quarter passes at the NEC for a day at the Games
- Champions Programme communications and impact updates
- Two exclusive IG27 T-Shirts and caps
- Discount on official Invictus Games merchandise

Silver £1,500

- 20 virtual places at a Champions Programme leadership event
- The first 100 sign-ups receive four Festival passes
- Champions Programme communications and impact updates
- Access to exclusive discounts on official merchandise
- Use of the Official Invictus Games Birmingham 2027 logo

Gold £3,000

- Two complimentary guest places at a pre-Games event
- The first 100 sign-ups receive x4 Leadership event places
- The first 100 sign-ups receive x8 Festival passes
- Use of the Official Invictus Games Birmingham 2027 logo
- Two complimentary guest places at a pre-Games event
- The first 100 sign-ups receive x4 Leadership event places
- All other Champion Benefits

It should be noted that Officers are unable to determine whether the bronze, silver and gold levels of support are used to support athletes in their preparation or participation in the Games and therefore do not believe that joining the Champion's Programme suitably answers part (a) or (b) of the NoM.

**Direct Sponsor**
The second option for financial support for the games noted on the Invictus Games website is by becoming a Direct Sponsor, the website does not offer sufficient detail on this option but Officer research has shown that this is more likely to be Commercial level sponsors investing upwards of £1,000,000.

It was noted that other partners were listed on the Invictus Games website and Officers have contacted these organisations. As yet, some of not responded however an online meeting has been arranged between Officers and Help for Heroes on the 8th September.

The second part of the NoM;

**b)** ***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.***

**Goldcard**

Officers had considered the Goldcard scheme as a potential mechanism to support athletes from the Borough with their training needs whereby they could use Leisure facilities free of charge for a period of time before the Games. However unfortunately Sport NI does not recognise the Invictus Games and therefore to ensure officer's compliance with the Sports Forum Grants Terms and Conditions the awarding of a Goldcard in this instance is not possible.

**Blair Mayne Bursary Award Scheme**

Members may be aware of the Blair Mayne Bursary Award Scheme that was established using surplus funds raised during the public appeal to raise funds for the bronze memorial statue in Conway Square Newtownards.

The Bursary welcomes applications from residents of the Ards and North Down Borough who are aged 25 years or younger under the following four categories:

- academic study
- sport.
- adventure training
- disability

Each bursary is £1000.

Additionally, the late William John Blair Mayne in his Will bequeathed £2,000.00 to "the Blair Mayne Bursary to be used by the Trustees thereof in their absolute discretion but I express the wish that the said legacy be used to augment any funds that the bursary has in place for supporting those persons who might be able to participate in the Paralympics or to provide such a fund."

The Blair Mayne Bursary Award Scheme is administered by a sub-committee of the Corporate Services Committee. At a meeting on the 26th March 2026 the sub-committee considered whether it would be appropriate to use the bequeathed sum of £2,000 from the late William John Blair Mayne to support the selected Invictus Games participants currently residing within the Borough as no Paralympic participants had applied for the Bursary. Members noted that it is not known if, or when, the Blair Mayne Bursary will receive future applications from Paralympians from the Ards and North Down area.

All sub-committee members agreed that allocating the funds in this manner would be appropriate in principle, with the caveat that the late William John Blair Mayne is formally recognised, and that the Blair Mayne Bursary is referenced in any related communications or documentation.

Therefore, should an athlete from the Borough be selected to compete in the Games, or if Members agree to further explore the Champions Programme or Direct Sponsor options with the Games, Leisure officers will undertake the necessary next steps and provide a subsequent update report for further consideration.

**Existing veteran support**

Members may be aware that emergency services personnel, including military veterans, are currently entitled to a 20% discounted Leisure membership price upon receipt of proof of status.

## RECOMMENDATION

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

ITEM 12

## Ards and North Down Borough Council

| | |
|---|---|
| Report Classification | Unclassified |
| Exemption Reason | Not Applicable |
| | If multiple: |
| Meeting | Active and Healthy Communities Committee |
| Date of Meeting | 09 September 2026 |
| Responsible Director | Director of Active and Healthy Communities |
| Responsible Head of Service | Head of Leisure |
| Report title | Ards and North Down Sports Forum Grants (Quarter 1 Report 2026/27) |
| Attachments | Appendix 1 - Successful Coaching Report for Noting 2026-27<br>Appendix 2 - Successful Equipment Report for Noting 2026-27<br>Appendix 3 - Successful Event Report for Noting 2026-27<br>Appendix 4 - Successful Goldcard Report for Noting 2026-27<br>Appendix 5 - Successful Individual Travel and Accommodation Report for Noting 2026-27<br>Appendix 6 – Unsuccessful Report for Noting 2026-27 |
| File Reference (if applicable) | SD155 |
| Legislation | Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 |
| Resource Implications | None<br>Narrative: |

If multiple:

| | |
|---|---|
| Screening Requirements | *The Council will commit to consider the implication of all reports under the categories of Section 75, Rural Needs, Data Protection, Climate and Sustainability:*<br><br>Screening of report not required |
| Link to Corporate Plan Priority and Outcome | Priority 3: Social<br>6. Opportunities for people to be active and healthy<br>If multiple: |

**Background**
Members will be aware that on the 26th August 2015 Council delegated authority to the Ards and North Down Sports Forum, in order to allow it to administer sports grants funding on behalf of the Council. £90,000 has been allocated within the 2026/2027 revenue budget for this purpose.

**Key Issues**
During April, May & June 2026, the Forum received a total of 131 applications: of which were 112 there were successful (2 Coach Education, 7 Goldcards, 12 Equipment, 10 Events and 81 Individual Travel/Accommodation).

A summary of the **112 successful** applications are detailed in the attached 2025/26 Successful Coaching, Equipment, Event, Goldcard and Travel/Accommodation Appendices.

| **2026/27 Budget £90,000** | Annual Budget | Awarded to Date | Committed Funding Awarded April, May & June **2026** | **Remaining Budget** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Anniversary | £3,000.00 | £0 | £0 | **£3,000.00** |
| Coach Education | £2,500.00 | £0 | £750.00 | **£1,750.00** |
| Equipment | £28,000.00 | £0 | £8,260.61 | **£19,739.39** |
| Events | £13,000.00 | £0 | £11,385.98 | **£1,614.02** |
| Seeding | £2,000 | £0 | £0.00 | **£2,000.00** |
| Travel and Accommodation | £38,500.00 | £0 | £15,407.72 | **£23,092.28** |
| Discretionary | £1,000.00 | £0 | £0 | **£1,000.00** |
| Schools/Sports Club Pathway | £2,000.00 | £0 | £0 | **£2,000.00** |
| **Remaining Budget** | | | | **£54,195.69** |

| | |
|---|---|
| | **7 Goldcards Awarded in Q1 April, May & June 2026.** |

**Budget remaining**
Please note that the following budget remaining breakdown is subject to receipt of all outstanding information required to process payments, such as proof of travel, accommodation or equipment purchases. In the rare event that committed funding is not awarded, the budget will be returned to the relevant funding stream.

The remaining budget for Coaching of **£1,750.00** is based on a committed funding award for April, May and June of **£750.00**

The remaining budget for Equipment of **£19,739.39** is based on a committed funding award for April, May and June of **£8,260.61**

The remaining budget for Events of **£1,614.02** is based on a committed funding award for April, May and June of **£11,385.98**

The remaining budget for Travel and Accommodation of **£23,092.28** is based on a committed funding award for April, May and June of **£15,407.72**

Remaining budget allocations not awarded during April, May, and June:

- Anniversary Fund: £3,000
- Discretionary Fund: £1,000
- Schools/Sports Fund: £2,000
- Seeding £2000

The remaining budget for 2026/27 is **£54,195.69** (40% of the 2026/27 budget spent).

This report outlines the Q1 (April – June 2026 only) of grants that have been administered and approved by the Ards and North Down Sports Forum and is for noting purposes only. This is in line with the Council's Grant Policy and the Council ratifying delegated authority to the Sports Forum on 12th November 2025.

## RECOMMENDATION

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

**APPENDIX 1 - SUCCESSFUL COACH EDUCATION REPORT FOR NOTING 2026-Q1**

| REFERENCE | MONTH | SPORT | COURSE | DATES | LOCATION |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2137 | MAY | Sailing | Dinghy Instructor Course | 28 June - 2 July 2026 | Killyleagh, OC |
| 2154 | MAY | Athletics | 1X Athletics Coach & 1X Coach in Running Fitness | 17 May - 25 June & 12th Sept - 22nd Nov | Athletics NI HQ |
| **Grand Total** | | | | | |

| BENEFIT | COSTS | Requested | FUNDED | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| The club will benefit by increasing the number of qualified coaches, improving the overall quality and consistency of coaching sessions. This will enhance participant experience, support sailor development and help retain members. | £950.00 | £500.00 | £500.00 | All documentation provided. Total cost of courses is £950.00, £475.00pp. As per our guidelines we will fund up to a maximum of 75%. Recommend funding of £500.00. |
| The course will enhance our sustainability to continue to offer a weekly programme of coaching to our members | £740.00 | £500.00 | £250.00 | A screenshot of booking for the Athletics course is provided but no cost/invoice (I have requested additional information). The second course is not booked yet as Athletics NI have not opened the bookings. HOwever, Athletics NI have sent a supporting letter to confirm they have reserved a space for the CIRF coaching |
| | **£1,690.00** | **£1,000.00** | **£750.00** | |

**APPENDIX 2 - SUCCESSFUL EQUIPMENT REPORT FOR NOTING 2026-Q1**

| REFERENCE | MONTH | SPORT | LOCATION | Requested | FUNDED | Equipment Requested | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2222 | JUNE | Football | Bangor | £1,495.00 | £1,345.00 | Balls (training & match – multiple ages), Cones, markers, flags, poles, Mannequins & coach board, Bibs, Hygiene water bottles | Funding recommended with condititonal letter - requesting updated policy- funding agreed £1345.00 |
| 2223 | JUNE | Football | Newtownards | £924.84 | £924.84 | Mitre Impel Training Ball 3, delta 1 match ball 6 off, Whistles/Stop Watches, white board tactics, speed parachutes, pop up mannequin set and armbands | Funding recommended with condititonal letter - requesting updated policy- funding agreed £924.84 |
| 2225 | JUNE | Softball | Comber | £1,500.00 | £1,500.00 | Umpire face guards, Catcher face guards, Pitcher face guards, Jugs PS50 Softball | Funding recommended with condititonal letter - requesting updated policy- funding agreed £1500.00 |
| 2226 | JUNE | Horse Riding | Kircubbin | £937.60 | £937.60 | Poly Jumps Blocks x 6 pairs, Poly Jumps Mini Blocks x 12 | Funding recommended with condititonal letter - requesting updated policy- funding agreed £937.60 |
| 2227 | JUNE | Sailing | Portaferry | £541.00 | £541.00 | Oppie Bouyancy Bag , 2 x Oppie Boat Paddles , 2 x Kids Sailing Helmets, Topper Mainsail, Boat Launching Trolley | Funding recommended with condititonal letter - requesting updated policy- funding agreed £541.00 |
| 2228 | JUNE | Football | Millisle | £240.00 | £192.00 | Goal netting | Funding recommended with condititonal letter - requesting updated policy- funding agreed £192.00 |
| 2229 | JUNE | Sailing | Bangor | £1,500.00 | £400.00 | RS Quest | Funding recommended of £400.00, the maximum you can claim under fundamental is £500 minus tax as per our guidelines, a new RS Quest is considered fundamental |
| 2230 | JUNE | Tennis | Helen's Bay | £407.89 | £407.89 | KUIKMA Adjustable Rolling Tennis and Padel Ball Cart - Black x2, PRECISION TRAINING Saucer Cones: Set of 50, ARTENGO Kids' 23" Tennis Racket Easy - Blue X5, DUNLOP Tennis Balls Fort All Court Box of 18 Tubes of 4 Balls - Yellow, KIPSTA Flat Discs 12-PACK - ORANGE/YELLOW, Babolat Stage 3 Red Tennis Balls - 24 Balls | Funding recommended with condititonal letter - requesting updated policy- funding agreed £407.89 |
| 2231 | JUNE | GAA | Kircubbin | £933.89 | £729.52 | Set of 12' x 6' mobile goalposts,Stopwatch X 4,Speed and training ladders x 6 (6m), Speed training, agility hurdles, 6" (set of 6) , Mini tricones (set of 40) , 6' loaded slalom poles (set of 8 including bases), Slalom pole carrier bag, Cumas groundskills (set of 8), Cumas pole trainer (set of 2), 10 water bottles and carrier, Training Bibs, 4 -8 years x 2, Training bibs, 9-14, Training bibs, small/medium adult, Coach whistles x 4, Handheld speaker x 2. | Funding recommended for 729.52 after tax, as per our guidelines we do not found water bottles |
| 2232 | JUNE | Rugby | Donaghdee | £458.75 | £367.00 | Gilbert Match Ball (2No), Tag Rugby Belt & Tag (40No), Gilbert Training Balls (Junior) (10No),Passing Target Net (2No) | Funding recommended for 367.00 after tax |
| 2233 | JUNE | Inline Hockey | Bangor | £1,477.00 | £500.00 | Warrior Bezerker Stick £20 x , Warrior Rise Shin Pads £43 x 7,Warrior Rise Elbow Pads £30 x , Warrior CF 80 Helmet Combo £80, Warrior QR Lite Gloves £38 x 7 | Funding recommended of £500.00, the maximum you can claim under fundamental is £500 as per our guidelines, all equipment requested is considered fundamental |
| 2234 | JUNE | GAA | Bangor | £415.76 | £415.76 | Sensory play set, 12ft parachute toy, pop up indoor goals, polebase indoor | Funding recommended for £415.76 |
| **Grand Total** | | | | **£10,831.73** | **£8,260.61** | | |

**APPENDIX 3 - SUCCESSFUL EVENT REPORT FOR NOTING 2026-Q1**

| REFERENCE | MONTH | SPORT | EVENT TYPE | LOCATION | DETAIL | Requested | FUNDED | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2211 | JUNE | Athletics | Comber 10K | Comber | a 10k run, taking place on public roads. This is a 2 lap flat and fast course, measured and certified by athletics NI. Capped at 800 runners and its already sold out. Its open to anyone with an interest in running with a generour prize. | £1,500.00 | £1,500.00 | Funding agreed with condititonal letter - requesting updated policy- Agreed funding of £1500.00 |
| 2212 | JUNE | Athletics | NI & Ulster Championship Seaton Classic 10k | Bangor and Groomsport | An annual 10k road race organised entirely on a volunteer basis by NDAC. In the wake of the club's 50th anniversary the race has been renamed in honour of one of its longest serving members, David Seaton. It starts at the townhall and proceeds around the coast to Ballyholme before performing a loop of Groomsport and finishing in Ward Park. It attracts 1500 runners, >100 volunteers and large numbers of supporters along the route. | £1,500.00 | £1,500.00 | Funding agreed with condititonal letter - requesting updated policy- Agreed funding of £1500.00 |
| 2213 | JUNE | Softball | NDSC Summer Softball Tournament | Comber | A summer all-day softball tournament held at Ward Park.Balanced composite teams mixing experienced & new players. This event intends to act as a participation pathway from introduction to ongoing involvement. The structured tournament format ensures all participants receive meaningful game time, & the skills competitions provide additional opportunities particularly for beginners. We aim to increase female membership from 40% to 50% by the end of the 2026 season (October), recruiting new players into regular training and competitive teams, & improve skill levels and confidence through a supportive, low-pressure environment. | £836.16 | £641.16 | Funding agreed with condititonal letter - requesting updated policy- Agreed funding of £641.16, funding was not provided for the Roller Banner as this is considered Marketing and Publication |
| 2214 | JUNE | Rowing | Portavogie regatta 2026 | Portavogie | We are having our annual regatta where all clubs from around ards peninsula & strangford lough will come to Portavogie to race 2k rows, these races will be broken down by age, we race in self built st ives skiffs. This is a cross community event that welcomes all. | £903.00 | £739.48 | Funding agreed with condititonal letter - requesting updated policy- Agreed funding of £739.48, funding was not provided for Medals as per guidance |
| 2215 | JUNE | Athletics | Ards Half Marathon | Newtownards | Ards half marathon is a large scale, open road running event delivered by Scrabo Striders within the Borough of Ards and North Down. This event will welcome approximately 600 competitors, including affiliated and unaffiliated runners, with participants travelling from across Northern Ireland and beyond. Previously organised by the Council, the event is a well-established fixture within the local sporting calendar. Club-led delivery makes sure its continuation and increase participation by providing an accessible competitive opportunity for runners of all abilities and backgrounds. | £1,500.00 | £1,500.00 | Funding agreed of £1500.00 |
| 2216 | JUNE | Athletics | WPR Groomsport 10k | Groomsport | A community-focused 10K running race organised by Ward Park Runners open to all fitness levels and abilities, featuring chip timing, water stations and post-race refreshments in Groomsport Parish Church. | £1,500.00 | £1,500.00 | Funding agreed with condititonal letter - requesting updated policy- Agreed funding of £1500.00 |
| 2217 | JUNE | Cycling | North Down Grand Prix | Orlock / Groomsport/ Donaghadee | The North Down Grand Prix is one of the Classic, annual Cycling Events on the Cycling Ireland Road Racing Calendar. It attracts in excess of 150 participants and their support crew to North Down each year. Under the umbrella of the North Down Grand Prix, We are also, this year, organising additional races for men and women who are 50+, 60+ and 70+. | £1,050.00 | £840.00 | Funding agreed with condititonal letter - requesting updated policy- Agreed funding of £840.00 |
| 2218 | JUNE | Football | Ards Rangers Inclusion | Newtownards | The Ards Rangers Inclusion Tournament is a one-day inclusive football event designed for young people with disabilities from across the province. The tournament will be hosted by Ards Rangers Football Club and delivered in partnership with local disability sport organisations, schools, and community groups | £1,123.20 | £898.56 | Funding agreed with condititonal letter - requesting updated policy- Agreed funding of £898.56 |
| 2219 | JUNE | (blank) | llenger Series (in affiliation with T | Newtownards | Ards TT Club will host the Senior Challenger Series (SportNI Ulster Series 2026/27) with Table Tennis Ulster/ Ireland in Oct 2026 at Queens Hall, Newtownards. The event features Masters Over 40s, Over 60s and Mixed Open, attracting approx. 100 entries and 30–50 spectators. Activities include matches, officiating and volunteer support. "Come and try" sessions and promotion via clubs, schools and community networks will increase participation and engagement. | £766.78 | £766.78 | Funding agreed with condititonal letter - requesting updated policy- Agreed funding of £766.78 |
| 2220 | JUNE | Inline Hockey | Bangor Chiefs Tournament | Bangor | A key aim of the event is to increase participation by providing players with meaningful opportunities to compete, develop confidence, and strengthen links between clubs. The tournament will also introduce new participants and spectators to the sport, helping to raise awareness of inline hockey opportunities within the Borough and encouraging future involvement in local club activity. Bangor Chiefs aims to engage at least 80 participants across all age groups during the event. | £1,500.00 | £1,500.00 | Funding agreed with condititonal letter - requesting updated policy- Agreed funding of £1500.00 |
| **Grand Total** | | | | | | **£12,179.14** | **£11,385.98** | |

**APPENDIX 4 - SUCCESSFUL GOLDCARD REPORT FOR NOTING 2026-Q1**

| REFERENCE | MONTH | SPORT | EVENT TYPE | DATES | LOCATION | GOLDCARD | PROPOSED | NOTES |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2109 | APRIL | Hurling | All Ireland Series Games | 24 January 2026 - 24 May 2026 | Various locations across Northern Ireland & Ireland | ABM. LDPK & PORTAFERRY - Gym, Pool, Health Suite & Cryo Spa | Yes | A letter from Down GAA confirms that has the athlete been selected to represent his sport at the All Ireland series for the Down Senior Hurling Panel Intercounty Campaign in 2026. Goldcard recommended until 24th May 2026. |
| 2110 | APRIL | Hurling | All Ireland Series Games | 24 January 2026 - 24 May 2026 | Various locations across Northern Ireland & Ireland | ABM. LDPK & PORTAFERRY - Gym, Pool, Health Suite & Cryo Spa | Yes | A letter from Ulster GAA confirms that the athlete has been selected to represent his sport at the All Ireland series for the Down Senior Hurling Panel Intercounty Campaign in 2026. Goldcard recommended until 24th May2026. |
| 2130 | MAY | Karate | W.U.K.F World Karate Championships / I.C.O Karate World Championships | 22-26 July 2026 / 14-18 October 2026 | Cluj-Napoca, Romania / Thonon-les-Bains, France | BA & ABM - Gym & Health Suite | Yes | A letter from Karate Ireland confirms that the athlete has been selected to compete at the W.U.K.F World Karate Championships in Cluj-Napoca, Romania f om 22-26 July 2026. She is also competing at the I.C.O Karate World Championships in Thonon-les-Bains, France from 14-18 October 2026. Goldcard recommended until 18 October 2026. |
| 2132 | MAY | Hockey | Home Nations Masters/ World Cup Masters | 8-10 May 2026 / 22 July - 1 August 2026 | Scotland & Holland | BA Gym, Pool, Cryo, Health Suite & Queens Gym | Yes | A letter from Hockey Ireland confirms that the athlete tehas been selected to represent the Men's O40 team at the Home Nations Masters in Aberdeen, Scotland from 8-10 May 2026 and he has also been selected for the World Cup Masters in Rotterdam, Holland from 22 July – 1 August 2026. Goldcard recommended until 1 August 2026. |
| 2152 | MAY | Hockey | O50s Irish Team Hockey World Cup | 22nd July - 1st August | Rotterdam, Holland | (blank) | Yes | The Athlete has been selected for the team of the Irish Masters Men's O50s for the upcoming World Masters Hockey (WMH) World Cup to be held in Rotterdam, Holland from 22 July to 1 August 2026. A selection letter from Hockey Ireland confirms these details. Goldcard recommended until 1st August 2026 |
| 2179 | JUNE | Athletics | European Championships / World Ultimate Championships | 10-16 August / 11-13 September 2026 | Birmingham / Budapest / Beijing | BA, BS & ABM - Gym, Health Suite, Cryo & Track | Yes | A letter from Athletics Ireland confirms that Athlete has been selected to compete at the European Championships from 10 - 16 August in Birmingham. Her second event is the World Ultimate Championships from 11-13 September 2026 in Budapest. Goldcard recommended until 13 September 2026. |
| 2203 | JUNE | Tennis | Forvis Mazars Templeogue TC - Junior Tour 1250 Open 2027 | Easter 2027 | Dublin, Ireland | ABM & CLC - Gym, Pool & Tennis Courts | Yes | A letter from Tennis Ireland confirms that Athlete is training to compete at the Templeogue Junior Tour 1250 Open 2027, which is talking place on the Sunday 28 March - Saturday 3 April 2027, Goldcard has been awarded until the 28th March 2027 |
| Grand Total | | | | | | | 7 | |

**APPENDIX 5 - SUCCESSFUL INDIVIDUAL TRAVEL/ACCOMMODATION REPORT FOR APPROVAL 2026-Q1**

| REFERENCE | MONTH | SPORT | EVENT | DATES | LOCATION | COSTS | REQUESTED | FUNDED | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2111 | MAY | Gymnastics | British Schools' Acrobatic Gymnastics Championship | 2-3 May 2026 | Stoke on Trent, England | £329.92 | £172.00 | £172.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the British Schools Championships in Stoke-on-Trent from 2-3 May 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £172.00. |
| 2112 | MAY | Fencing | 2026 Senior and Veteran Commonwealth Fencing Championship | 9-19 August 2026 | Lagos, Nigeria | £1,964.90 | £300.00 | £300.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the 2026 Senior and Veteran Commonwealth Fencing Championship in Lagos, Nigeria from 9-19 August 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Northern Ireland Fencing. Recommend funding of £300.00. |
| 2113 | MAY | Fencing | 2026 Senior and Veteran Commonwealth Fencing Championship | 9-19 August 2026 | Lagos, Nigeria | £1,964.90 | £300.00 | £300.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the 2026 Senior and Veteran Commonwealth Fencing Championship in Lagos, Nigeria from 9-19 August 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Northern Ireland Fencing. Recommend funding of £300.00. |
| 2114 | MAY | Hockey | Ulster U21 Mens v Scotland three Match Series | 4-6 April 2026 | Glasgow, Scotland | £300.00 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the Ulster U21 Men's v Scotland three Match Series in Glasgow, Scotland from 4-6 April 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Ulster Hockey. Recommend funding of £200.00. |
| 2115 | MAY | Gymnastics | British Schools' Acrobatic Gymnastics Championship | 2-3 May 2026 | Stoke on Trent, England | £202.00 | £202.00 | £200.00 | The Athlete has been selected to compete at the British Schools Championships in Stoke-on-Trent from 2-3 May 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00. |
| 2116 | MAY | Gymnastics | British Schools' Acrobatic Gymnastics Championship | 2-3 May 2026 | Stoke on Trent, England | £200.00 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete e has been selected to compete at the British Schools Championships in Stoke-on-Trent from 2-3 May 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00. |
| 2117 | MAY | Gymnastics | British Schools' Acrobatic Gymnastics Championship | 2-3 May 2026 | Stoke on Trent, England | £240.00 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the British Schools Championships in Stoke-on-Trent from 2-3 May 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00. |
| 2118 | MAY | Hockey | Home Nations | 8-10 May 2026 | Aberdeen, Scotland | £276.00 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the Home Nations in Aberdeen, Scotland from 8-10 May 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Hockey Ireland. Recommend funding of £200.00. |
| 2119 | MAY | Gymnastics | British Schools' Acrobatic Gymnastics Championship | 2-3 May 2026 | Stoke on Trent, England | £200.00 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the British Schools Championships in Stoke-on-Trent from 2-3 May 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00. |
| 2120 | MAY | Gymnastics | British Schools' Acrobatic Gymnastics Championship | 2-3 May 2026 | Stoke on Trent, England | £218.00 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the British Schools Championships in Stoke-on-Trent from 2-3 May 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00. |
| 2122 | MAY | Gymnastics | British Schools' Acrobatic Gymnastics Championship | 2-3 May 2026 | Stoke on Trent, England | £200.00 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the British Schools Championships in Stoke-on-Trent from 2-3 May 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00. |
| 2123 | MAY | Gymnastics | British Schools' Acrobatic Gymnastics Championship | 2-3 May 2026 | Stoke on Trent, England | £200.00 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athletehas been selected to compete at the British Schools Championships in Stoke-on-Trent from 2-3 May 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00. |
| 2124 | MAY | Gymnastics | NDP National Finals | 15-17 May 2026 | Stoke on Trent, England | £249.25 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the NDP National Finals in Stoke-on-Trent from 15-17 May 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00. |
| 2125 | MAY | Gymnastics | British Schools' Acrobatic Gymnastics Championship | 2-3 May 2026 | Stoke on Trent, England | £201.00 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the British Schools Championships in Stoke-on-Trent from 2-3 May 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00. |
| 2126 | MAY | Gymnastics | NDP National Finals | 15-17 May 2026 | Stoke on Trent, England | £237.99 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the NDP National Finals in Stoke-on-Trent from 15-17 May 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00. |
| 2127 | MAY | Gymnastics | British Schools' Acrobatic Gymnastics Championship | 2-3 May 2026 | Stoke on Trent, England | £202.00 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the British Schools Championships in Stoke-on-Trent from 2-3 May 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00. |
| 2129 | MAY | Gymnastics | NDP National Finals | 15-17 May 2026 | Stoke on Trent, England | £507.98 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the NDP National Finals in Stoke-on-Trent from 15-17 May 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00. |
| 2131 | MAY | Hockey | Home Nations Masters | 8-10 May 2026 | Aberdeen, Scotland | £329.88 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to represent the Men's O40 team at the Home Nations Masters in Aberdeen, Scotland from 8-10 May 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Hockey Ireland. Recommend funding of £200.00. |
| 2133 | MAY | Gymnastics | British Schools' Acrobatic Gymnastics Championship | 2-3 May 2026 | Stoke on Trent, England | £200.00 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the British Schools Championships in Stoke-on-Trent from 2-3 May 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00. |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2134 | MAY | Karate | W.U.K.F World Karate Championships | 22-26 July 2026 | Cluj-Napoca, Romania | £250.00 | £250.00 | £250.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the World Karate Championships in Cluj-Napoca, Romania from 22-26 July 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Karate Ireland.Recommend funding of £250.00. |
| 2135 | MAY | Gymnastics | British Schools' Acrobatic Gymnastics Championship | 2-3 May 2026 | Stoke on Trent, England | £200.00 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the British Schools Championships in Stoke-on-Trent from 2-3 May 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00. |
| 2136 | MAY | Gymnastics | British Schools' Acrobatic Gymnastics Championship | 2-3 May 2026 | Stoke on Trent, England | £222.64 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the British Schools Championships in Stoke-on-Trent from 2-3 May 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00. |
| 2138 | MAY | Gymnastics | British Schools' Acrobatic Gymnastics Championship | 2-3 May 2026 | Stoke on Trent, England | £202.00 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the British Schools Championships in Stoke-on-Trent from 2-3 May 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00. |
| 2139 | MAY | Hockey | World Cup Masters | 22 July - 1 August 2026 | Rotterdam, Holland | £1,070.20 | £250.00 | £250.00 | The athlete has been selected to represent the Men's O40 team at the World Cup Masters in Rotterdam, Holland from 22 July 2026 - 1 August 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Hockey Ireland. Recommend funding of £200.00. |
| 2141 | MAY | Gymnastics | British Schools' Acrobatic Gymnastics Championship | 2-3 May 2026 | Stoke on Trent, England | £162.48 | £162.48 | £162.48 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the British Schools Championships in Stoke-on-Trent from 2-3 May 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £162.48. |
| 2142 | MAY | Gymnastics | Inter Regional Championships | 2-3 May 2026 | Southampton, England | £277.09 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The the athlete has been selected to compete at the Inter Regional Championships in Southampton from 2-3 May 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00. |
| 2143 | MAY | Gymnastics | British Schools' Acrobatic Gymnastics Championship | 2-3 May 2026 | Stoke on Trent, England | £280.98 | £176.48 | £176.48 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the British Schools Championships in Stoke-on-Trent from 2-3 May 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £176.48. |
| 2144 | MAY | Acrobatics | NDP National Acrobatic Final | 15-17 May 2026 | Stoke on Trent, England | £518.40 | £250.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to complete at the NDP Acrobatic Final in Stoke-on-Trent from 15th - 17th May. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00 |
| 2147 | MAY | Gymnastics | NDP National Acrobatic Final | 15-17 May 2026 | Stoke on Trent, England | £235.50 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to complete at the NDP Acrobatic Final in Stoke-on-Trent from 15th - 17th May. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00 |
| 2148 | MAY | Acrobatics | Inter-Regional Champs | 2nd/3rd May 2026 | Southhampton | £421.59 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the Inter-Regional Champs in Southhampton on 2nd/3rd May. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00 |
| 2149 | MAY | Hockey | World Masters Hockey, World Cup | 22nd July -1st August 2026 | Rotterdam, Netherlands | £878.00 | £250.00 | £250.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the World Masters Hockey, World Cap, Netherlands from 22 July to 1 August 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Hockey Ireland. Recommend funding of £250.00 |
| 2150 | MAY | Hockey | Irish Masters Men's O50s, Home Nations Championship | 8 May to 10 May 2026 | Aberdeen, Scotland | £250.00 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athletehas been selected to the Irish Masters Men's O50s team for the Home Nations Championship from 8 May to 10 May 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Hockey Ireland. Recommend funding of £200.00 |
| 2151 | MAY | Gymnastics | British Schools' Acrobatic Gymnastics Championship | 2-3 May 2026 | Stoke on Trent, England | £264.98 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the British Schools Championships in Stoke-on-Trent from 2-3 May 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00 |
| 2153 | MAY | Gymnastics | NDP National Acrobatic Final | 15-17 May 2026 | Stoke on Trent, England | £275.00 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the NDP Acrobatic Final in Stoke-on-Trent from 15th - 17th May. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00 |
| 2155 | MAY | Acrobatics | NDP Acrobatic Finals | 15-17 May 2026 | Stoke on Trent, England | £518.38 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the NDP Acrobatic Final in Stoke-on-Trent from 15th - 17th May. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00 |
| 2156 | MAY | Acrobatics | Inter Regional Championships | 2nd – 3rd May 2026 | Southhampton | £412.81 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the Inter Regional Championships from 2-3 May 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00 |
| 2157 | MAY | Gymnastics | NDP Acrobatic Finals | 15-17 May 2026 | Stoke on Trent, England | £292.68 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the NDP Acrobatic Final in Stoke-on-Trent from 15th - 17th May. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00 |
| 2158 | MAY | Sailing | Eric Twiname Championships 2026 | 2-4 May 2026 | Rutland Water England | £531.50 | £177.50 | £177.50 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the Twiname Champs 2026 in England from 2-4th May 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from the RYANI. Recommend funding of £177.50 |
| 2159 | MAY | Sailing | Eric Twiname Championships 2026 | 2-4 May 2026 | Rutland Water England | £531.50 | £177.50 | £177.50 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the Twiname Champs 2026 in England from 2-4th May 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from the RYANI. Recommend funding of £177.50 |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2160 | JUNE | Gymnastics | Inter Regional Championships | 2-3 May 2026 | Southhampton | £281.97 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the Inter Regional Championships from 2-3 May 2026. Th has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00 |
| 2161 | JUNE | Gymnastics | British Schools' Acrobatic Gymnastics Championship | 2-3 May 2026 | Stoke on Trent, England | £240.00 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the British Schools Championships in Stoke-on-Trent from 2-3 May 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00 |
| 2162 | JUNE | Gymnastics | British Schools' Acrobatic Gymnastics Championship | 2-3 May 2026 | Stoke on Trent, England | £200.00 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the British Schools Championships in Stoke-on-Trent from 2-3 May 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00 |
| 2164 | JUNE | Gymnastics | N.D.P National Finals | 15th - 17th May 2026 | Stoke on Trent, England | £227.39 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the NDP Acrobatic Final in Stoke-on-Trent from 15th - 17th May. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00 |
| 2165 | JUNE | Gymnastics | British Schools Gymnastics Championships | 2-3 May 2026 | Stoke on Trent, England | £200.00 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the British Schools Championships in Stoke-on-Trent from 2-3 May 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00 |
| 2166 | JUNE | Gymnastics | Inter Regional Championships | 2-3 May 2026 | Southhampton | £425.75 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the Inter Regional Championships from 2-3 May 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00 |
| 2169 | JUNE | Sailing | Feva British Nationals | 23-26 May 2026 | The Welsh National Sailing Academy and Event Centre, Plas Heli | £445.65 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the The Welsh National Sailing Academy and Event Centre, Plas Heli from 23-16 May 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from RYANI. Recommend funding of £200.00 |
| 2170 | JUNE | Sailing | Topper Worlds 2026 | 27-31 July 2026 | Quiberon, France | £444.97 | £250.00 | £250.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the Topper Worlds 2026 in Quiberon, France from 27-31 July 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from RYANI. Recommend funding of £250.00 |
| 2171 | JUNE | Sailing | Topper British Nationals 2026 | 7-14 August 2026 | Weymouth & Portland National Sailing Academy | £328.93 | £200.00 | £150.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the Topper British Nationals 2026 in Weymouth & Portland National Sailing Academy from 7-14 August 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from RYANI. Recommend funding of £150.00, as Leo has now reached his £600.00 funding limit per finanical year. |
| 2173 | JUNE | Hockey | Home Nations | 8-10 May 2026 | Aberdeen, Scotland | £317.66 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the Home Nations in Aberdeen, Scotland from 8-10 May 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Hockey Ireland. Recommend funding of £200.00. |
| 2174 | JUNE | Sailing | 29er Irish National Championships | 19-21 June 2026 | Royal St George, Dun Loaghaire, Dublin | £451.00 | £150.00 | £150.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the 29er Irish National Championships in Dun Loaghaire, Dublin from 19-21 June 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from RYANI. Recommend funding of £150.00 |
| 2175 | JUNE | Sailing | 29er Irish National Championships | 19-21 June 2026 | Royal St George, Dun Loaghaire, Dublin | £451.00 | £150.00 | £150.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the 29er Irish National Championships in Dun Loaghaire, Dublin from 19-21 June 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from RYANI. Recommend funding of £150.00 |
| 2176 | JUNE | Gymnastics | N.D.P National Finals | 16-17 May 2026 | Stoke on Trent, England | £268.37 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the N.D.P National Finals from 16-17 May 2026 in Stoke on Trent, Englang.This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00 |
| 2177 | JUNE | Hockey | Scotland Series U16 | 5-7 June | Glasgow, Scotland | £350.00 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the Scotland Series U16 from 5th-7th June 2026 in Glasgow, Scotland. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00 |
| 2178 | JUNE | Gymnastics | NDP FINALS | 16-17 May 2026 | Stoke on Trent, England | £342.20 | £342.20 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the NDP Finals from 16-17 May 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommended funding is £200.00 |
| 2180 | JUNE | Walking Football | Limerick Walking Football Festival | 4-5 July 2026 | Limerick, Ireland | £169.73 | £169.73 | £150.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the Limerick Walking Football Festival from 4-5 July 2026 in Limerick Ireland. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Northern Ireland Football Association. Recommended funding is £150.00 |
| 2181 | JUNE | Walking Football | Limerick Walking Football Festival | 4-5 July 2026 | Limerick, Ireland | £169.73 | £169.73 | £150.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the Limerick Walking Football Festival from 4-5 July 2026 in Limerick Ireland. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Northern Ireland Football Association. Recommended funding is £150.00 |
| 2182 | JUNE | Sailing | ILCA 6 Youth Europeans | 10-18 July 2026 | Thessaloniki, Greece | £351.75 | £250.00 | £250.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the ILCA 6 Youth Europeans in Thessaloniki, Greece from 10-18 July 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from RYANI. Recommend funding of £250.00 |
| 2184 | JUNE | Gymnastics | Inter Regional Challenge Cup Final | 3-5 July 2026 | Birmingham, England | £145.88 | £145.88 | £145.88 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the Inter Regional Challenge Cup Final from 4-5 July 2026, in Birmingham, England. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £145.88 |
| 2185 | JUNE | Gymnastics | Inter Regional Challenge Cup Final | 4-5 July 2026 | Birmingham, England | £145.88 | £145.88 | £145.88 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the Inter Regional Challenge Cup Final from 4-5 July 2026, in Birmingham, England. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £145.88 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2186 | JUNE | Gymnastics | Inter Regional Challenge Cup Final | 4-5 July 2026 | Birmingham, England | £366.00 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the Inter Regional Challenge Cup Final from 4-5 July 2026 Birmingham, England. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00 |
| 2187 | JUNE | Gymnastics | Inter Regional Challenge Cup Final | 4-5 July 2026 | Birmingham, England | £270.00 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the Inter Regional Challenge Cup Final from 4-5 July 2026, in Birmingham, England. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00 |
| 2188 | JUNE | Gymnastics | Inter Regional Challenge Cup Final | 4-5 July 2026 | Birmingham, England | £270.00 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the Inter Regional Challenge Cup Final from 4-5 July 2026, in Birmingham, England. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00 |
| 2189 | JUNE | Gymnastics | Inter Regional Challenge Cup Final | 4-5 July 2026 | Birmingham, England | £391.26 | £391.26 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the Inter Regional Challenge Cup Final from 4-5 July 2026, in Birmingham, England. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00 |
| 2190 | JUNE | Gymnastics | Inter Regional Challenge Cup Final | 4-5 July 2026 | Birmingham, England | £230.00 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the Inter Regional Challenge Cup Final from 4-5 July 2026, in Birmingham, England. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00 |
| 2191 | JUNE | Gymnastics | Inter Regional Challenge Cup Final | 4-5 July 2026 | Birmingham, England | £230.00 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the Inter Regional Challenge Cup Final from 4-5 July 2026, in Birmingham, England. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00 |
| 2192 | JUNE | Badminton | Special Olympics Ireland Games 2026 | 18-21 June 2026 | Dublin, Ireland | £455.00 | £150.00 | £150.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the Special Olympics Ireland Games 2026 from 18-21 June in Dublin, Ireland. This has been confirmed by a selection letter Special Olympics Ireland. Recommend funding of £150.00 |
| 2193 | JUNE | Gymnastics | NDP Acrobatic National Finals | 16-17 May 2026 | Stoke on Trent, England | £349.12 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the NDP Acrobatic National Finals from 16-17 May 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00 |
| 2194 | JUNE | Gymnastics | Inter Regional Challenge Cup Final | 4-5 July 2026 | Birmingham, England | £270.00 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the Inter Regional Challenge Cup Final from 4-5 July 2026, in Birmingham, England. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00 |
| 2196 | JUNE | Polocrosse | UK v Ireland U19/U16 Test | 23-24 May 2026 | Ceyln Polocrosse Club, Longstone Lane, Tarporley, Cheshire, CW6 9ES | £701.96 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at UK v Ireland U19/U16 Test from 23-24 May 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Horse Sport Ireland. Recommend funding of £200.00 |
| 2197 | JUNE | Hockey | Masters World Cup | 22 July- 1 August 2026 | Rotterdam | £321.00 | £250.00 | £250.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the Masters World Cup from 22 July - 1 August 2026. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Hockey Ireland. Recommend funding of £250.00 |
| 2199 | JUNE | Walking Football | Limerick Walking Football Festival | 4-5 July 2026 | Limerick, Ireland | £169.73 | £169.73 | £150.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the Limerick Walking Football Festival from 4th-5th July 2026 in Limerick Ireland. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Northern Ireland Football Association. Recommended funding is £150.00 |
| 2200 | JUNE | Hockey | Hockey Ireland Training Camp | 28th June 2026 | Dublin, Ireland | £101.70 | £50.00 | £50.00 | The athlete has been selected to train at Hockey Irelands Training Camp on 28 June 2026 in Dublin, Ireland. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Hockey Ireland. Recommend funding of £50.00 |
| 2201 | JUNE | Hockey | Hockey Ireland Training Camp | 30th May 2026 | Dublin, Ireland | £101.70 | £50.00 | £50.00 | The athlete has been selected to train at Hockey Irelands Training Camp on 30 May 2026 in Dublin, Ireland. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Hockey Ireland. Recommend funding of £50.00 |
| 2202 | JUNE | Hockey | Hockey Ireland Training Camp | 7th June 2026 | Dublin, Ireland | £101.70 | £50.00 | £50.00 | The athlete has been selected to train at Hockey Irelands Training Camp on 7 June 2026 in Dublin, Ireland. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Hockey Ireland. Recommend funding of £50.00 |
| 2204 | JUNE | Gymnastics | Inter Regional Challenge Cup Final | 4-5 July 2026 | Birmingham, England | £439.66 | £300.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the Inter Regional Challenge Cup Final from 4-5 July 2026, in Birmingham, England. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00 |
| 2205 | JUNE | Gymnastics | Inter Regional Challenge Cup Final | 4-5 July 2026 | Birmingham, England | £230.00 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the Inter Regional Challenge Cup Final from 4-5 July 2026, in Birmingham, England. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00 |
| 2206 | JUNE | Gymnastics | Inter Regional Challenge Cup Final | 4-5 July 2026 | Birmingham, England | (blank) | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the Inter Regional Challenge Cup Final from 4-5 July 2026, in Birmingham, England. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00 |
| 2207 | JUNE | Gymnastics | Inter Regional Challenge Cup Final | 4-5 July 2026 | Birmingham, England | (blank) | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the Inter Regional Challenge Cup Final from 4-5 July 2026, in Birmingham, England. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00 |
| 2208 | JUNE | Gymnastics | Inter Regional Challenge Cup Final | 4-5 July 2026 | Birmingham, England | £420.00 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the Inter Regional Challenge Cup Final from 4-5 July 2026, in Birmingham, England. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2209 | JUNE | Gymnastics | Inter Regional Challenge Cup Final | 4-5 July 2026 | Birmingham, England | £301.00 | £200.00 | £200.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the Inter Regional Challenge Cup Final from 4-5 July 2026 Birmingham, England. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Gymnastics NI. Recommend funding of £200.00 |
| 2210 | JUNE | Walking Football | Limerick Walking Football Festival | 4-5 July 2026 | Limerick, Ireland | (blank) | £150.00 | £150.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the Limerick Walking Football Festival from 4th-5th July 2026 in Limerick Ireland. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Northern Ireland Football Association. Recommended funding is £150.00 |
| 2236 | JUNE | Walking Football | Limerick Walking Football Festival | 4-5 July 2026 | Limerick, Ireland | (blank) | £169.73 | £150.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the Limerick Walking Football Festival from 4th-5th July 2026 in Limerick Ireland. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Northern Ireland Football Association. Recommended funding is £150.00 |
| 2237 | JUNE | Walking Football | Limerick Walking Football Festival | 4-5 July 2026 | Limerick, Ireland | (blank) | £169.00 | £150.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the Limerick Walking Football Festival from 4th-5th July 2026 in Limerick Ireland. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Northern Ireland Football Association. Recommended funding is £150.00 |
| 2238 | JUNE | Walking Football | Limerick Walking Football Festival | 4-5 July 2026 | Limerick, Ireland | (blank) | £169.73 | £150.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the Limerick Walking Football Festival from 4th-5th July 2026 in Limerick Ireland. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Northern Ireland Football Association. Recommended funding is £150.00 |
| 2239 | JUNE | Walking Football | Limerick Walking Football Festival | 4-5 July 2026 | Limerick, Ireland | (blank) | £200.00 | £150.00 | The athlete has been selected to compete at the Limerick Walking Football Festival from 4th-5th July 2026 in Limerick Ireland. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Northern Ireland Football Association. Recommended funding is £150.00 |
| **Grand Total** | | | | | | **£27,025.65** | **£16,110.83** | **£15,407.72** | |

| FUNDING STREAM | REFERENCE | MONTH | SPORT | EVENT TYPE | DATES | LOCATION | COSTS | REQUESTED | FUNDED | NOTES |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ANNIVERSARY | 2172 | JUNE | Rowing | (blank) | 12/09/2026 | North shore portavogie | £290.00 | £290.00 | | Funding not recommended as guidance notes state that we will not fund "Donations/fundraising events or activities" |
| COACHING | 2195 | JUNE | Football | Irish FA National Coaching Certificate (NCC) Course x1 | 6-13 September 2026 | Lisburn and Castlereagh | £165.00 | £165.00 | | Funding not recommended as Bangor Swifts Football Club is not an afiliated club. "Our guidelines state, "Clubs must be affiliated to the Ards and North Down Sports Forum and newly affiliated clubs must be outside the 3-month waiting period" |
| EQUIPMENT | 2224 | JUNE | MMA | (blank) | (blank) | Newtownards | | £1,500.00 | | Funding not recommended - Club constitution not received |
| EQUIPMENT | 2235 | JUNE | Football | (blank) | (blank) | Bangor | | | | Funding not recommended as applcation was received after the deadline |
| EVENT | 2221 | JUNE | Sailing | Optimist Ulster Championships 2026 | 16 -17th May 2026 | Newtownards | | £4,500.00 | | Funding not recommended as applcation was received after the deadline. |
| GOLDCARD | 2145 | MAY | Hurling | Joe McDonagh Final | 7th June | Croke Park, Ireland | | ABM Gym, Pool, Health Suite, LDP Cryo, PF Pool | | The athlete has not attached a selection letter and used an old application form. I have requested additional info but also noted that if the 7th June is last day of competition that his application would be ineligible: "Goldcards will ONLY be granted if the event/competition exceeds more than 2 months from the date of application." |
| GOLDCARD | 2146 | MAY | Hurling | Joe McDonagh Final | 7th June 2026 | Ballycran | | BA Gym, Health Suite, Cryo & Pool | | The athlete selected to represent the Down Senior Hurling Team at the Intercounty Campaign 2026. This is confirmed by a Ulster GAA selection letter, which shows his last day of competition is the 26th May. the athletes Goldcard application is for training towards the Joe McDonagh Final for which he does not have a selection letter. Goldcard not recommended, our guidance states that "Goldcards will ONLY be granted if the event/competition exceeds more than 2 months from the date of application. " Goldcard would only be valid for approx 5 weeks. Furthermore, the selection letter does not provide information on his selection for the final. |
| TRAVEL & ACCOMMODATION | 2121 | MAY | Boxing | Irish National Championships | 6-11 April 2026 | Dublin, Ireland | £293.96 | £150.00 | | Funding not recommended as the application was received on 13 April 2026 for a event that concluded on 11 April 2026. Our guidelines state, "the application must be submitted prior to the event commencing." |
| TRAVEL & ACCOMMODATION | 2128 | MAY | Weightlifting | European Senior Weightlifting Championships | 17-26 April 2026 | Batumi, Georgia | £2,083.64 | £250.00 | | Funding not recommended the athlete is a representing as a coach and has not provided a valid selection letter. does not meet the eligibility criteria as competition for an, the athlete at the event. Our guidelines state, "Provide a specific selection letter for the event from the relevant Sport NI/Sport Ireland Recognised National Governing Body* (NGB). |
| TRAVEL & ACCOMMODATION | 2140 | MAY | Hockey | Masters Trial/Training | 8th March 2026 | Kings Hospital School, Dublin | £58.50 | £50.00 | | Funding not recommended as the application was received on 23 April 2026 for a event that concluded on 8 March 2026. Our guidelines state, "the application must be submitted prior to the event commencing." |
| TRAVEL & ACCOMMODATION | 2163 | JUNE | Gymnastics | Inter Regional Championships | 2-3 May 2026 | Southhampton | | | | Funding not recommended as we have not received an application form. Staff did get in contact to advise, but no communication back. Our guidelines state, "all applications must be completed in full, signed and submitted with all mandatory supporting documentation. Incomplete applications will not proceed for assessment" |
| TRAVEL & ACCOMMODATION | 2167 | JUNE | Gymnastics | British Schools Gymnastics Championships | 2-3 May 2026 | Stoke on Trent, England | £200.00 | £200.00 | | Funding not recommended as the application was received on 2 May 2026 for a event that commenced on 2 May 2026. Our guidelines state, "the application must be submitted prior to the event commencing." |
| TRAVEL & ACCOMMODATION | 2168 | JUNE | Gymnastics | British Schools Nationals | 3rd May 2026 | Stoke on Trent, England | £533.77 | £200.00 | | Funding not recommended as the application was received on 4 May 2026 for a event that commenced on 2 May 2026. Our guidelines state, "the application must be submitted prior to the event commencing." |
| TRAVEL & ACCOMMODATION | 2183 | JUNE | Hockey | 2026 Four Nations | 8-10 May 2026 | Aberdeen, Scotland | £202.99 | £200.00 | | Funding not recommended as the application was received on 13 May 2026 for a event that commenced on 8 May 2026. Our guidelines state, "the application must be submitted prior to the event commencing." |
| TRAVEL & ACCOMMODATION | 2198 | JUNE | Gymnastics | N.D.P, National Acrobatic Championships 2026 | 15 - 17 May 2026 | Stoke on Trent, England | £244.00 | £200.00 | | Funding not recommended as the application was received on 19 May 2026 for a event that commenced on 15 May 2026. Our guidelines state, "the application must be submitted prior to the event commencing." |
| Grand Total | | | | | | | | | | |

**ITEM 13**

## Ards and North Down Borough Council

| | |
|---|---|
| Report Classification | Unclassified |
| Exemption Reason | Not Applicable |
| | If multiple: |
| Meeting | Active and Healthy Communities Committee |
| Date of Meeting | 09 September 2026 |
| Responsible Director | Director of Active and Healthy Communities |
| Responsible Head of Service | Head of Community |
| Report title | Good Relations Annual Report 2025-2026 |
| Attachments | Appendix 1 - Good Relations Annual Report 2025-2026 |
| File Reference (if applicable) | GREL 415 |
| Legislation | Other<br>Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 |
| Resource Implications | None<br>Narrative: |
| Screening Requirements | *The Council will commit to consider the implication of all reports under the categories of Section 75, Rural Needs, Data Protection, Climate and Sustainability:*<br><br>Screening of decision not required |
| Link to Corporate Plan Priority and Outcome | Priority 3: Social<br>5. Safe, welcoming and inclusive communities that are flourishing<br>If multiple: |

**Background**

The Ards and North Down Borough Council Good Relations Strategy and Action Plan outlines a comprehensive plan to promote inclusivity, cohesion, and positive community engagement across the Borough. Developed through community consultations including focus groups, one to one meetings and survey responses, the strategy identifies key challenges and prioritises action areas in alignment with the "Together: Building a United Community" (T:BUC) framework.

The Good Relations Strategy (2025-2028) informs an annual action plan, which is submitted to the Executive Office for assessment. The Action Plan is based on the four key themes of the Executives Strategy Together Building United Communities:

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

The action plans aim is to promote the use of shared spaces, provide educational programmes for young people, and develop targeted cultural expression programmes. It also prioritises support for inclusive cultural events and education on shared history. By addressing entrenched divisions and leveraging opportunities for collaboration, the strategy aims to build a thriving and peaceful Borough.

The Good Relations section is funded 75% externally from the Executive Office and 25% by Council.

**Key Issues**

The 2024-2025 Programme operated within a challenging budgetary environment and continued budget cuts from the Executive in 2025-2026. This had the potential at the beginning of the financial year to reduce the number of programmes in the 2025-2026 action plan. The total Good Relations budget from TEO was reduced in 2025-2026 from £170,053.50 to £127,540.12, a reduction of 25%.

However, in July 2025, following the riots in Ballymena, the Executive office offered Councils an (additional) £20k budget to address racial and social cohesion. The application was approved and did not require match funding from Council. In September 2025 a further £30k was offered, and again match funding was not required. In January 2026 a further £12,700 was offered, and again match funding was not required.

The total amount awarded to ANDBC was £190,240.12 enabling the Council to deliver targeted Good Relations interventions despite the uncertainty and reduction of funding in the first quarter of the financial year.

**Next Steps**

The annual 2026-2027 action plan has been submitted to the Executive Office for approval and based on the 2025-2026 initial funding that was asked for of £170,053.50. Indeed, as reported in LoO for DGRP (District Good Relations Plan) 2026/27 (Item 5 on Agenda) there has been a reduction in funding to £114,460.66.

**Summary**
The Good Relations Team has been able to deliver all projects captured in the 2025-2026 Action Plan. However, there is recognition that reduced funding at the beginning of the financial year created pressures on team to potential consider reducing and removing projects. The additional funding from TEO over three application processes from July 2025 allowed officers to fully deliver all Good Relations programmes while ensuring outcomes of funding were achieved.

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

## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council **Notes** the Good Relations Annual report 2025-2026.

APPENDIX 1

# Ards and North Down Borough Council Good Relations

# Annual Report

# 2025 – 2026

# Contents


| | |
|---|---|
| Foreword | 3 |
| Children and Young People | 5 |
| Shared Community | 11 |
| Safe Community | 13 |
| Cultural Expression | 19 |
| Conclusion | 24 |

## Foreword

Ards and North Down Borough Council's Good Relations (GR) section sits within the Councils Community and Wellbeing Directorate. The District Councils GR Programme is delivered by the GR team in accordance with an annual Action Plan, which is approved by the Council and The Executive Office.

The section receives financial assistance from the Executive Office of 75% with Council contributing 25%. However 2025-2026 seen the Executive Office operate within a challenging budgetary environment and budget cuts continued in 2025-2026. The total Good Relations budget from TEO was reduced in 2025-2026 from £170,043.50 to £127,540.12, a reduction of 25%. This effected the overall delivery of the full GR Action Plan.

Additional funding during 2025-2026 enabled some programmes from the action plan to resume and also deliver programmes not on the action plan initially, specifically addressing race hate and promoting social cohesion.

The report on the Action Plan details a programme of activities to promote and deliver improved GR in the Council area in accordance with the aims and objectives outlined in the Together: Building a United Community Strategy (T:buc) and prioritised needs and issues identified in the 2025-2028 GR Strategy.

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

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

ANDBC's GR Action Plan for 2025– 2026 was delivered to meet the aims and strategic outcomes of the four key themes of: -

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

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

In addition to the following programmes the GR team:

- Offers support to local groups through regular Interagency meetings.
- Supports the Refugee and Asylum Forum, refugees and asylum seekers.
- Works closely with other statutory agencies.
- Delivers GR programmes to local schools and colleges, pre and post primary.
- Manages a successful Cultural Expression programme
- Manages the budget for Good Relations, Dispersal funding specifically aimed at those seeking asylum locally and Refugee funding to address racism.
- Works closely with other Council departments to avoid duplication of delivery and promote collaborative working.

## Children and Young People

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

**Strategic Outcomes**
1.1 Improving attitudes of children from different backgrounds.
1.2 Young people engaging in bringing the community together.

**AND01 Shared Education**

In 2024/2025 cuts in the budget meant the cross community Shared Education Programme that would normally take young people to battlefield sites in France and Belgium, demonstrating the joined effort of all community backgrounds was unable to go ahead. Instead, the programme was amended to deliver a 3-day educational initiative held over three weeks, designed to provide **224 students** with a comprehensive understanding of Northern Ireland's role in the First World War, particularly focusing on the Battle of the Somme. The programme aimed to foster cross-community relationships and promote friendships among young people from a diverse mix of Primary schools across the borough.
This year 2025/26 we have expanded the programme to include 8 Primary schools and delivered to **308 students**.

Participating Schools:

- Millisle Primary School
- Castle Gardens Primary School
- Kircubbin Integrated Primary School
- Ballyvester Primary School
- Loughries Primary School
- Comber Primary School
- Bangor Central Primary School
- St. Finian's Primary School

Schools were twinned and came together for each session to promote contact theory, helping build rapport and relationships between children from different perceived backgrounds and locality.

**Session 1** - schools received a visit from a local historian, providing historical context of Ireland pre WWI and the role of the 36th Ulster and 16th Irish divisions at home and abroad.
**Session 2 -** students visited the Somme Museum receiving a guided tour/talk, experiencing a day in mock trenches and learning about the various equipment, uniforms and weaponry from that era.
**Session 3 -** consisted of a twinned visit to Clandeboye Estate, which famously held the 36th Ulster Division training camps before the men were sent off to the frontlines. Students were given the opportunity to dress up, practice marching in time and learned about the role Clandeboye Estate played in supporting and preparing the division for war.

During this session students were welcomed by a short presentation from the Archivist at Clandeboye estate before being split into 3 mixed groups and engaging in 3 different workshops.

**Workshop 1 –** Local Historian & Air Cadets Instructor, Show & Tell, Dress up, Mock drills

**Workshop 2 –** Delivered by Council's Community Safety Team; Team building workshop using natural resources to create art pieces with 36th Ulster and 16th Irish badges.

**Workshop 3 –** Delivered by the Council's Play Officer: Students learned about toys and games that children would have played with at the time, including jacks, diabolos, cup & ball etc. They were then given the opportunity to free play with these and modern games.

These activities deepened their historical understanding, fostered critical thinking, and built better understanding and teamwork between students who came from different schools.

Outcomes and Impact - Cross-Community Collaboration: The programme successfully promoted engagement of students from diverse schools and backgrounds, fostering friendships that extend beyond the programme.

Educational Value: The programme provided a unique blend of historical learning and interactive experiences, deepening students' understanding of the First World War.

Friendship Building: Shared experiences helped students develop cross-community friendships, promoting social cohesion.

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

GR Officer noted observing children from different schools organically engage and form friend groups, with piggybacks and games taking place amongst themselves.

***The Somme Museum – St. Finian's & Castle Gardens PS***

**AND02 Shared Voices**

A programme co-designed with GR staff and volunteers from different ethnic backgrounds to address racism awareness in both primary and secondary schools. It covers topics such as Diversity, Stereotyping, Prejudice and Inclusion.
Children and Young people get the opportunity to meet people from different ethnic, national and religious backgrounds, who share their stories and promote an interest in other cultures and countries.

Programme is volunteer led and incurs no cost to either Council or Schools. In 2025/26 due to community tensions around immigration and the asylum process; programme was temporarily suspended.

As a result Shared Voices was delivered in two schools and **approx. 160 students** – Model Primary School & Kircubbin Integrated PS.

Kircubbin Primary School – celebration event for their Aspire Shared education programme. Shared Voices workshop was delivered by GR Officer, GR sourced Indian dance workshop, Polish Arts and crafts workshop. Approx 100 children from 6 different schools. Mixed into groups and rotated around different workshops.
**Shared Voices - Summer Schemes**

Cross Council departmental working with Community Development Unit. Shared Voices workshop was delivered to **approx. 200 children** in the Council's summer schemes across Holywood, Portavogie, West Winds, Bowtown, Ballygowan, Donaghadee, Comber and Bangor.

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

**<u>AND03 Building Young Peoples Resilience</u>**

**Young Urban Samurai –**

Collaborating with Community Safety team to deliver diversity & world around us workshops as part of their "Young Urban Samurai" programme; exploring the tenants of Bushido and how they can incorporate those values into their day to day lives.

GR Officer delivered 'World around us' Geography & Diversity workshop to **approx. 25** young people, examining cultural differences and similarities of UK and Japan, and discussing stereotyping, diversity and inclusion.

From the evaluations, 69% of participants showed a better attitude towards people from a different ethnic background after attending this event.

**Gone Fishing Drama Production –**

A drama based on the immigration riots in Belfast during 2024. Explored themes of identity, immigration and community tensions.
Play was performed for **approx. 250** Movilla High School students with a Q&A with cast members following.

Performance was also delivered to general public in Queen's Hall, Newtownards with **approx. 60** members of public in attendance. Q&A with cast members followed.


Evaluations showed 51% of participants increased their knowledge of cultural traditions / background while 80% felt it would bring people from different backgrounds together.

Feedback:

- Nice to get some insight into a culture I don't understand nor agree with. Always important to understand other perspectives. I do understand the gut instinct & point of fear. Good to highlight how sectarianism has evolved into racism which is evolving deeper into fascism & misogyny. Made me grumpy and hopeful at where we are & where we can go.
- Really enjoyed this play and use of language, music, lighting. I'm always for the people and against the "man" lol. I liked how it highlights the issues at hand, which is the government "old traditions" etc being pushed onto the younger culture. I'm from a mixed background and found this very good/informative. Thank you! :)
- I was not expecting the topic and definitely not the quality (amazing) of this production. Having lived in NI for 38 years as a Chinese, I did not feel any racism when I was first here but in later years this has been creeping in. It is a shame

because this is an amazing country. A bit of diversity will strengthen this beautiful country if only people will feel less threatened by the unfamiliar.

**Go Fly Your Kite –**

Go Fly Your Kite delivered a 3 week workshop to local 2 local primary schools around Anti-bullying, Diversity, Respect and what makes a good friend.
Young people used the medium of kite design and building to explore these topics concluding in a Fly your kite session in which the children flew their newly designed kites.

Schools delivered to – St. Finian's Primary School & Clandeboye Primary School

Feedback*:*

- I think this project is about flying your kite and what friend are about, like trust loyalty and kindness.
- I think this project was about flying and kite and what friends are about.
- It think it's being fair don't ignore people and trust people, respect also friendship kindness.

**AND04 Community Relations Through Sport – Removed**

Budget cuts resulted in programme not taking place.

## Our Shared Community

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

**Strategic Outcomes**

2.1 Increased use of shared space and services
2.2 Shared space accessible to all

**AND05 Living History**

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

In 2025/26 the programme was tailored to be offered to SERC and delivered to two of their Learning for life and work classes. In addition to increasing knowledge of the shared, living history of N.Ireland and Ireland, students also explored themes of personal development and resilience. This was a pilot delivery of the programme to this specific demographic of 16 – 21 year olds. In total **28 students** participated in the programme.

A facilitator guided the students throughout the programme, encouraging engagement and discussion of differing views on various themes.

- Week 1: Introduction / Ice Breaker - SERC
- Week 2: Siege Museum / Free Derry Museum
- Week 3: Shankill / Falls Tour - Coiste / Epic
- Week 4: History of Terror Walking Tour
- Week 5: Seamus Heaney Centre / Beyond Skin
- Week 6: Conclusion / Evaluation / Celebratory event

*Living history – 2026 SERC Students*

Feedback:

- It made me see the history of Northern Ireland. It was to see how people see from different point of views. Billy makes it easier to understand what the speakers way. He is a very nice person and makes us feel more knowledgeable
- Helped me see the catholic side that I wouldn't normally see in a good environment
- The project helped me to understand the troubles and impact it had on Northern Ireland better. I feel like the project helped me to fill the gaps in my knowledge about the history of Northern Ireland.
- Seeing the misogynistic struggle of Iranian and Afghan women was enlightening.

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

Evaluations showed:

- 32% positive change in their attitudes towards people from a different religious background
- 42% positive change in their attitudes towards people from a different ethnic background
- 37% positive change in whether they would attend an event in an area associated with another community

## Our Safe Community

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

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

**AND06 Holocaust Events**

The 2026 Holocaust Memorial Day events provided an opportunity for the community to come together for education, remembrance, and reflection. The series of events allowed participants to honour the memory of Holocaust victims, hear survivor testimonies, and engage with meaningful educational exhibitions.

Key Events:

1. **Chamber Event – 27th January 2026** (**Attendance: 100**) Held at Bangor City Hall, this formal gathering featured testimony from Michael

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

2. **Exhibition at Bangor Library – 21st January 2026** (**Attendance: 200**) A powerful 2 week long exhibition was hosted at Bangor Library, displaying artwork, written reflections, and educational materials from local schools and community groups. The exhibition provided a comprehensive educational experience, allowing attendees to learn about the Holocaust and its enduring impact.
3. **Local Schools Event – 28th January 2026** (**Attendance: Approx 240**) Held at Regent House, an assembly talk featured Michael Bibring, a second-generation Holocaust survivor. It was attended by a number of post primary schools from the borough, offering students a unique opportunity to learn about the Holocaust through personal family experiences, highlighting the importance of education and remembrance.

Outcomes and Impact - The 2026 Holocaust Memorial Day commemorations successfully honoured the victims of the Holocaust and reinforced the importance of remembrance. Each event – from the Chamber gathering to the Bangor Library exhibition and the school presentation – played a crucial role in educating and engaging the local community. The powerful survivor testimonies and the involvement of local schools and organisations were key strengths, ensuring that the memory of the Holocaust and its lessons continue to resonate across generations.


*Holocaust Memorial Exhibition*

Chamber Event Feedback:

Evaluations showed 81% of participants increased their knowledge of cultural traditions/backgrounds after attending the event with 91% who would recommend it to others

- A wonderful evening it was so valuable for my daughter to hear Michael Bibrings account. Andrew McBrides song was inspiring and beautiful.
- Michael spoke with emotion and brought his family to life, I will definitely come to other events.
- It was difficult to see from back, would possible help if speaker was on stage, fantastic speaker and storytelling, just a bit disappointed that when other genocides were mentioned that Gaza was not. Must mean everyone. But fantastic event.

Library Feedback:

- I think that this event has helped me understand World War 2 a little more and has deepened my knowledge in the subject.
- I liked the posters and the handmade things.
- Very educational

Schools event Feedback:

Evaluations showed 88% of participants increased their knowledge of cultural traditions/backgrounds after attending the event with 93% who would recommend it to others

- I found the talk very interesting and he knew a lot through it. I appreciate him coming and talking about it to us. It helps a lot with our GCSE.
- Brilliant story, excellent speakers.
- It was very interesting.

**AND07 Getting to know your Councillors.**

Programme removed from 25/26 delivery due to budget cuts.

**AND08 No Hate Here**

The “No Hate Here” programme delivers a range of diversity and inclusion programmes aimed at building community cohesion, tackling hate crime, and raising awareness of racism and sectarianism across the Borough. It aims to help participants better understand themselves and others, the programme combines creative arts, cultural events and learning to help foster acceptance, respect, and inclusivity.

In 2025/26 the Good Relation team delivered the following programmes under ‘No Hate Here’.

**Refugee Week – Myth Busting**

Good Relations hosted a Asylum Seeker & Refugee myth busting workshop, facilitated by an expert with over 20 years working in the volunteer and charity sector.
The workshop was aimed at providing factual information on Asylum Seekers rights, benefits, status, and the differences between an Asylum seeker and a Refugee.

**20** participants attended the workshop with 15 completed questionnaire returns.

Feedback:

- Getting message out to all is a must. Social media, radio, tv. To correct inaccurate information.
- Thank you - a very challenging, interesting and informative session. I came thinking it might be long, tedious, on a bright summers evening, but rather I leave encouraged and stimulated to keep hoping. ( I volunteer with Asylum seekers in a number of capacities)
- Good event. I do wish more people could learn this.

**Invisible Traffick NI – Human Trafficking Seminar**

As part of our ‘International Women’s Day’ event and in collaboration with ‘Invisible Traffick NI’, the Good Relations team hosted a seminar raising awareness of Human Traffick in the UK, using local examples within Northern Ireland to highlight the extent of the issues of modern day slavery.

Approximately **30** participants registered to attend.

Feedback:

- Great presentation and fantastic work by this group
- Very informative such a worthwhile course
- Speaker was very informative great event

**GRANDFest 2025/26 – Queen’s Hall**

On Saturday, 18th October 2025, the Good Relations Team hosted *GRANDFest 2025* at Queens Hall, Ards and North Down Borough. This vibrant celebration showcased the rich cultural diversity that strengthens and enriches our community. Residents and visitors alike were welcomed to explore a wide variety of music, art and food.

Cultural Performances Included:

- Traditional Indian Music and Folk Dance
- Traditional Irish dancers
- Traditional Scottish dancers
- Local singer, song writer
- Loughrie’s Men Shed ukulele band
- African Music Performers

Arts and crafts tables from various nationalities, flower arrangement workshop and food provided by the local Indian community.

Ards and North Down Borough Council PCSP and Play Development Officer facilitated information stalls and play workshop/games respectively.

GRANDFest 2025 achieved its goal of promoting intercultural understanding and appreciation. The engaging programme of cultural performances, art displays, and culinary experiences allowed attendees to connect with and learn from the diverse cultures that call Ards and North Down home. Indian folk dances, Traditional Irish and Scottish dancers, African and local artist's musical performances captivated audiences and highlighted the artistic vibrancy within our community.

The interactive arts and crafts stalls—from Polish papercraft to Colombian beadwork—invited approximately **200 attendees** to engage directly with various cultural traditions. The food station, a standout feature, allowed guests to enjoy flavours from around the globe.

Outcomes and impact - GRANDFest 2025 was a great success and a testament to the power of cultural celebration in fostering unity, respect, and mutual appreciation. It brought together individuals from various backgrounds, reinforcing the importance of inclusivity and shared community values. The Good Relations Team is proud to have delivered an event that highlighted the many ways cultural diversity contributes to a vibrant, thriving borough with 91% of attendees who would recommend it to family and friends.

*Loughries Men's ukulele band – GRANDfest 2025*

Feedback:

- An excellent event with a diverse range of music and food. Thank you for an enjoyable and entertaining afternoon.

- Really good event. Great selection of music and entertainment. Enjoyed that there was a quick turnaround time between artists. Could be more display events but nice crafts for the kids. Appreciated the free Tea/Coffee + food was amazing.

**Awake the Garden – Bangor Walled Garden**

Working in partnership with Ards and North Down Park's team, the Good Relations team delivered an open air movie screening of 'Grow Your Own', a heartfelt British comedy around the themes of immigration, stereotypes and inclusion within an English community allotment.
Audience attendance was estimated at 80 with a good mix of young and older generations.

Feedback:

- Great message in the movie – Prejudice is so hurtful – No one knows what someone has gone through. It's heart breaking to see what immigrants suffer. We should be more open hearted and understanding walking in their shoes.
- A super event, a little more supervision on the craft tables would have been beneficial but very enjoyable.
- Excellent event, film was challenging stereotype of both white British working class and negative viewing of immigrants and their capacity to integrate thoroughly enjoyable.

**Multicultural Day – Comber Primary School**

ArtsEtka facilitated a one day multicultural event in Comber Primary School.
The entire school were able to avail of 3 different workshops on rotation throughout the day.

Workshop 1 – Arts and Crafts
Workshop 2 – Bollywood Dancing
Workshop 3 – Indian Story telling

Approximately **400** children took part in the day of events.

Feedback:

- Learning new languages, learning that it is ok to be different cultures and that your unique in your own way, having fun, dancing

## Our Cultural Expression

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

**Strategic Outcomes**
4.1 Increased sense of community belonging.
4.2 Cultural diversity is celebrated.

## AND09 – Cultural Expression

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

Funding and Support - The programme is primarily funded through the Executive Office (75%) and the Council (25%). Support for events and festivals involving community bonfires is provided when communities agree to core conditions aimed at reducing the negative social and environmental impact of these bonfires. 2025-2026 introduced the first penalties applied to sites that displayed effigies or emblems on the bonfires. This resulted in 2 sites being penalised.

Site Management - A total of **27 sites** were managed across the Ards and North Down Borough Council (ANDBC) area from April to July 2025. The Council continues to collaborate with statutory agencies, including NIFRS, PSNI, NIHE, and EA, holding regular discussions to monitor and manage these sites effectively.

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

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

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

Evaluations showed 97% of those asked felt the event brought together people from different backgrounds.
Feedback:

- A great family event for the community
- Great event well organised

- An awesome day plenty of activities for the young kids and plenty to eat and drink. Brilliant

**Marshalling Training**

Event Marshall training provided for local community group members.

Feedback:
- Gave me more indepth understanding
- Good course, well hosted

**AND10 History Talks**

**St. Patrick's Day –** Go Fly Your Kite

St. Finian's Primary School, Newtownards availed of a one off workshop with facilitators 'Go Fly Your Kite'.

Primary 4 & 5 students were taught about the history and mythology of St. Patrick in Ireland. Using their new knowledge they then designed and decorated their own individual kites with themes and symbols from their lesson.

The students were taught how to fly their new kites and each went home with a kite tailored and designed by themselves.

Feedback:

- It was about St. Patrick, we had to draw a symbol, drew a horse shoe with a shamrock on it. I liked to draw the kite a lot
- It was about St. Patrick. We had to draw a symbol. I drew a hat and rainbow with a pot of gold. I like learning about St. Patrick

**'Behind the boring data' – Prof. Peter Shirlow**

An online series of seminars delivered by Prof. Peter Shirlow, director of the Institute of Irish Studies at University of Liverpool.

Using data collected from Census, Life and Times Surveys and through research carried out by the Institute of Irish Studies, a 3 part series was delivered addressing topics such a population demographics, media vs reality and the achievements of Northern Ireland.

36 registered participants, average attendance of 25.

Feedback:

- Good to have access to FACTS to challenge misconceptions from an esteemed academic who understands Northern Ireland
- I did not realise how much influence social media has on everybody lives. Peter was an excellent presenter of the facts behind the data exposed.
- Really good talks from Peter, I found him to be very balanced but equally open to discuss his life which made the talks very engaging. I enjoyed them so much I even tuned in from a work trip in London last week. It was maybe a little less in-depth than I expected but i think it was about the right level for the general audience. Jonny did a great job of moderating and making sure all voices were heard. Fantastic series of talks and I will definitely look out for more events.
- I have a greater understanding of Northern Ireland and how successful it is. I would like more publicity around the birth rate so our communities know we need people to come to our country to make it sustainable

**Diwali Cultural Celebration Workshops**

Upon request from Clandeboye PS, Good Relations organised facilitators to deliver a Diwali Celebration event with Clandeboye PS and St. Malachy's PS.

Approx **100** Children were able to take part in 3 workshops –

- Bollywood Dancing
- Arts and crafts
- Diwali Storytelling

These workshops promoted cultural diversity and inclusion and helped with integration of children from the Indian, Hindu, Sikh and Jain backgrounds within the schools.

Feedback from teachers included seeing a young girl's face light up when she found out they were going to learn about her cultural holiday.

Feedback:

- I loved it. I thought it was amazing. I wanted to stay.
- I like the storyteller
- Storyteller was great. I loved the puppets. Dancing was good and the music.

**Exploring Ards and North Down – What Makes Us Unique**

A series of 7 online seminars, each covering a locality within Ards and North Down Borough.
Facilitated by BBC Presenter and Tour Guide Lolly Spence, using presentations, modern recorded footage and historic footage from the Northern Ireland's Digital Film Archive to bring history to life.

**Areas covered –**
Newtownards
Donaghadee
Comber/Ballygowan/Killinchy

Holywood
Bangor
Portaferry/Portavogie
Kircubbin/Greyabbey

34 registered to attend, average 22 per seminar.

Evaluations showed 93% of participants felt the event helped bring people from different backgrounds together

Feedback:

- Interesting to think about many of the things that brought us together in the past with a common history such as the war effort post 1939 and how different communities worked together to support it. Film footage was really interesting to see and supported the spoken word.

- The project increased my knowledge of local history enormously - I also enjoyed the fact that it was a relatively small number of people attending regularly. The team, organisers and presenters, provided a warm, friendly welcome and were keen to interact. Amazing knowledge and wealth of resources. I left the province almost 40 years ago - having been born in Newtownards. It reminded me of home.

- Excellent and professional presentation, inclusion of Digital Film Archive footage really brought the history to life.

**Go Fly Your Kite – Community Development Play Clubs**

Go Fly Your Kite delivered their Diversity, Inclusion and What makes a good friend workshop to the Council's Play Clubs.

Approx **100** children took part in the programme, with each getting to design, decorate, fly and take home their kite.

Feedback:

- I think it's about friendship, helping each other and caring for each other.
- I learned about a good friend is loyal, kind and helps you.
- It was very very good, I really liked it, I think the project was about making friendships, kites and personalities and manners.

## Conclusion:

The Good Relations (GR) team will continue its important work throughout 2026-2027, building on the successes and lessons learned from previous initiatives. As part of its commitment to continuous improvement, the team will focus on closely monitoring the impact and effectiveness of each programme. This includes gathering valuable feedback from participants and actively encouraging the submission of evaluations. By carefully reviewing these evaluations, the GR team will be able to assess the success of each initiative, identify areas for enhancement, and ensure that future programmes are even more impactful and relevant to the diverse needs of the community.

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

ITEM 14

## Ards and North Down Borough Council

| | |
|---|---|
| Report Classification | Unclassified |
| Exemption Reason | Not Applicable |
| | If multiple: |
| Meeting | Active and Healthy Communities Committee |
| Date of Meeting | 09 September 2026 |
| Responsible Director | Director of Active and Healthy Communities |
| Responsible Head of Service | Head of Community |
| Report title | District Good Relations Plan 2026/27 |
| Attachments | Appendix 1 - Updated Action Plan 2026-2027 |
| File Reference (if applicable) | CW184 |
| Legislation | Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 |
| Resource Implications | Budget<br>Narrative: |
| Screening Requirements | *The Council will commit to consider the implication of all reports under the categories of Section 75, Rural Needs, Data Protection, Climate and Sustainability:*<br><br>Screening of decision not required |
| Link to Corporate Plan Priority and Outcome | Priority 3: Social<br>5. Safe, welcoming and inclusive communities that are flourishing<br>If multiple: |

**Background**
In January 2026 Council approved the District Good Relations Action Plan 2026 – 2027 prior to its submission to the Executive Office for approval in order to draw down funding.

**Context**
The initial Action Plan requested an amount of £170,053.50 from TEO with Council match funding this at 25 % with £56,684.50.

A Letter of Offer for 2026 – 2027 has now been received offering financial assistance from TEO totalling £114,460.66 to deliver the AND Good Relations Action Plan. However there is a deficit of £55,592.84.

Section 1.2 in the attached DCGRAP (District Council Good Relations Plan) outlines in red the reduction in the amount of budget available under each theme. Once salaries are removed from the financial assistance there is reduced budget to run programmes for the remaining months of 2026-2027. Maximum budget available for programmes is £31,473.21 compared to £105,597. We will work with departments such as PCSP (Policing and Community Safet Partnership) and other stakeholders and agencies to deliver Good Relations Action Plan.

It is anticipated, as in previous years, that there will be further rounds of funding from TEO that will be made available throughout the financial year. However, this isn't guaranteed and any further funding will be updated through Committee.

Members have previously been made aware the reduction in the budget and releasing of small amounts of funding well into the financial year makes delivery and impact of projects extremely difficult. Good Relations Team continually source alternative and additional funding and work in partnership with all agencies and stakeholders to mitigate against these issues.

Members should note that due to the reduction in funding of £55,592.84 the action plan has been highlighted in red with reduction in programmes under all aims and removal of Children Relations Through Sport Project, Holocaust and Other Genocide Programmes and Intergenerational Programmes. This will continually be reviewed and if further funding becomes available from TEO members will be advised accordingly.

## RECOMMENDATION

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

Appendix 1

The Executive Office

# DISTRICT COUNCIL GOOD RELATIONS PROGRAMME

# 2026/27 ACTION PLAN

**District Council: Ards and North Down Borough Council**

**Chief Executive Officer:**

**Section 1**

## 1.1 Programme information

| | |
|---|---|
| **Number of programmes** | 10 |
| **Name/role/contact details of all staff responsible for programme management** | REDACTED |

## 1.2 Financial information

| | |
|---|---|
| **Name/contact details for staff responsible for financial management of programme** | REDACTED |

| | 100% | 75% | Total budget amount following reduction | Total TEO amount financial assistance (75%) with reduction |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total cost** | £226,738 | £170,053.50 | £152,614.21 | £114,460.66 |
| **Total programme costs** | £105,597 | £79,197.75 | £31,473.21 | £23,604.91 |
| **Programme costs breakdown** | | | | |
| **Children and Young People** | £18,000 | £13,500 | £672.21 | £504.16 |
| **Shared Community** | £15,000 | £11,250 | £266.67 | £200 |
| **Safe Community** | £8,200 | £6,150 | 0 | 0 |
| **Cultural Expression** | £64,397 | £48,297.75 | £30,534.33 | £22,900.75 |
| **Total staff and other expenses costs** | | | | |
| **Staff cost breakdown** | £121,141 | £90,855.75 | £121,141.00 | £90,855.75 |
| **Job title and % of role focussing on GR (Job Descriptions to be forwarded to TEO along with completed Action Plan)** | GRO- 28.75hours- £47,216 GRA- £46,174 GR admin- 20 hour- £20,907 | GRO- 28.75hours- £35,412 GRA- £34,630.50 GR admin- 20 hour- £15,680.25 | | |
| **Other expenses breakdown e.g. travel, stationery, phones etc please give details** | Overtime £2,500 First Aiders allowance- £144 Mileage- £3,500 Car Parking- £100 Subsistence- £100 Training- £500 Total- £6,844 | Overtime £1875 First Aiders allowance- £108 Mileage- £2625 Car Parking- £75 Subsistence- £75 Training - £375 Total- £4,800 | | |

## 1.3 Claim deadlines

It is extremely important that all claims for expenditure are made promptly and that full expenditure is claimed for within six weeks of the end of the financial year. The claim deadlines for 26/27 are as follows:

- Quarter 1 to be with TEO no later than end of July 2026
- Quarter 2 to be with TEO no later than end of October 2026
- Quarter 3 to be with TEO no later than the end of January 2027
- Quarter 4 to be with TEO no later than 11th June 2027

## Section 2

| **2.01 PROGRAMME NAME** | | **2.02 CODE** |
|---|---|---|
| Shared Education | | AND01 |
| **2.03 KEY WORDS** | Youth, Educational, Historic Shared, Trip | |
| **2.04 Programme Summary** | The Shared Education programme that included a trip to the battlefields in France and Belgium has been amended to reflect the cut in budgets for Good Relations over the last number of years.<br><br>The amended cross community programme continues to deliver to young people to inform and educate them on the joined effort of all community backgrounds who took part in WWI. The programme will continue to enforce the message of how local people fought and died during this period. The amended programme has been altered over the last few years in an attempt to provide the greatest outcome for the programme. To build lasting friendships between the young people over a much shorter timeframe is a challenge. To help with this we have, where possible, linked the cross community schools that are in shared education through the EA.<br><br>The programme will be delivered in ANDBC and make use of our historic and cultural past. Young people will visit but not be limited to Clandeboye Estate and the Somme Centre. School sessions will be incorporated helping to build the cross community friendships that they may take with them from primary into post primary education. The programme will bring history alive for the participants. Participant numbers will also increase due to the programme being delivered at home.<br><br>The continued aim of the programme is to develop increased knowledge and understanding of key | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | anniversaries and develop an appreciation of their social, political and cultural significance for NI and the UK and Ireland then and now. This incorporates knowledge and awareness of the national and European context of this period can help to change participants perspectives of our shared history.<br><br>This programme will build on the experience of previous educational programmes.<br><br>The programme will be evaluated by pre and post questions and observation. | | | |
| **2.05 Contact details for programme staff** | REDACTED | | | |
| **2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)** | £10,000 | | | |
| **2.07 Total TEO contribution** | £7,500 | | | |
| **2.08 Total target no. of participants** | **Direct** | **300** | **InDirect** | **200** |
| **2.09 Budgeted unit cost of programme** | £33.33pp – Final breakdown is based on transport costs and venue hire | | | |
| **2.10 Targeted participant background analysis** | 50% PUL<br>50% CNR | | | |
| **2.11 Name and post code of Programme HQ** | **Location** | **Ards and North Down Borough Council** | **Location** | **BT19, BT20, BT21, BT22, BT23** |
| **2.12 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact** | **Location** | **Schools to be selected** | **Location** | **Schools to be selected** |
| | **Location** | | **Location** | |
| | **Location** | | **Location** | |
| | **Location** | | **Location** | |
| **2.13 T:BUC Key Aim** | Children and Young People | | | |
| **2.14 Link to good relations audit** | The Shared Education Programme addresses the persistent educational segregation identified as a significant barrier to good relations in the Ards & North Down Borough. Census data highlights that 68% of the population identify as Protestant and 32% as Catholic, other and non, showing the need for programmes that bring communities together.<br><br>The use of exhibitions and school assemblies ensures parental and community involvement, meaning that the programme has a wider reach. | | | |

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| | 62.6% of survey respondents prioritised education in improving good relations. |
| **2.15 Complementarity- include links with other Strategy's e.g. Peace Plus, Urban Villages, MEDF etc** | The Shared Education Programme complements the aims and objectives of multiple other strategies. The ANDBC Corporate Plan and ANDBC Big Plan (Community Plan) both contain outcomes in relation to flourishing and safe communities. By engaging young people and promoting increased understanding of shared history at a young age, increased mutual respect and tolerance will be fostered and carried forward into adulthood.<br><br>Multiple other strategies also highlight the importance of promoting good relations and understanding from a young age. These include:<br>• the Education Authority's Local Assessment of Need;<br>• Draft Programme for Government;<br>• Together Building a United Community;<br>• Children and Young People's Strategy;<br>• Racial Equality Strategy;<br>• Refugee Integration Strategy; and<br>• PEACEPLUS |
| **2.16 Impacted Communities – Urban, Rural or both** | Both |

| **2.01 PROGRAMME NAME** | | | | **2.02 CODE** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Shared Voices | | | | AND02 |
| **2.03 KEY WORDS** | Youth Community Diversity Education Rural Urban | | | |
| **2.04 Programme Summary** | This programme, co-designed with GR staff and volunteers from diverse ethnic backgrounds, raises racism awareness in primary schools and groups. Adapted to suit the needs and capacities of each school or group, the programme includes flexible delivery options: three workshops over three weeks, a condensed four-hour session, or a single, informal one-hour session.<br><br>Initially created for post-primary schools, the programme now includes P4 and upwards, aligning with their celebration of world cultures curriculum. Facilitators and volunteers from ethnic and European backgrounds educate children about their cultures and traditions, fostering understanding and respect.<br><br>Delivery to post-primary schools includes sessions with the PSNI addressing hate crime and hate incidents.<br><br>Reflecting local demographics, including asylum-seekers, this enhanced programme builds on past experiences to improve outcomes. Impact will be measured using pre- and post-programme questions and observations. | | | |
| **2.05 Contact details for programme staff** | REDACTED | | | |
| **2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)** | £1000 | | | |
| **2.07 Total TEO contribution** | £750 | | | |
| **2.08 Total target no. of participants** | **Direct** | **200** | **InDirect** | **100** |
| **2.09 Budgeted unit cost of programme** | £5pp | | | |
| **2.10 Targeted participant background analysis** | 75% PUL<br>25% CNR | | | |
| **2.11 Name and post code of Programme HQ** | **Location** | **Ards and North Down Borough Council** | **Location** | **BT20** |

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| **2.12 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact** | **Location** | Holywood<br>Ards<br>Ballyhalbert | **Location** | BT18 9ER<br>BT23 8EY<br>BT22 1DQ |
| | **Location** | Scrabo,<br>West Winds,<br>East End | **Location** | BT23 4NR<br>BT23 4QT<br>BT23 8LF |
| | **Location** | Donaghadee<br>Millisle<br>Ballywalter<br>Portavogie | **Location** | BT21 0AY<br>BT22 2DR<br>BT22 2PJ<br>BT22 1EB |
| | **Location** | | **Location** | |
| **2.13 T:BUC Key Aim** | Children and Young People | | | |
| **2.14 Link to good relations audit** | This programme aims to address the issues of racism and cultural understanding across the Borough. With 187 racist incidents and crimes recorded from 2019 to 2025 the programme's focus on raising awareness in schools is essential. The demographic makeup of the Borough's population (NISRA Census data 2021) shows 13% of residents born outside of Northern Ireland (including England, Scotland, Wales, Republic of Ireland & Others), further emphasising the need for cultural education.<br><br>In the focus group sessions, participants noted "entrenched divisions" and "stereotypes" as barriers to good relations. Programmes such as this will provide young people with the opportunity to learn more about people from diverse backgrounds.<br><br>Shared Voices provides support to schools and communities. Sessions with PSNI will enhance understanding of hate crimes, addressing the community's need for safety and inclusion. The programme's capacity to engage children from P4 onwards ensures early intervention, supporting the 68.2% of survey respondents who wanted more "social interactions" to improve good relations across the Borough. | | | |
| **2.15 Complementarity- include links with other Strategy's e.g. Peace Plus, Urban Villages, MEDF etc** | The Shared Voices complements the aims and objectives of multiple other strategies. The ANDBC Corporate Plan and ANDBC Big Plan (Community Plan) both contain outcomes in relation to flourishing and safe communities. By engaging young people and promoting increased understanding of shared history at a young age, | | | |

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| | increased mutual respect and tolerance will be fostered and carried forward into adulthood.<br><br>Multiple other strategies also highlight the importance of promoting good relations and understanding from a young age. These include:<br>• the Education Authority's Local Assessment of Need;<br>• Draft Programme for Government;<br>• Together Building a United Community;<br>• Children and Young People's Strategy;<br>• Racial Equality Strategy;<br>• Refugee Integration Strategy; and<br>• PEACEPLUS<br><br>In addition, there were a total of 141 race related incidents and a total of 79 recorded race crimes in the ANDBC area between Oct 24 and Sep 25, this relates to a 63.9% and 132% increase on the same period 23/24. (PSNI Statistics)<br>The trend with each of these categories shows an overall increase, with figures being at their highest since 2014/15.<br><br>Increase in coverage of Immigration issues and on going protests within Borough has led to increased tensions. Delivery of the programme has been impacted due to these concerns. |
| **2.16 Impacted Communities – Urban, Rural or both** | Both |

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">2.01 PROGRAMME NAME</th><th>2.02 CODE</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Youth Empowerment Programme</td><td>AND03</td></tr>
<tr><td>2.03 KEY WORDS</td><td colspan="2">Young, Skills, Shared</td></tr>
<tr><td>2.04 Programme Summary</td><td colspan="2">The Youth Empowerment Programme is a holistic programme designed to support young people in building resilience, developing positive relationships, and developing essential life skills. The programme aims to divert youth from negative influences, such as involvement with paramilitary groups, by offering structured, engaging, and transformative activities in a safe and inclusive environment.<br><br>The main objectives of the programme are to equip young people with the skills and tools to manage stress, adversity, and change in a healthy and constructive way, foster personal development through the enhancement of communication, problem-solving, decision-making, and leadership skills, encourage youth to become active, positive contributors to their communities, and support mental, emotional, and physical well-being, promoting a sense of purpose and self-worth.<br><br>Linking with the EA to support in recruitment and delivery of programme. Links with EA Youth Voice / Council<br><br>1. Resilience programme with SERC – “Skills for your life” Programme students and with Include Youth<br>2. Youth Council – supported and delivered by EA<br>3. Resilience Programme for young people to build confidence delivered in schools. PUL & CNR mix.<br><br>The programme will include workshops, and mentorship opportunities. It will include life skills workshops that deliver sessions on decision-making, communication, goal setting, emotional intelligence, and conflict resolution. Mentorship and role model support will offer access to positive role models, community mentors, and peer support networks to inspire and guide youth. The programme will be delivered in collaboration with community organisations, youth clubs, schools, and sports clubs.</td></tr>
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| | A drama to tackle current societal issues i.e. Immigration, Anti paramilitarism, Youth empowerment themes will be delivered to a number of schools if funding available. | | | |
| **2.05 Contact details for programme staff** | REDACTED | | | |
| **2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)** | £7000 | | | |
| **2.07 Total TEO contribution** | £5250 | | | |
| **2.08 Total target no. of participants** | **Direct** | **150** | **InDirect** | **20** |
| **2.09 Budgeted unit cost of programme** | £46.66 | | | |
| **2.10 Targeted participant background analysis** | 75% PUL<br>25% CNR | | | |
| **2.11 Name and post code of Programme HQ** | **Location** | **Ards and North Down Borough Council** | **Location** | **BT20** |
| **2.12 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact** | **Location** | Bangor | Location | BT20 4TD |
| | **Location** | Newtownards | **Location** | BT23 7HA |
| | **Location** | Glastry | **Location** | BT22 1RB |
| | **Location** | | **Location** | |
| **2.13 T:BUC Key Aim** | Children and Young People | | | |
| **2.14 Link to good relations audit** | This programme aims to tackle anti-social behaviour and paramilitary influence among young people, which was highlighted as a key concern across all of the focus groups.<br><br>Anti-social behaviour and lack of activities for young people were noted as challenges in survey findings, with 35% identifying "lack of engagement opportunities for children and young people" as a barrier to good relations.<br><br>This programme's holistic approach to skill-building, mentorship, and developing resilience will help support the development of young people.<br><br>Education and skills deprivation is a concern in 12 of the Council area's 86 statistical districts, all of which fall within NI's 25% most deprived areas in relation to this measure. | | | |

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| **2.15 Complementarity- include links with other Strategy's e.g. Peace Plus, Urban Villages, MEDF etc** | This programme complements the aims and objectives of multiple other strategies. The ANDBC Corporate Plan and ANDBC Big Plan (Community Plan) both contain outcomes in relation to flourishing and safe communities. By engaging young people and promoting increased understanding of shared history at a young age, increased mutual respect and tolerance will be fostered and carried forward into adulthood.<br><br>Multiple other strategies also highlight the importance of promoting good relations and understanding from a young age. These include:<br>• the Education Authority's Local Assessment of Need;<br>• Draft Programme for Government;<br>• Together Building a United Community;<br>• Children and Young People's Strategy;<br>• Racial Equality Strategy;<br>• Refugee Integration Strategy; and<br>• PEACEPLUS |
| **2.16 Impacted Communities – Urban, Rural or both** | Both |

| **2.01 PROGRAMME NAME** | **2.02 CODE** |
|---|---|
| Community Relations Through Sport - REMOVED | AND04 |

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| **2.03 KEY WORDS** | Youth Schools Sport Rural Urban facilities |
| **2.04 Programme Summary** | This programme will work with pre and post primary schools in the borough. The Community Relations Through Sport Programme is designed to introduce young people to sport with which they may not normally associate. The programme will run across the borough in both urban and rural areas. Similar to the Game of 3 Halves the programme includes a 'fourth half' on community relations.<br>Over the 5 weeks the 'fourth half' addresses issues on sectarianism and racism while the sporting element introduces the young people to new sports often associated with a particular community background.<br>Building on the work from previous years, this cross-community programme of activity with schools across ANDBC continues to build links between rural and urban communities and maintained and controlled schools in the AND area. |

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| | The numbers and background of participants will be reflected by the demographics of the area and schools/ clubs engaged.<br><br>If required, the programme can include transport enabling rural schools/clubs to engage.<br><br>The programme will also work closely with local sporting clubs to deliver a one day Game of 3 Halves event. The event encourages coaches and participants to take part in new sports.<br><br>Programme will be evaluated by pre and post questions and observation. | | | |
| **2.05 Contact details for programme staff** | REDACTED | | | |
| **2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)** | ~~£3,000~~ | | | |
| **2.07 Total TEO contribution** | ~~£2,250~~ | | | |
| **2.08 Total target no. of participants** | **Direct** | | **InDirect** | |
| **2.09 Budgeted unit cost of programme** | ~~£26.66~~ | | | |
| **2.10 Targeted participant background analysis** | 75% PUL<br>25% CNR | | | |
| **2.11 Name and post code of Programme HQ** | **Location** | **Ards and North Down Borough Council** | **Location** | **BT20** |
| **2.12 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact** | **Location** | **Portaferry** | **Location** | **BT22 1RB** |
| | **Location** | Ballyhalbert | **Location** | BT22 1DQ |
| | **Location** | Bangor | **Location** | BT20 3DS |
| | **Location** | Holywood | **Location** | BT18 9EW |
| **2.13 T:BUC Key Aim** | Children and Young People | | | |
| **2.14 Link to good relations audit** | The focus groups highlighted the importance of engaging children and young people, with 35% of survey respondents identifying 'Lack of engagement opportunities for young people' as a significant barrier to good relations.<br><br>62.6% highlighted 'Education' as another area which was key to developing good relations in the area. | | | |

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| | 68% of respondents also highlighted the need for more social interactions between people in the Borough to develop good relations.<br><br>Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour, Paramilitarism and Drugs / Alcohol Related Issues were viewed as the most urgent social challenges facing communities in the ANDBC area in need of addressing. |

| **2.01 PROGRAMME NAME** | | **2.02 CODE** |
|---|---|---|
| Living History | | AND05 |
| **2.03 KEY WORDS** | Education, Rural, Urban, Trip, Fac, Shared, Summer | |
| **2.04 Programme Summary** | The Living History Programme is a 5 week programme for participants which includes a series of educational and historical based Rural and Urban visits to places of interest within the local areas and beyond that helps people understand their shared history, breaks down barriers and challenges people to venture elsewhere to learn about their shared past. A calendar of visits will be developed aimed at breaking down barriers and offer opportunities for participants to build an understanding of our shared history.<br>Some of the trips may include visits to places like, Crumlin Road Gaol, Grange Gorman, Dublin Library, Glasnevin.<br><br>Participants will be introduced to places in Northern Ireland and Ireland that have had an impact on our lives today. Each visit is followed by post discussion to explore the shared history of the visit. It will also focus on visiting places within AND as a way of breaking down some barriers and addressing silent sectarianism.<br>AND is an area with a wealth of diversity with a range of different places where communities of different community backgrounds meet and engage, in many cases with people from their own community background. Creating everyday opportunities for people to meet and engage with people from other community backgrounds is the focus of this programme. It aims to create opportunities for people to learn more about the people, places and communities that make Northern Ireland the diverse and multi-cultural place that it is. | |

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| | The programme will be open to all community backgrounds and faiths and will be publicly advertised. This will ensure a good mix of participants and community background. The programme is much more than a tourist tour because the places visited all have an influence on society today eg Visit to Crumlin Road Gaol followed by discussion with ex combatants – links closely to the Good Friday agreement and the release of prisoners.<br><br>By advertising it will engage with the different 'class' elements often identified in ANDBC. All visits are followed by in depth discussion on issues that have engulfed Northern Ireland and Ireland over the centuries. This programme is designed to encourage dialogue and address these issues from an up-to-date viewpoint and in a safe environment.<br><br>The numbers and background of participants will be reflected by the demographics of the area and transport availability.<br>This programme encourages returning participants that has enabled open discussion and a better understanding of the effect the 'troubles' has had on so many.<br><br>If full budget is achieved this year, we will deliver the Living History programme twice. To older people and to younger people. This will enable us to reach two very different demographics: CYP and Over 50's (average age of past participants)<br><br>Hate crime is on the increase and equally as relevant as 'The Troubles' especially for young people. GR will endeavour to include diversity and challenges faced by others into the LH programme.<br><br>Programme will be evaluated by pre and post questions and observation. | | | |
| **2.05 Contact details for programme staff** | REDACTED | | | |
| **2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)** | £15,000 | | | |
| **2.07 Total TEO contribution** | £11,250 | | | |
| **2.08 Total target no. of participants** | **Direct** | **80** | **Direct** | **150** |
| **2.09 Budgeted unit cost of programme** | £187.50 (£31.25pp per week) | | | |

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| **2.10 Targeted participant background analysis** | 75% PUL<br>25% CNR | | | |
| **2.11 Name and post code of Programme HQ** | **Location** | **Ards and North Down Borough Council** | **Location** | **BT20** |
| **2.12 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact** | **Location** | Ards | **Location** | BT23 4AP |
| | **Location** | Conlig | **Location** | BT23 7PR |
| | **Location** | Portaferry | **Location** | BT22 1PE |
| | **Location** | Bangor | **Location** | BT19 1SH |
| **2.13 T:BUC Key Aim** | Our Shared Community | | | |
| **2.14 Link to good relations audit** | The focus groups revealed that symbolic and physical divisions marked by flags, murals, and graffiti persist, reinforcing sectarian attitudes.<br><br>40% of survey respondents identified 'Political Differences' as a key barrier to good relations, while 33.8% highlighted 'Religious Differences.'<br><br>AND's population is 68% Protestant, 14% Catholic, and 17% non-religious, reflecting the need for programmes that bring the community together.. 62.6% of respondents called for 'Education' as a priority for improving good relations. | | | |
| **2.15 Complementarity- include links with other Strategy's e.g. Peace Plus, Urban Villages, MEDF etc** | The Living History programme complements the aims and objectives of multiple other strategies. The ANDBC Corporate Plan and ANDBC Big Plan (Community Plan) both contain outcomes in relation to flourishing and safe communities, which this programme will stand to achieve by bringing people from across the Borough together in order to learn and gain greater understanding of the historical perspectives of their neighbours.<br><br>Promoting better relations and generating increased respect for different historical points of view with the aim of fostering shared, safe communities is considered a priority in multiple other strategies, including:<br><br>• Draft Programme for Government;<br>• Together Building a United Community;<br>• Children and Young People's Strategy;<br>• Racial Equality Strategy;<br>• Refugee Integration Strategy; and<br>• PEACEPLUS | | | |

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

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

<table>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="4">The numbers and background of participants will be reflected by the demographics of the area and based on previous programmes. Programme will be evaluated by pre and post evaluations and observation.</td></tr>
<tr><td>2.05 Contact details for programme staff</td><td colspan="4">REDACTED</td></tr>
<tr><td>2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)</td><td colspan="4">£3,000</td></tr>
<tr><td>2.07 Total TEO contribution</td><td colspan="4">£2,250</td></tr>
<tr><td>2.08 Total target no. of participants</td><td>Direct</td><td>400</td><td>InDirect</td><td>100</td></tr>
<tr><td>2.09 Budgeted unit cost of programme</td><td colspan="4">£7.50pp</td></tr>
<tr><td>2.10 Targeted participant background analysis</td><td colspan="4">75% PUL<br>25% CNR</td></tr>
<tr><td>2.11 Name and post code of Programme HQ</td><td>Location</td><td>Ards and North Down Borough Council</td><td>Location</td><td>BT20</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">2.12 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact</td><td>Location</td><td>Ards</td><td>Location</td><td>BT23 4JT</td></tr>
<tr><td>Location</td><td>Bangor</td><td>Location</td><td>BT20 4BT</td></tr>
<tr><td>Location</td><td>Holywood</td><td>Location</td><td>BT18 9HQ</td></tr>
<tr><td>Location</td><td>Ballyhalbert</td><td>Location</td><td>BT22 IDQ</td></tr>
<tr><td>2.13 T:BUC Key Aim</td><td colspan="4">Our Safe Community</td></tr>
<tr><td>2.14 Link to good relations audit</td><td colspan="4">The survey results highlighted the need for more educational programmes to improve good relations across the borough and this programme will aim to build awareness and increase understanding of historical events.<br><br>There were 30 sectarian crimes recorded in the Borough Oct 24 to Sep 25, which is a 233% increase from the same time period in 23/24. There were 48 sectarian incidents between Oct 24 and Sep 25, which is a 37% increase from the same period in 23/24, this highlights the need for the programme.<br><br>Focus groups all highlighted the importance "shared history education" as a tool to promote good relations across the Borough.<br><br>This programme aims to foster intergenerational understanding and contribute to a broader culture of acceptance and inclusion.</td></tr>
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| | The programme also addresses key barriers to Good Relations identified during consultation, namely lack of engagement and opportunities for awareness raising. |
| **2.15 Complementarity- include links with other Strategy's e.g. Peace Plus, Urban Villages, MEDF etc** | Similar to other historical related initiatives contained within this Action Plan, The Holocaust Memorial and other Genocides Programme complements the aims and objectives of multiple other strategies. The ANDBC Corporate Plan and ANDBC Big Plan (Community Plan) both contain outcomes in relation to flourishing and safe communities, which this programme will stand to achieve by bringing people from across the Borough together in order to learn and gain greater understanding of the historical perspectives of their neighbours.<br><br>Promoting better relations and generating increased respect for different historical points of view with the aim of fostering shared, safe communities is considered a priority in multiple other strategies, including:<br><br>• Draft Programme for Government;<br>• Together Building a United Community;<br>• Children and Young People's Strategy;<br>• Racial Equality Strategy;<br>• Refugee Integration Strategy; and<br>• PEACEPLUS |
| **2.16 Impacted Communities – Urban, Rural or both** | Both. |

| **2.01 PROGRAMME NAME** | | **2.02 CODE** |
|---|---|---|
| Getting to Know Your Councillors - GTYC | | AND07 |
| **2.03 KEY WORDS** | Shared, Youth, Diverse | |
| **2.04 Programme Summary** | This programme is open to people of all ages, including schools, community groups, and individuals, to develop a better understanding of the role of Good Relations within local councils, the role of regional and local government in Northern Ireland, and the importance of active participation in the democratic process.<br><br>Participants of all ages will gain insights into how local and regional government operates, including | |

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| | the roles and responsibilities of councillors, council structures, and decision-making processes. The programme will also educate participants on the voting system in Northern Ireland, the electoral process, and the importance of voting in shaping their communities and influencing change.<br>The programme will include interactive sessions where participants can meet and question their local councillors. This dialogue will not only educate participants but also allow elected members to hear firsthand the concerns of their constituents, fostering transparency and accountability.<br><br>All political parties and independent councillors will be invited to participate. Groups registered on the community database, as well as all schools, community organisations, and interested individuals, will be invited to take part. The programme will be adapted to suit all age groups, from school-age children to adults, using age-appropriate workshops and materials.<br><br>The programme will be evaluated through pre- and post-programme surveys, observation, and feedback from participants and councillors. The numbers and backgrounds of participants will reflect the demographics of the area. | | | |
| **2.05 Contact details for programme staff** | REDACTED | | | |
| **2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)** | £200 | | | |
| **2.07 Total TEO contribution** | £150 | | | |
| **2.08 Total target no. of participants** | **Direct** | **60** | **InDirect** | |
| **2.09 Budgeted unit cost of programme** | £3.33pp | | | |
| **2.10 Targeted participant background analysis** | 75% PUL<br>25% CNR | | | |
| **2.11 Name and post code of Programme HQ** | **Location** | **Ards and North Down Borough Council** | **Location** | **BT20** |
| **2.12 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact** | **Location** | Holywood | **Location** | BT18 9ER |
| | **Location** | Portaferry | **Location** | BT22 1RB |
| | **Location** | Bangor | **Location** | BT20 4TH |
| | **Location** | | **Location** | |
| **2.13 T:BUC Key Aim** | Our Safe Community | | | |

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| **2.14 Link to good relations audit** | This programme aims to enhance public awareness of local government, addressing the focus group's call for "community leadership programmes".<br><br>In the NILT survey- 46.6% of survey respondents stated that relations between Protestants and Catholics had stayed "about the same" over five years, programmes like this that increase transparency, and dialogue will be key to improving relations going forward.<br><br>The community survey also noted that "awareness raising" (74.8%) was important to improve relations and this programme aims to build connections between councillors and constituents.<br><br>The programme also addresses key barriers to Good Relations identified during consultation, namely lack of engagement and opportunities for awareness raising. |
| **2.15 Complementarity- include links with other Strategy's e.g. Peace Plus, Urban Villages, MEDF etc** | Contained within the ANDBC Corporate Plan, there is an emphasis on the Council being an 'engaged Borough,' with businesses and citizens having the opportunity to directly influence services, plans and investment.<br><br>This initiative will bridge a gap between citizens and their elected representatives and increase awareness of the respective roles and responsibilities of Councillors, and what they have the power to change and influence. |
| **2.16 Impacted Communities – Urban, Rural or both** | Both. |

| **2.01 PROGRAMME NAME** | | **2.02 CODE** |
|---|---|---|
| No Hate Here | | AND08 |
| **2.03 KEY WORDS** | Diverse, Shared, Rural. Urban, Fac, Youth | |
| **2.04 Programme Summary** | The *"No Hate Here"* programme delivers a range of diversity and inclusion programmes aimed at building community cohesion, tackling hate crime, and raising awareness of racism and sectarianism across the Borough. It aims to help participants better understand themselves and others, the programme combines creative arts, cultural events, and learning to help foster acceptance, respect, and inclusivity. | |

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| | The programme features a variety of events and activities developed in partnership with statutory agencies, voluntary organisations, and community groups, including PSNI, NIHE, YMCA, and the Intercultural Forum's *No Hate Here* subgroup.<br><br>It will use innovative approaches to engage participants, including arts-based projects, cultural celebrations, and newly introduced dance and drama workshops. These sessions will provide participants with a safe space to explore themes of identity, diversity, and equality, encouraging open dialogue and positive expression.<br><br>A series of awareness-raising seminars and talks will also be delivered, featuring guest speakers, survivors of hate incidents, and experts who share insights into addressing racism and sectarianism.<br><br>Schools and local communities will benefit from tailored workshops through the *Shared Voices* and diversity programmes, promoting cultural understanding and challenging stereotypes.<br><br>The programme will also support asylum seekers and refugees arriving in the Borough. Working in partnership with YMCA and local networks, newcomers will receive practical support, including access to local information, ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes, and advice to help them integrate and thrive within their new communities.<br><br>Targeting a wide range of participants, including local communities, schools, and individuals seeking asylum, the programme will engage with all age groups. Creative workshops, cultural activities, and awareness campaigns will empower participants to challenge hate and build better relationships with others, promoting inclusion across the Borough.<br><br>The outcomes of the programme will include increased understanding of diversity and cultural traditions, reduced incidences of hate crime, and strengthened relationships between communities and statutory organisations.<br><br>To measure success, the programme will be evaluated through pre- and post-surveys, |

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| | observations, and feedback from participants. Participation numbers and the background of attendees will reflect the demographics of the area, ensuring inclusivity and representation. | | | |
| **2.05 Contact details for programme staff** | REDACTED | | | |
| **2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)** | £4,000 | | | |
| **2.07 Total TEO contribution** | £3,000 | | | |
| **2.08 Total target no. of participants** | **Direct** | **150** | **InDirect** | **100** |
| **2.09 Budgeted unit cost of programme** | £26.66pp | | | |
| **2.10 Targeted participant background analysis** | 75% PUL<br>25% CNR | | | |
| **2.11 Name and post code of Programme HQ** | **Location** | **Ards and North Down Borough Council** | **Location** | **BT20** |
| **2.12 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact** | **Location** | Bangor | **Location** | BT20 5AY |
| | **Location** | Portaferry | **Location** | BT22 1RB |
| | **Location** | Holywood | **Location** | BT18 9ER |
| | **Location** | | **Location** | |
| **2.13 T:BUC Key Aim** | Our Safe Community | | | |
| **2.14 Link to good relations audit** | In addition, there were a total of 141 race related incidents and a total of 79 recorded race crimes in the ANDBC area between Oct 24 and Sep 25, this relates to a 63.9% and 132% increase on the same period 23/24. (PSNI Statistics)<br>The trend with each of these categories shows an overall increase, with figures being at their highest since 2014/15.<br>This shows evidence of need to continue to promote better racial and cultural awareness. | | | |
| **2.15 Complementarity- include links with other Strategy's e.g. Peace Plus, Urban Villages, MEDF etc** | The 'No Hate Here' programme complements the aims and objectives of multiple other strategies. The ANDBC Corporate Plan and ANDBC Big Plan (Community Plan) both contain outcomes in relation to flourishing and safe communities. By engaging young people and promoting increased understanding of shared history at a young age, increased mutual respect and tolerance will be fostered and carried forward into adulthood. | | | |

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

| **2.01 PROGRAMME NAME** | | **2.02 CODE** |
|---|---|---|
| Cultural Expression Programme | | AND09 |
| **2.03 KEY WORDS** | Hard to reach, Urban, Rural,Shared | |
| **2.04 Programme Summary** | The Cultural Expression programme has been developed and builds on previous programmes with hard-to-reach groups and key influencers from perceived ex paramilitary backgrounds. The programme supports cultural expression festivals to encourage the positive promotion of PUL and CNR culture to the wider society. Festivals and bonfires will be regularly monitored, and any negative issues addressed before they become more challenging.<br><br>The cross-community Cultural Expression programme gives the PUL community a sense of belonging that they feel is being eroded and the CNR community a sense of inclusion. While bonfires are always going to be contentious if Good Relations can work with the groups to minimise the negativity seen around bonfires it will develop greater respect among communities and cultures in the local areas; the aims are that by reducing the negativity this may also influence wider society and those who would not normally be associated with cultural festivals.<br><br>The programme maintains and builds relationships between the Council and retains engagement. This will also enable and encourage engagement around other hard issues (e.g., paramilitarism, flags, murals), and find alternatives means for dialogue, training and capacity building. | |

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| | The programme will also help engage hard to reach groups positively when external negative influences effect certain communities (e.g., Brexit, NI Protocol and Irish Sea Border). The programme and its activities are designed to include the wider community and create a sense of belonging, reducing the fear of intimidation often associated with bonfires.<br><br>The programme aims to offer young people more opportunities locally, addressing the sense of hope that some feel and the lack of educational attainment faced by many young protestant boys. While the delivery of programme will not directly address this, it acts as important link and engagement mechanism for council and other agencies to progress their interagency activities in these areas with a focus on the community planning.<br><br>Cultural festivals supported through the programme continue to be well attended by many members of the community.<br><br>All statutory agencies agreed that although there are still some concerns especially with the size and location of a few traditional bonfires, community engagement in association with the CE Agreement and the CE programme has significantly reduced negative incidents that previously occurred during bonfire season.<br><br>The numbers and background of participants will be reflected by the demographics of the area and groups that can engage through the programme.<br><br>The programme will be evaluated by pre and post questions and observation, monitoring and reports.<br><br>The Council's Good Relations team will actively seek guidance from Stormont and the recommendations outlined in the FICT (Flags, Identity, Culture, and Tradition) report to address issues related to flags. |
| **2.05 Contact details for programme staff** | REDACTED |
| **2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)** | £60,000 |
| **2.07 Total TEO contribution** | £45,000 |

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| **2.08 Total target no. of participants** | **Direct** | **27** | **InDirect** | **2000** |
| **2.09 Budgeted unit cost of programme** | £2222.22 per group | | | |
| **2.10 Targeted participant background analysis** | 75% PUL<br>25% CNR | | | |
| **2.11 Name and post code of Programme HQ** | **Location** | **Ards and North Down Borough Council** | **Location** | **BT20** |
| **2.12 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact** | **Location** | Ards | **Location** | BT23 4YH |
| | **Location** | Comber | **Location** | BT23 5DF |
| | **Location** | Holywood | **Location** | BT18 9PB |
| | **Location** | Ballygowan | **Location** | BT23 6NA |
| **2.13 T:BUC Key Aim** | Our Cultural Expression | | | |
| **2.14 Link to good relations audit** | Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey Data highlight a strong willingness for further integration within the ANDBC population, however also highlights a high level of discomfort in relation to cultural symbols, highlighting a need for further work in this area in order to address areas of concern and to break down barriers and misconceptions. | | | |
| **2.15 Complementarity- include links with other Strategy's e.g. Peace Plus, Urban Villages, MEDF etc** | There are a number of strategies and policies which promote increased confidence and respect for the various cultural traditions which exist in Ards and North Down, as well as Northern Ireland as a whole. In particular, Together Building a United Community includes a specific strand dedicated to acknowledging the richness of cultural heritage and celebrating cultural expression.<br><br>Promoting a society where all citizens feel secure in celebrating their respective cultural identities is also a key theme within the ANDBC Corporate Plan, ANDBC Big Plan, the Draft Programme for Government and the Northern Ireland Racial Equality Strategy. | | | |
| **2.16 Impacted Communities – Urban, Rural or both** | Both. | | | |

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| **2.01 PROGRAMME NAME** | | **2.02 CODE** |
| History Talks – Understanding ourselves and others | | AND10 |
| **2.03 KEY WORDS** | Fac Hard to reach Sin- Id Urban | |

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| **2.04 Programme Summary** | Ards and North Down Borough Council will deliver a series of History Talks throughout the year, focusing on shared history, remembrance, gender equality, and peace and reconciliation. These talks will align with significant historical and cultural dates, offering opportunities for learning, dialogue, and reflection across the Borough.<br><br>The programme will include talks and workshops around key events such as St Patrick's Day, Ulster Scots Week, Good Relations Week, and International Women's Day, as well as ongoing discussions addressing Peace and Reconciliation.<br><br>Each talk will aim to provide participants with a deeper understanding of our shared history, encouraging open, unbiased conversations about the complexities of Northern Ireland and Ireland's past. Previous talks have included the Decade of Centenaries, Partition, Brexit, and the NI Protocol.<br><br>The programme will also include talks on remembrance and diversity, focusing on how historical events shape identities and community relations today. Participants will be introduced to multiple perspectives, helping individuals better understand "the other side" and encouraging mutual respect and shared understanding. These sessions will explore how history has impacted gender, cultural traditions, and community development, fostering conversations that celebrate diversity while acknowledging challenges.<br><br>Participants will be invited through the Council's Good Relations database, social media platforms, and website to ensure representation reflective of the Borough's demographics. Each event will aim to engage a wide range of individuals, creating opportunities for communities to come together and reflect on their shared history while respecting differing identities.<br><br>The programme will be monitored through pre- and post-event evaluations, measuring participants' understanding, attitudes, and perceptions. |
| **2.05 Contact details for programme staff** | REDACTED |
| **2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)** | £4,397 |

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| **2.07 Total TEO contribution** | £3,297.75 | | | |
| **2.08 Total target no. of participants** | **Direct** | **150** | **InDirect** | **50** |
| **2.09 Budgeted unit cost of programme** | £29.31 | | | |
| **2.10 Targeted participant background analysis** | 75% PUL<br>25% CNR | | | |
| **2.11 Name and post code of Programme HQ** | **Location** | **Ards and North Down Borough Council** | **Location** | **BT20** |
| **2.12 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact** | **Location** | Portaferry | **Location** | BT22 1PE |
| | **Location** | Comber | **Location** | BT23 5DF |
| | **Location** | Holywood | **Location** | BT18 9PB |
| | **Location** | Ballygowan | **Location** | BT23 6NA |
| **2.13 T:BUC Key Aim** | Cultural Expression | | | |
| **2.14 Link to good relations audit** | This programme is key for tackling racism and sectarianism, given the increase in racist and sectarian incidents in the Borough.<br>In addition, there were a total of 141 race related incidents and a total of 79 recorded race crimes in the ANDBC area between Oct 24 and Sep 25, this relates to a 63.9% and 132% increase on the same period 23/24. (PSNI Statistics)<br>The trend with each of these categories shows an overall increase, with figures being at their highest since 2014/15.<br>This shows evidence of need to continue to promote better racial and cultural awareness.<br><br>The programme's focus on cultural events, arts-based projects, and ESOL support for asylum seekers addresses the socio-economic and cultural diversity in the area, where 5% of the population was born outside the UK or Ireland.<br><br>Focus group participants identified "cultural expression" as a key issue, and this programme's partnership with PSNI, YMCA, and others provides a coordinated response. | | | |
| **2.15 Complementarity-include links with other Strategy's e.g. Peace Plus, Urban Villages, MEDF etc** | Similar to other historical related initiatives contained within this Action Plan, The Holocaust Memorial and other Genocides Programme complements the aims and objectives of multiple other strategies. The ANDBC Corporate Plan and ANDBC Big Plan (Community Plan) both contain | | | |

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| | outcomes in relation to flourishing and safe communities, which this programme will stand to achieve by bringing people from across the Borough together in order to learn and gain greater understanding of the historical perspectives of their neighbours.<br><br>Promoting better relations and generating increased respect for different historical points of view with the aim of fostering shared, safe communities is considered a priority in multiple other strategies, including:<br><br>• Draft Programme for Government;<br>• Together Building a United Community;<br>• Children and Young People's Strategy;<br>• Racial Equality Strategy;<br>• Refugee Integration Strategy; and PEACEPLUS |
| **2.16 Impacted Communities – Urban, Rural or both** | Both. |

| **2.01 PROGRAMME NAME** | | **2.02 CODE** |
|---|---|---|
| Intergenerational Programmes | | AND11 |
| **2.03 KEY WORDS** | Fac Hard to reach Sin- Id Urban | |
| **2.04 Programme Summary** | This programme is designed to bring together different generations from different communities. It encourages participants to share their skills. Through workshops between generations, it will enable them to gain new abilities and knowledge from each other.<br>During the public consultations for the GR Audit 2025-2028 it was highlighted the need to<br>• Utilise technology and social media to connect with children and young people.<br>• Create opportunities for children and young people to develop essential skills that will empower and support them throughout their lives.<br>• Facilitate initiatives that encourage meaningful engagement between different generations, fostering mutual understanding and shared learning.<br><br>This intergenerational programme will encourage young and old to kindle relationships through | |

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| | similar interests and skills bases and encourage apprenticeship choices.<br><br>GR will collaborate with other Council sections including PCSP, Community Safety and Age friendly Co-ordinator to deliver a robust intergenerational programme.<br><br>Link to EA Youth Voice and the Over 50's Council.<br><br>Programme evaluated by pre and post questions and observation. | | | |
| **2.05 Contact details for programme staff** | REDACTED | | | |
| **2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)** | £1000 | | | |
| **2.07 Total TEO contribution** | £750 | | | |
| **2.08 Total target no. of participants** | **Direct** | **30** | **InDirect** | **60** |
| **2.09 Budgeted unit cost of programme** | £33.33pp | | | |
| **2.10 Targeted participant background analysis** | 75% PUL<br>25% CNR | | | |
| **2.11 Name and post code of Programme HQ** | **Location** | **Ards and North Down Borough Council** | **Location** | **BT20** |
| **2.12 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact** | **Location** | Bangor | **Location** | BT19 |
| | **Location** | Comber | **Location** | BT23 5DF |
| | **Location** | Holywood | **Location** | BT18 9PB |
| | **Location** | Ballygowan | **Location** | BT23 6NA |
| **2.13 T:BUC Key Aim** | Our Safe Community | | | |
| **2.14 Link to good relations audit** | Reduce the feeling of intimidation that some people feel<br><br>GR Strategy 2022-2025 Priorities Issues | | | |
| **2.15 Complementarity-include links with other Strategy's e.g. Peace Plus, Urban Villages, MEDF etc** | Big Plan: Outcome 3: All people in Ards and North Down live in communities where they are respected, are safe and feel secure.<br><br>PCSP – Hate Crime | | | |
| **2.16 Impacted Communities – Urban, Rural or both** | Both. | | | |

**Section 3**

## Action Plan Programme Outcome Summary Table 2026/27

| **Programme name (2.01)** | **Code (2.02)** | **Key Aim (2.13)** | **No. direct participants (2.08)** | **TOTAL COST with Reduction** | **Total Cost (2.06)** | **Total TEO Contribution (2.07)** | **Post Codes (2.11)** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Shared Education | AN D01 | Children and Young People | 300 | **£672.21** | £10,000 | £7,500 | BT19, BT20, BT21, BT22, BT23 |
| Shared Voices | AN D02 | Children and Young People | 200 | | £1000 | £750 | BT18 9ER BT23 8EY BT22 1DQ BT18 9EZ BT18 9RA BT23 4NR BT23 4QT BT23 8LF BT21 0AY BT22 2DR BT22 2PJ BT22 1EB |
| Youth Empowerment Programme | AN D03 | Children and Young People | 150 | | £7000 | £5250 | BT20 4TD BT22 1DQ BT23 7HA BT22 1RB |
| ~~Community Relations Through Sport~~ | ~~AN D04~~ | ~~Children and Young People~~ | ~~300~~ | | ~~Removed due to budget cuts~~ | ~~Removed due to budget cuts~~ | ~~BT22 1RB BT22 2GB BT22 1DQ BT20 3DS BT18 9EW~~ |
| Living History | AN D05 | Our Shared Community | 80 | **£266.67** | £15000 | £11250 | BT23 4AP BT23 5DF BT23 7PR BT22 1PE BT19 1SH |
| Holocaust and Other Genocides Programme reduced | AN D06 | Our Safe Community | 400 | **£0** | £3000 | £2250 | BT23 4JT BT22 1LE BT20 4BT BT18 9HQ BT22 1DQ |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| lack of funding | | | | | | | |
| Getting to Know Your Councillors/ Intergenerational | AN D07 | Our Safe Community | 60 | | £200 | £150 | BT18 9ER<br>BT20 4TH<br>BT22 1RB |
| No Hate Here | AN D08 | Our Safe Community | 150 | | £4,000 | £3,000 | BT23 4EN<br>BT20 5AY<br>BT22 1RB<br>BT18 9ER |
| Cultural Expression Programme Programme reduced lack of funding | AN D09 | Cultural Expression | 27 groups<br><br>2000 attendees | **£30,534.33** | £60,000 | £45,000 | BT23 4YH<br>BT22 1PE<br>BT23 5DF<br>BT18 9PB<br>BT23 6NA |
| History Talks Programme reduced Lack of funding | AN D10 | Cultural Expression | 150 | | £4,397 | £3297.75 | BT23 4DQ<br>BT22 1PE<br>BT23 5DF<br>BT18 9PB<br>BT23 6NA |
| Intergenerational Programmes | AN D11 | Our Safe Community | 30 | **£0** | £1000 | £750 | BT18 9ER<br>BT23 8EY<br>BT22 1DQ<br>BT18 9EZ<br>BT18 9RA<br>BT23 4NR<br>BT23 4QT<br>BT23 8LF<br>BT21 0AY<br>BT22 2DR<br>BT22 2PJ<br>BT22 1EB |

**Section 4**

**T:BUC Strategic Outcome**

| | C&YP | Shared community | Safe community | Cultural Expression | Council Total | TEO Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total no. of programmes** | 3(4) | 1 | 4 | 2 | 10 | 10 |
| **Total no. of direct participants** | 650 | 80 | 640 | 2150 | 3,520 | 3,520 |
| **Unit cost of programme activity** | £27.69 | £187.50 | £10.95 | £29.95 | 64.03 | 192.06 |
| **Total Council cost of programmes** | £4,500 | £3,750 | £2,050 | 16099.25 | 26399.25 | |
| **Total TEO cost of Programmes** | £13,500 | £11,250 | £6,150 | 48297.75 | | £79,197.75 |

Unclassified

Ards and North Down Borough Council

# ITEM 15

## Ards and North Down Borough Council

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| Report Classification | Unclassified |
| Exemption Reason | Not Applicable |
| | If multiple: |
| Meeting | Active and Healthy Communities Committee |
| Date of Meeting | 09 September 2026 |
| Responsible Director | Director of Active and Healthy Communities |
| Responsible Head of Service | Head of Community |
| Report title | Response to Notice of Motion 703 - Femicide |
| Attachments | Appendix 1 - Letter ot Justice Minister<br>APpendix 2 - Response from Justice Minister |
| File Reference (if applicable) | CDV 68 |
| Legislation | Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 |
| Resource Implications | None<br>Narrative: |
| Screening Requirements | *The Council will commit to consider the implication of all reports under the categories of Section 75, Rural Needs, Data Protection, Climate and Sustainability:*<br><br>Screening of decision not required |
| Link to Corporate Plan Priority and Outcome | Priority 3: Social<br>5. Safe, welcoming and inclusive communities that are flourishing<br>If multiple: |

**Background**
In February 2026 Council agreed to NoM 703 a letter to be written to Stormont to request the introduction of femicide as a specific hate crime which therefore carries an appropriate sentence, as well as specific deradicalisation support while in prison in order to prevent reoffending. Letter attached as Appendix 1.

The NoM states Femicide is defined as the intentional killing of a woman due to factors such as hatred, discrimination or subjugation.

It also includes acts motivated by control, possession or domination over a woman, or in relation to her refusal to establish or maintain an emotional relationship, or as an act of limitation of her individual freedom.

This Council recognises that the motivation for this crime is rooted in a desire for the control and subjugation of women, driven by patriarchal attitudes in society.

That perpetrators can be partners but as our communities are changing, we are also seeing a growing trend of 'honour based' killings of women by family members.

That while femicide lies at the extreme end of the spectrum of violence against women, other acts motivated by control, possession, or dominance—such as domestic abuse, coercive control, and harassment—create the conditions in which femicide occurs. These acts serve as warning signs that, when left unaddressed, can escalate to fatal violence.

And that by establishing femicide as a distinct criminal offence, we send a clear message that gender-based violence will not be tolerated and that the lives of women have inherent value deserving of specific legal protection.

**Context**
A response has been received (Appendix 2) from the Justice Minister citing her commitment to tackling gender-based abuse and violence in all its forms. Minister Long remains open to learning from developments in other areas and continue to keep this area under review and concluded that policy work on this is ongoing as part of the consideration of sex/gender as a protected characteristic in hate crime legislation.

## RECOMMENDATION

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

Ards and North Down Borough Council

**APPENDIX 1**

21st May 2026

Ms Naomi Long
Minister of Justice
Minister's Office Block C
Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
Ballymiscaw
Belfast
BT4 3SG

Dear Ms Long

At a recent meeting of Ards and North Down Borough Council it was agreed to request the introduction of femicide as a specific hate crime which therefore carries an appropriate sentence, as well as specific deradicalisation support while in prison in order to prevent reoffending.

Femicide is defined as the intentional killing of a woman due to factors such as hatred, discrimination or subjugation. It also includes acts motivated by control, possession or domination over a woman, or in relation to her refusal to establish or maintain an emotional relationship, or as an act of limitation of her personal freedom.

Council recognises that the motivation for this crime is rooted in a desire for the control and subjugation of women, driven by patriarchal attitudes in society. That perpetrators can be partners but as our communities are changing, we are also seeing a growing trend of 'honour based' killings of women by family members. That while femicide lies at the extreme end of the spectrum of violence against women, other acts motivated by control, possession, or dominance - such a domestic abuse, coercive control, and harassment - create the conditions in which femicide occurs. These acts serve as warning signs that, when left unaddressed, can escalate to fatal violence. And by establishing femicide as a distinct criminal offence, we send a clear message that gender-based violence will not be tolerated and that the lives of women have inherent value deserving of specific legal protection.

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Subsequently, it was agreed that I write to you to request the introduction of femicide as a specific hate crime. I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

Via e mail

Nicola Dorrian
Head of Community Services

**FROM THE OFFICE OF THE JUSTICE MINISTER**

Department of Justice
An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
Männystrie O tha Laa
www.justice-ni.gov.uk

Minister's Office Block C,
Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
Ballymiscaw
Belfast
BT4 3SG
Tel: 028 9076 5723
DOJ.MinistersOffice@justice-ni.gov.uk

Our Ref: COR-0513-2026

Ms. Nicola Dorrian
Via email: Nicola.Dorrian@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

16 June 2026

Dear Ms Dorrian

Thank you for your correspondence of 21 May 2026.

I am firmly committed to tackling gender-based abuse and violence in all its forms.

The existing criminal law in Northern Ireland provides a response for all forms of homicide for all victims, including cases in which misogyny, domestic abuse or gender-based violence may be significant factors.

The Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (Northern Ireland) 2021 also significantly strengthened the justice response both by creating a specific domestic abuse offence and recognising patterns of abusive, controlling and coercive behaviour.

My Department has considered the broader issues surrounding violence against women and girls, including the concept of femicide, it has concluded that the creation of a standalone offence of femicide would not provide additional legal protections beyond those already available under existing homicide and domestic abuse legislation.

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE JUSTICE MINISTER



I remain open to learning from developments in other jurisdictions and will continue to keep this area under review.

The DoJ, in partnership with the Northern Ireland Prison Service [NIPS] supports the delivery of a range of rehabilitation programmes designed to advance the rehabilitation of offenders of domestic and sexual violence including:

- The Building Better Relationships (BBR) and White Ribbon programmes target intimate partner violence, with White Ribbon being more informative with BBR designed to reduce risk and create behavioural changes.
- White Ribbon workshops focus on topics related to violence against women and girls and are attended by prisoners willing to engage in those discussions, attendees are not selected based on being perpetrators of violence against women and/or girls.
- BBR is a His Majesty's Prison and Probation (HMPPS) moderate-intensity cognitive-behavioural programme for adult men convicted of an Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) offence. BBR focuses on men convicted of IPV offences and has been one of the offending behaviour programmes delivered by NIPS Psychology.
- The Life Minus Violence – Enhanced (LMV-E) programme is a high intensity programme for those who are assessed as higher risk of future violence and while it doesn't specifically target violence towards women, it considered indiscriminate violence which can be targeted towards men or women.
- Horizon is a His Majesty's Prison and Probation (HMPPS) accredited offender behaviour programme designed for adult men with sexual convictions. It aims to help participants manage life's problems, build healthy relationships, and develop healthy sexual interests and thinking.
- NIPS Psychology also provide individual offence focussed risk reduction work to a range of prisoners including in relation to violence perpetrated against female victims, including fatal violence.

- Programmes/workshops delivered under the Domestic Sexual Abuse Strategy include Safety in Relationships Programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence; Domestic Violence Awareness Workshops for perpetrators of domestic violence. These programmes engaged with 84 offenders during 2024/25.

Sanctions for misogyny related offences need to be considered within the broader Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) policy context.

Regarding the suitability of the inclusion of misogyny related offences in the hate crime framework, policy work on this is ongoing as part of the consideration of sex/gender as a protected characteristic in hate crime legislation. Proposals for these issues are to be included as part of a public consultation scheduled to take place in the next Assembly Mandate and I would encourage you to respond and share your views when the opportunity arises.

Yours sincerely

Naomi R Long.

**NAOMI LONG MLA**
**Minister of Justice**

*Please ensure that you quote our reference number in any future related correspondence.*

Unclassified

Ards and North Down Borough Council

# ITEM 16

## Ards and North Down Borough Council

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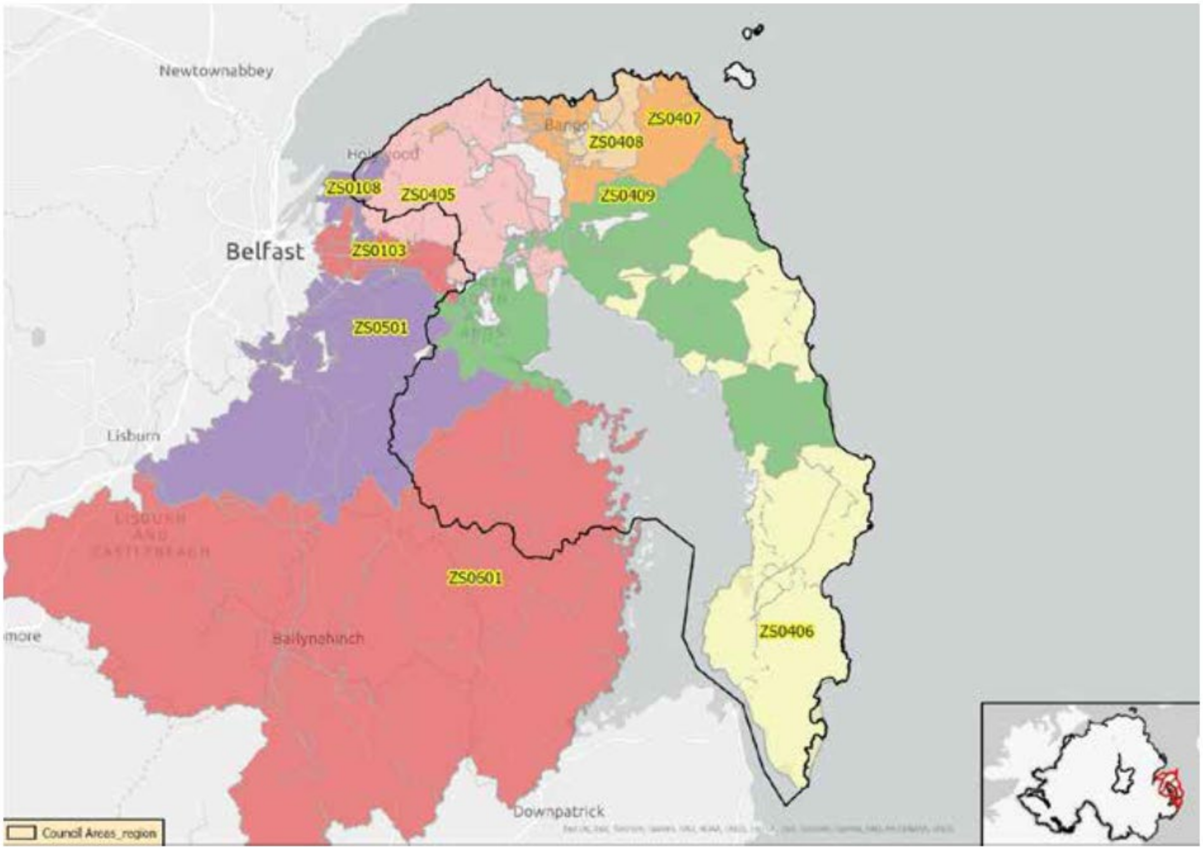
|---|---|
| Report Classification | Unclassified |
| Exemption Reason | Not Applicable |
| | If multiple: |
| Meeting | Active and Healthy Communities Committee |
| Date of Meeting | 09 September 2026 |
| Responsible Director | Director of Active and Healthy Communities |
| Responsible Head of Service | Head of Environmental Health and Regulatory Services |
| Report title | Drinking Water Quality Report 2025 |
| Attachments | Appendix 1 - Northern Ireland Water Drinking Water Quality Annual Report 2025 |
| File Reference (if applicable) | CW98 |
| Legislation | Choose an item.<br>Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017 |
| Resource Implications | None<br>Narrative: |
| Screening Requirements | *The Council will commit to consider the implication of all reports under the categories of Section 75, Rural Needs, Data Protection, Climate and Sustainability:*<br><br>Screening of report not required |
| Link to Corporate Plan Priority and Outcome | Priority 3: Social<br>6. Opportunities for people to be active and healthy<br>If multiple: |

**Background**
The Drinking Water Quality Report 2025, produced by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) is attached as Appendix 1. The report indicates a 99.9% level of compliance with an extensive array of drinking water quality parameters as laid down in the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017 as amended in 2018.

The map below shows the various supply zones in the Borough.

Ards and North Down Borough Council




The table below demonstrates compliance levels of drinking water in Ards and North Down when sampled at the customer's tap since 2020.

| | Target | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Northern Ireland Compliance** | 99.7% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% |
| **Ards and North Down Compliance** | 99.7% | 100.0% | 99.9% | 100.0% | 99.9% | 99.9% |

**Key Issues**
During 2025, enforcement action taken by the Drinking Water Inspectorate, a branch of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, was successfully concluded in relation to drinking water quality in the Ards and North Down area. Enforcement Notice Regulation 31(4) 2021/001 required NI Water to install and operate a treatment system at Drumaroad Water Treatment Works capable of removing or reducing aluminium to achieve a final water quality result within the maximum regulatory limit of 200 μg/l by 30 April 2025. The Notice was issued on 8 July 2021 and subsequently amended, with works completed by 30 September 2025. Following evidence provided by NIW demonstrating that the new treatment process met the requirements of the Notice, the Drinking Water Inspectorate issued a Revocation Notice on 19 December 2025.

One Major Drinking Water Quality Event was recorded across Northern Ireland in January 2025, when Storm Éowyn affected all areas. In the days preceding the storm, NIW took action to maximise water levels at service reservoirs and clear water tanks to optimise treated-water storage levels and mitigate against customer supply interruptions.

Severe winds across Northern Ireland disrupted electricity and telecommunications services and damaged NIW infrastructure. Around 6,000 properties experienced mains water supply interruptions. Substantial resources, including generators, bottled water and asset-to-asset tanker transfer, were deployed to restore and maintain customer supplies. Drinking water quality was not impacted.

In the week preceding Storm Éowyn, one Serious Drinking Water Quality Event affected all areas of Northern Ireland, when a period of freezing weather followed by thaw caused burst mains across the network, increasing water demand and interrupting supply. NIW declared a Category 1 Incident. Proactive measures were put in place by NIW ahead of the thaw period in anticipation of increased demand. Burst repairs were prioritised, output from treatment works was increased to meet demand, and re-zoning and asset-to-asset tanker transfer were used where necessary to restore water levels. Drinking water quality was not impacted.

## RECOMMENDATION

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

niwater
Delivering what matters

# DRINKING WATER QUALITY

## ANNUAL REPORT

## 2025

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# Contents

**Introduction and Foreword** .......... 2

**Drinking Water Quality** .......... 3
Water Quality Standards .......... 3

**Monitoring Drinking Water Quality** .......... 4
Drinking Water Quality Summary – Year on Year .......... 4

**Protecting Our Customers** .......... 5
Drinking Water and Health .......... 5
Lough Neagh and Blue-Green Algae .......... 5
Lead Pipework Replacement Programme .......... 6

**Source to Tap** .......... 7
Drinking Water Safety Plans .......... 7

**Sustainable Catchment Management Programme** .......... 8
Delivering in Partnership .......... 8

**Farming for Water** .......... 9
Managing our Uplands .......... 9
PEACEPLUS Projects .......... 10
Mournes Catchment Management .......... 10
Planting One Million Trees .......... 11

**Environmental Management System (EMS) and ISO14001** .......... 12

**Sufficiency of Supply** .......... 13

**Drinking Water Inspectorate - Technical Audit** .......... 14
Water Quality Events .......... 14
Regulatory Enforcement .......... 14

**Quality Assurance** .......... 15
Use of Technology for Increased Assurance .......... 15

**Water Quality Summary** .......... 16
NI Water Sites in Service .......... 16
Overall Water Quality Testing .......... 16
Microbiological Quality .......... 17
Physical and Chemical Quality at Customer tap .......... 19

**Water Quality Issues** .......... 20

**The Water Supply Regulations (NI) 2009** .......... 25

**Public Information** .......... 26
Drinking Water Register .......... 26
Water Hardness Map .......... 26
Social Media .......... 27
Customer Services .......... 28
Self Service Portal .......... 28
Customer Care Register .......... 29

**Major Incident Information** .......... 30
Major Incident and Major Emergency Website .......... 30

**Appendix 1** .......... 32
Drinking Water Quality Standards .......... 32
Schedule 1 .......... 32
Schedule 2 .......... 34

**Appendix 2** .......... 35
Water Quality Report for Water Supply Zones .......... 35
Water Quality Report for Authorised Supply Points .......... 36
Water Quality Report for Water Treatment Works .......... 36
Water Quality Report for Service Reservoirs .......... 36

**Appendix 3** .......... 37
Water Quality by Northern Ireland Council Area .......... 37

**Appendix 4** .......... 60
Water Quality Events .......... 60

**Appendix 5** .......... 63
Inspections and Infringements .......... 63
Enforcement .......... 64
Notifications .......... 64
Disputes .......... 64
Relaxations .......... 64
Attributed to water quality incidents and NIW observations .......... 65

**Appendix 6** .......... 66
Glossary of Technical Terms .......... 66

# Introduction and Foreword

**I am pleased to present Northern Ireland Water's (NI Water) Annual Drinking Water Quality report covering the calendar year 2025, and I am delighted to report that we have continued to supply a very high quality of drinking water to our customers across all of Northern Ireland.**

Providing safe, high-quality drinking water remains central to NI Water's role in safeguarding public health. Drinking water quality compliance for calendar year 2025 was 99.91%, exceeding the regulatory target and reflecting strong operational control and assurance.

Operational resilience was maintained primarily through targeted investment in treatment works, network optimisation and strategic transfers where funding allowed.  Leakage detection and repair activity continued at scale, supported by skilled teams and advanced technologies. Performance during the year was influenced by prolonged dry conditions followed by severe weather, which slowed recovery in some areas but did not compromise water quality or customer safety.

Long-term supply resilience pressures identified in the Water Resource and Supply Resilience Plan continue to be actively managed. Short-term mitigations remain effective; however, some strategic solutions are dependent on future investment decisions.

Around 40% of the drinking water in Northern Ireland is sourced from Lough Neagh. Sunlight combined with the presence of nutrients plus higher water temperatures resulted in significant levels of algal growth in Lough Neagh over 2025 again. There is a continuing complex range of pressures across multiple sectors impacting on the Lough's water quality.

Our water treatment works which rely on Lough Neagh, are designed with the potential for algae to be present and robust multi-barrier treatment, sampling, and monitoring processes are in place to give confidence in the water supplied to homes, schools, and businesses every day. Additional extensive monitoring to assure and inform our customers is in place. Further information can be accessed at Lough Neagh Blue-Green Algae (niwater.com)

At NI Water, we recognise that protecting water quality begins long before it reaches our treatment works. Our Sustainable Catchment Management team continues to play a central role in protecting and enhancing the water environment through considerate land management, reflecting NI Water's long-standing stewardship of 11,000 hectares of catchment land for drinking water protection, biodiversity and recreation.

During 2025, we strengthened catchment management and nature-based solutions using a risk-based approach that prioritises reducing contaminants at source, limiting reliance on energy-intensive treatment and supporting cost effective delivery aligned with sustainability and net zero goals.

Working closely with statutory bodies, environmental NGOs, land managers, communities and academia, we extend benefits beyond NI Water owned land, particularly in upland peat and heath dominated catchments where targeted management delivers improvements in raw water quality, carbon storage, flood resilience and ecosystem health. We commenced a 'Protecting Shared Waters' (PEACEPLUS) funded project, in collaboration with Uisce Éireann and a number of environmental and academic partners.

The water we supply for domestic use or food production must comply with UK national standards. We continue to engage with the Drinking Water Inspectorate for Northern Ireland (DWI) on potential changes to the Drinking Water Regulations in line with European standards and have put in place a monitoring programme for potential new parameters.

Our capital investment programme to maintain and safeguard water quality for the reporting period is set out using the Northern Ireland council areas in Appendix 3.

As part of our reporting requirements, this report also incorporates data to meet the requirements of the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations (NI) 2009.

We continue to exceed the targets placed upon us by our Regulators to comply with water quality standards and will continue to improve the service to all our customers in the future despite working in ever more challenging times.

**Sara Venning**
**Chief Executive Officer**

# Drinking Water Quality



## Water Quality Standards

During 2025, Drinking Water Quality in Northern Ireland was assessed against standards set in the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017, herein after referred to as “the Regulations”.

The Regulations set out the requirements to be met by NI Water when supplying water for domestic or food production purposes and include:

- Water quality standards for wholesomeness
- Sampling locations for monitoring purposes
- Minimum requirements for the number, frequency, and types of water samples to be taken at sampling locations
- Water sample collection and testing regimes
- Maintaining records of water sample results
- The provision and publication of information

NI Water assesses water quality standards against the parameters listed in Appendix 1. The standards in the Regulations are normally expressed as “Prescribed Concentrations or Values” (PCV) and are generally specified as maximum, minimum, percentile or average concentrations for a particular substance. Standards are set to ensure that water is wholesome, safe to drink, and aesthetically acceptable.

The Regulations set demanding standards for the quality of drinking water, but contraventions of these standards do not necessarily mean the water represents any public health risk. These contraventions are reported to the Drinking Water Inspectorate, investigated by NI Water, and prompt remedial action taken where appropriate to ensure that the drinking water is regulatory compliant.

The regulations require sampling programmes to be in place to ensure that water quality is monitored at: Water Treatment Works (WTWs); Service Reservoirs (SRs), Authorised Supply Points, and consumers’ taps in Water Supply Zones (WSZs). NI Water has a monitoring programme in place that covers raw waters, water at various treatment stages, drinking water in distribution and at the customer tap.

NI Water liaises with its customers on a wide variety of issues. Where the monitoring programme highlights a problem with the customer’s plumbing, NI Water informs the customer, the local Environmental Health Officer, and the Drinking Water Inspectorate.

To assist in understanding the contents of this report, a glossary of technical terms is provided (Appendix 6).

# Monitoring Drinking Water Quality

The Regulations necessitate a thorough and extensive water-sampling programme to be undertaken, to monitor water quality throughout the supply and distribution systems. The sampling locations and frequencies for the monitoring of drinking water quality are specified in the Regulations. These monitoring arrangements are audited by the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI). The mandatory sampling programme requires water samples to be collected regularly at water treatment works, at service reservoirs and water towers used to store treated water, and at customer taps in the water supply zones. In addition to the regulatory sampling frequency requirement, NI Water also carries out operational sampling and analyses to monitor and optimise the processes and quality of our drinking water supplies.

Under the Regulations, samples to be analysed for parameters that do not change in the supply water main, may be collected from Authorised Supply Points. These samples are collected from the final distribution point of the Water Treatment Works, and are considered under the Regulations to be equivalent to samples collected from the customer tap. All samples are carefully collected, handled, and transported to ensure that they accurately represent the water quality that customers receive. NI Water uses trained, skilled, and experienced sampling staff for the collection and delivery of the regulatory samples to the laboratories. In addition to this, the sampling for regulatory samples is accredited to meet the requirements of ISO 17025. United Kingdon Accreditation Service (UKAS) auditors carry out an annual audit of the sampling providers' quality system to ensure maintenance of accreditation for sampling. All sampling staff wear uniforms and carry identity cards when they call upon customers to take a sample.

Samples collected from customer taps are taken at random addresses in each water supply zone. A water supply zone, under the requirements of the Regulations, is a designated area with a population of no more than 100,000 supplied with water from one water treatment works or blended water from several works. The number and boundaries of water supply zones are subject to change according to operational requirements as supply sources to areas are adjusted to meet demand and infrastructure developments. On this basis, 64 water supply zones were monitored during the period of this report.

**The parameters for which samples are tested:**

- **Microbiological,** e.g. Coliform bacteria
- **Physical,** e.g. pH (Hydrogen ion)
- **Chemical,** e.g. Iron, Manganese, Lead and Nitrate
- **Aesthetic,** e.g. Colour

Compliance with the drinking water standards is determined by comparing the results of laboratory analysis of water samples with the relevant Prescribed Concentrations or Values (PCV). Where monitoring indicates that a standard has not been met, appropriate immediate investigation and remedial action is undertaken to ensure that the water supply does not present any public health risk. Sampling programmes are adjusted, and increased testing may be scheduled in the water supply zone for the parameter involved. NI Water will liaise at all times with the DWI and the Public Health Agency to ensure customer safety.

NI Water reports its water quality compliance levels as Overall Percentage Compliance. This assesses all regulatory consented parameters at water treatment works, service reservoirs, as well as customer tap. This is a holistic approach and is supported by the Drinking Water Inspectorate and the Utility Regulator.

## Drinking Water Quality Summary – Year on Year

Compliance assessed against the“Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017”

| Compliance Measure | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| % Overall compliance with drinking water regulations | 99.88% | 99.91% | 99.92% | 99.88% | 99.91% |
| % Compliance at customer tap (including supply points) | 99.82% | 99.88% | 99.88% | 99.87% | 99.88% |
| % Iron compliance at customer tap | 99.35% | 99.15% | 99.71% | 99.02% | 99.58% |
| % Service Reservoirs with coliforms in >5% samples | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% |

# Protecting Our Customers

## Drinking Water and Health

The safety of drinking water is paramount to public health. It is a tribute to the skills and expertise of colleagues working for drinking water providers, regulators, health authorities, and local authorities that the safety of drinking water in Northern Ireland is something that the public is able to take for granted.

The Drinking Water and Health Liaison Group (DW&HLG) is a multi-agency group that considers public health issues associated with the drinking water supply. The Group, which is unique in the UK context, draws its membership from the main stakeholder organisations including the Department of Health, the Public Health Agency, the Drinking Water Inspectorate, the Northern Ireland Public Health Laboratory, the Environmental Health Northern Ireland, and NI Water.

The Group produced a comprehensive guidance document on "Drinking Water and Health" aimed at professionals from a variety of backgrounds who share an interest and involvement in the safety of drinking water. The purpose of this joint guidance is to set out the roles and responsibilities of the key players, to describe the wider context to the provision of safe drinking water, to detail the arrangements and protocols in place to monitor compliance with standards and to respond to an emergency or incident situation.

This guidance is a "living document" that is regularly reviewed and updated.

The guidance document can be found at: www.niwater.com/drinking-water-guidance/

## Lough Neagh and Blue-Green Algae

Raw water is drawn from Lough Neagh to supply our Dunore Point, Moyola, and Castor Bay water treatment works. These works supply around 40% of the population of NI. This includes homes and business in locations across much of Northern Ireland such as Portadown, Antrim, parts of Belfast and parts of Newry.

Drinking water supplied from the water treatment works which use Lough Neagh as their raw water sources are designed with the potential for algae to be present and robust treatment processes are in place to manage this effectively. NI Water's treatment works use an evidence based, multi-barrier treatment approach to ensure that water is safe to drink at the customer tap. This means that we gather evidence on raw water from Lough Neagh; this evidence can take the form of e.g. raw water colour, raw water algae and raw water cyanobacteria. We use this evidence to design, operate and optimise our treatment works, using appropriate treatment barriers such as filters, activated carbon and chlorine to produce good clean safe drinking water.

The public is urged to remain vigilant and take extra care with blue-green algae if visiting Lough Neagh during the summer. The advice from DAERA is to stay away from the Lough if you think blue-green algae is present as direct contact can be harmful to people and animals. Further instruction is available in this DAERA fact sheet "Look out for Harmful Algal Blooms (daera-ni.gov.uk)"

**What is Blue-Green Algae?**
Blue-green algae is an overgrowth of a type of bacteria in a water body that could affect water quality and aquatic life. It can produce several toxins that may cause harm to people, animals, and the local environment. It can exist alongside many other forms of non-harmful algae.

Blooms can look green, blue-green, or greenish brown. Scums can form along shorelines and look like paint, mousse, or small clumps.

Potentially any inland or coastal waterway can be affected so people are urged to be vigilant and take extra care if they spot what may appear to be blue-green algae.

**Does it affect the taste of drinking water?**
Blue-green algae (cyanobacteria), (similar to other algae species) can produce volatile organic compounds such as Geosmin and Methyl-Isoborneol (MIB). These organic compounds can give an earthy or musty smell and taste to water. Geosmin and MIB are also commonly found in soil and foods such as beetroot, spinach and mushrooms. They are naturally occurring and are not harmful to health. Geosmin and MIB can be detected by some people even at incredibly low concentrations, which means that even at concentrations of these compounds as low as 5 parts per trillion in drinking water, (equivalent to 1 teaspoon in 200 Olympic swimming pools), some people can still detect them.

**Who is responsible for Lough Neagh?**
The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) is responsible for the management of the water quality in the Lough, and the work being undertaken to reduce the risk for blue-green algae blooms.

We (NI Water) are working with DAERA (Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs) and NIEA (Northern Ireland Environment Agency) in the expectation that blooms will reoccur until nutrient levels are reduced.

For queries on Blue-Green Algae please contact the lead agency NIEA.

# Protecting Our Customers

## Lead Pipework Replacement Programme

The NI Water lead strategy sets out NI Water's approach to the management of lead in drinking water.

The strategy details how NI Water will work to reduce the likelihood of lead failures at customers' taps whilst working within its current remit.

The overall approach will be a combination of two strands, as summarised below:

1. **Removal of NI Water owned lead assets from the water distribution system.**
2. **Encourage the removal of customer owned lead assets such as their service pipes.**

NI Water has been undertaking lead pipe replacements for several years under the following programmes of work:

- **Proactive Lead Pipe Replacement:** Proactively replacing lead communications pipes only, where the water main is in good condition, and is not being replaced.
- **Opportunistic Lead Pipe Replacement:** Replacement of lead pipes as part of Watermains Rehabilitation programme.
- **Customer Requested Lead Pipe Replacement:** Proactively replacing lead communications pipes when a customer requests NI Water to replace lead pipework to their property when they have replaced lead pipe internally in their property.
- **Water Quality Sample Failures:** Replacement of lead pipes identified through the random lead sampling program.

These programmes of replacement have been developed to ensure that NI Water prioritises and targets areas with high numbers of lead pipes and poor compliance with the lead standard.

In the PC21 price control period NI Water has replaced 12,020 lead service pipes, exceeding target of 11,064 for the period.

A leaflet on lead in drinking water is available from the NI Water website at www.niwater.com/about-your-water

# Source to Tap

## Drinking Water Safety Plans

A Drinking Water Safety Plan (DWSP) is the most effective way of ensuring that a water supply is safe for human consumption and that it meets the health-based standards and other regulatory requirements. It is based on a comprehensive risk assessment and risk management approach to all the steps in a water supply chain from catchment to customer – the Source to Tap approach.

The primary objectives of a DWSP in protecting human health and ensuring good water supply practice are the minimisation of contamination of source waters and effective treatment using appropriate processes. DWSPs are used to map water supply systems, identify the hazards at each stage of the system from catchment, through treatment and the distribution system, to the customer's tap, and to assess and control the risks that these hazards pose.

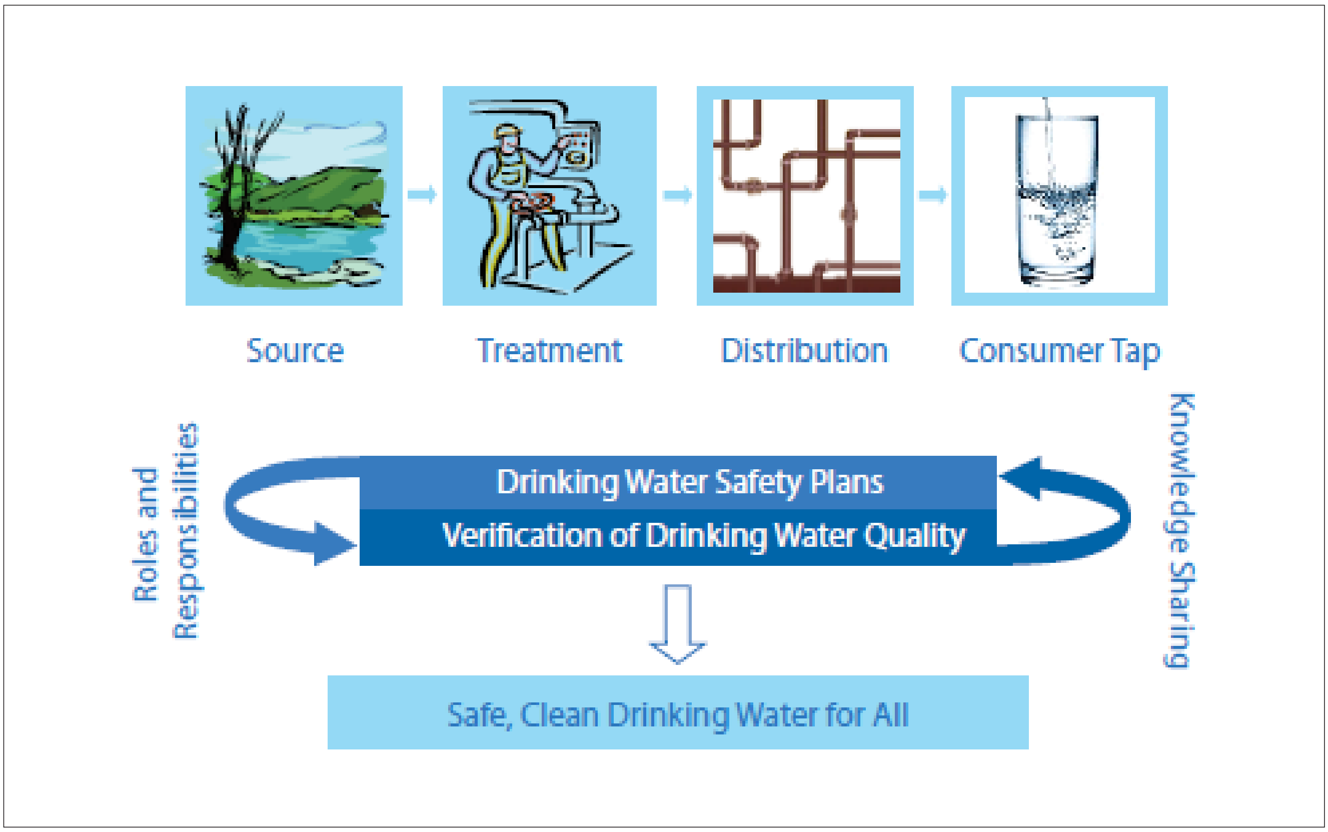
The Water Industry has adopted the DWSP approach to risk management from the raw water source, through water treatment, distribution and to our customer's taps. NI Water has put in place DWSPs for all of our drinking water supply systems to identify hazards, assess risks which could potentially threaten each stage of the water supply process, and implement mitigation measures to control the risk to ensure that the quality of the drinking water supplied meets regulatory requirements and protection of public health.

The risk assessments are kept under review, to ensure risks are adequately controlled and also that any new or emerging risks are identified and assessed. They are reviewed using a risk-based approach at on a minimum of an annual frequency. In the long term, DWSPs will lead to improved security of supply, a reduction in regulatory failures, incidents, and customer complaints and hence increased customer confidence.

NI Water works with a number of partners such as the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), Forestry Service, College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) and other Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to protect the raw water sources from contamination. Protection of the raw water is the first step in the multibarrier approach to drinking water treatment and therefore the first stage in the DWSP approach to management of drinking water quality.

The outputs of these plans – "The Drinking Water Safety Plans" themselves continue to be embedded into company policies and procedures.

NI Water uses the DWSP risk assessments to help inform the investment strategy for drinking water.



# Sustainable Catchment Management Programme (SCaMPNI)


## SCaMPNI

SCaMPNI continues to play a central role in protecting and enhancing the water environment through sustainable land management, reflecting NI Water's long standing stewardship of 11,000 hectares of reservoir catchment land for drinking water protection, biodiversity and recreation.

During 2025/26, we strengthened catchment management and nature-based solutions using a risk-based approach that prioritises reducing contaminants at source, limiting reliance on energy-intensive treatment and supporting cost effective delivery aligned with sustainability and net zero goals.

## Partnerships in SCaMPNI

Working closely with statutory bodies, environmental NGOs, land managers, communities and academia, we extend benefits beyond NI Water owned land, particularly in upland peat and heath dominated catchments where targeted management delivers improvements in raw water quality, carbon storage, flood resilience and ecosystem health.

This collaborative approach is increasingly critical following recent blue green algae events in Lough Neagh and includes NI Water's core role in the Forever Lough Neagh Partnership and targeted agricultural interventions such as the Farming for Water scheme, farm chemical disposal programmes, farmer engagement and expanded peatland restoration, all contributing to long term drinking water resilience across Northern Ireland.

# Farming for Water

*Figure 116km of watercourses were fenced off in Clay Lake catchment to prevent livestock encroachment and reduce erosion by bank stabilisation.*

The Farming for Water scheme was delivered in the Clay Lake drinking water catchment near Keady, Co. Armagh, to reduce losses of MCPA herbicide, nutrients and soil into the Clay Lake and Gentle Owens watercourses through practical, fully funded farm interventions. Supporting 29 participating farms, the scheme focused on pollution prevention at source, benefiting raw water quality, reducing treatment costs at Clay Lake water treatment works and improving farm sustainability.

> "...with around 86% of peatlands now degraded, targeted restoration is increasingly important..."

Measures included weed wiping, rush topping and liming across 81 hectares, nearly 16 km of watercourse fencing to prevent livestock damage and erosion, installation of mains-fed and solar drinkers with associated pipework, provision of pesticide storage units, spill kits and training, and targeted culverting works. Early monitoring shows reductions across key water quality parameters, demonstrating the effectiveness of collaborative, catchment-based delivery.

## Managing our Uplands

Northern Ireland's uplands are vital for protecting drinking water at source, with healthy soils and peatlands naturally filtering rainfall and reducing treatment costs; however, with around 86% of peatlands now degraded, targeted restoration is increasingly important to reduce colour and organic material in raw water.

NI Water is investing in peatland restoration across its landholdings, building on work at Dungonnell and delivering projects at Lough Bradan, Tullychurry and in the Mournes, including the first use of contour bunds to successfully re-wet peat on a previously forested site beside Lough Bradan. A 28 hectare restoration at Lough Bradan, delivered with RSPB and Peatland Challenge Fund support, has already reduced colour, turbidity and organic carbon while improving flows during dry periods, and following major wildfires in the Mournes in April 2025, upland management has been expanded to address erosion, sediment risk and wildfire resilience, strengthening raw water quality and long term drinking water resilience.

*Contour Bunds were used for the first time in NI Water to successfully re-wet the peatland on a previously forested area adjacent to Lough Bradan.*

# Farming for Water


*Garrison wastewater treatment works, County Fermanagh which is due to be replaced with a sustainable solution under the PEACEPLUS programme.*

## PEACEPLUS projects

NI Water has secured significant PEACEPLUS funding to support cross-border water quality protection and catchment resilience. This includes €7.5m for the Protecting Shared Waters Project, led by NI Water in partnership with Uisce Éireann, The Rivers Trust, AFBI, Ulster Wildlife and The James Hutton Institute, to tackle nutrient, pesticide and sediment pressures in the Strule/Foyle and Fane catchments through practical interventions and community engagement between April 2025 and March 2029.

NI Water has also secured almost €200k through a PEACEPLUS Nature project led by RSPB to develop a management plan and deliver targeted peatland restoration in the Altnahinch catchment, protecting raw water quality and biodiversity. In addition, NI Water is an associate partner in the PEAT+ project, managed by Ulster Wildlife with Mourne Heritage, which has allocated around €900k to the NI Water Mournes estate for habitat surveys and peatland restoration trials to inform long-term management of this strategically important drinking water catchment.

Garrison wastewater treatment works, County Fermanagh which is due to be replaced with a sustainable solution under the PEACEPLUS programme.

NI Water takes the lead on €32m PEACEPLUS project to tackle water pollution

Construction began in February 2026 on a new environmentally sustainable wastewater treatment facility in Garrison, County Fermanagh, introducing reed bed technology to improve water quality in Lough Melvin.

The scheme forms part of the €32m Water Enhancements through Sustainable Treatment (WEST) initiative, a cross-border programme led by NI Water and Uisce Éireann to upgrade wastewater infrastructure and protect shared catchments including Lough Erne, Lough Melvin and Donegal Bay. Funded through the PEACEPLUS Water Quality Improvement Programme and managed by SEUPB, WEST includes sustainable upgrades at Belleek, Ballybay, and Blacklion, alongside extensive catchment modelling.

Launched in November 2025, the programme supports compliance with Water Framework Directive objectives, delivering enhanced wastewater treatment for at least 5,000 people, with additional capacity for a further 1,000 across the project locations.

## Mournes catchment management

The Mournes catchments are NI Water's largest landholding and continue to provide high-quality raw water, but their scale and exposure mean they face pressures from erosion, extreme weather, visitor impacts, wildfire and habitat degradation.

Optimised grazing is a key mitigation measure, reducing fire fuel loads from gorse and mature heather, maintaining soil stability and limiting sediment runoff into reservoirs, while also supporting upland biodiversity and delivering the objectives of the High Mournes and Eastern Mournes Management Plans. Sheep grazing within Silent Valley is managed by Mourne Conservation Graziers Limited in partnership with NI Water and the Mourne Heritage Trust to balance habitat conservation with sustainable food production. In April 2025, a major wildfire destroyed nearly 6 $km^2$ of upland habitat in Silent Valley; while drinking water quality was not affected, the fire has increased sediment risk and treatment costs downstream and set back restoration programmes by several years. NI Water will continue working with partners, tenants and neighbouring landowners to repair damage, restore habitats and strengthen catchment resilience to future fire and climate-related risks.

The Forever Mournes Partnership is continuing our work in promoting cohesive management of the Mournes across our collective landholdings for people, land and nature.

*Forever Mournes Partnership is continuing our work in promoting cohesive management of the Mournes across our collective landholdings for people, land and nature.*


# Farming for Water

## Planting one million trees

We have now passed the halfway milestone in our commitment to plant one million trees across Northern Ireland by 2030, working in partnership with The Woodland Trust Northern Ireland and DAERA Forest Service.

> "...over 621,000 locally sourced native trees have been planted..."

To date, over 621,000 locally sourced native trees have been planted across NI Water sites, delivering benefits for local habitats while also supporting long-term improvements in water quality.

Regreening initiatives at Dunore, Stoneyford and Woodburn in County Antrim; Fofanny and Annalong in County Down; and Glenedra in County Derry/Londonderry will provide lasting environmental, social and climate benefits for local communities and future generations.

During the 2026/27 planting season, we plan to establish a further 200,000 trees across approximately 100 hectares of land near Woodburn Reservoir, building on the largest woodland creation site developed in Northern Ireland in the past three decades. In parallel, work is ongoing across several sites to identify additional suitable locations for further planting opportunities during the 2026/27 season.


*Tree planting at Dunore Point water treatment works, County Antrim*

# Environmental Management System (EMS) and ISO14001

In carrying out our core business NI Water contributes to and relies upon the quality of the natural environment, and we strive to protect it by working in an environmentally responsible manner, demonstrating high standards of environmental care and operational performance. NI Water works toward a 'Zero Harm' ambition, which includes avoiding harm to our environment.

NI Water is proud of its achieved maintenance of and compliance with the international standard ISO14001 for our Environmental Management System (EMS). The continual improvement and hard work of our functional staff and business areas, ensures NI Water maintains a strong environmental focus and management of compliance as evidenced through its testing our internal audit plan, and by frequent independent external auditors. Our accreditation to the ISO standard has been managed and maintained since 2003. Our CEO, Board, and Executive Committee support and approve NI Water's Environmental Statement and continued commitment to protecting, preserving, and improving our natural environment.

NI Water's EMS has become an integral part of our daily activities and business processes.

## Water Mains Rehabilitation

NI Water is a customer focused but asset-based organisation. In order to deliver the maximum level of customer service at the lowest sustainable cost, it is important that NI Water assigns expenditure in the most effective possible manner.

The Water Mains Rehabilitation Programme for Northern Ireland was established in 1999 to ensure the investment in water mains infrastructure was appropriately targeted at those areas of greatest need to ensure delivery of a reliable supply of compliant quality water to the people of Northern Ireland and comply with the relevant statutory and regulatory standards.

For the PC15 planning period and, in preparation for the PC21 business plan (covering 2021 – 2028), NI Water revised its approach to identifying Water mains investment needs. In consultation with external stakeholders such as the Drinking Water Inspectorate, the Utility Regulator, and the Consumer Council Northern Ireland, NI Water developed the Water mains Infrastructure Investment Model (WIIM). Building on the basis of the previous Zonal Studies approach, which utilised the analysis of structural and water quality issues, the revised approach draws on corporate data, focusing on customer contacts and customer preferences as well as structural and WQ issues when identifying and prioritising investment needs.

The Water Mains Rehabilitation programme delivered 832km during the PC15 period and the target for the PC21 period is 838km although this target will be reduced due to financial constraints. Approximately 430km have been laid to date.

Further consultation will be needed between NIW and the Utility Regulator to ascertain the impact upon the organisation due to the recent budgetary restrictions.

NI Water Customer targets, for drinking water compliance, are set to assist the company in improving the customer experience as well as to facilitate improvement in regulatory compliance with lead, iron, and turbidity. The current aim, of improving both the customer experience and regulatory compliance, in relation to these three parameters, lies with replacement / refurbishment of the drinking water distribution system. The intervention methodology will be reviewed again before the PC28 plan period, with interventions to be considered such as planned area flushing and monitoring and mains conditioning."

# Sufficiency of Supply

**NI. Water serves a population of 1,928,880 domestic customers, plus additional provision for agricultural, commercial and business properties. This equates to 99.9% of the total population of Northern Ireland.**

To serve our customers we produced on average 616 million litres of high-quality drinking water every day in 2025/26. For this NI. Water utilised 39 Sources including upland impounding reservoirs, boreholes, rivers and loughs.

NI Water has a legislative requirement to produce a Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP) and a Drought Plan as part of its forward planning process. The Water & Sewerage Services Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 permitted NI Water to combine these two plans into the Water Resource and Supply Resilience Plan (WR&SR Plan). The latest version of the WR&SR Plan was published in April 2025.

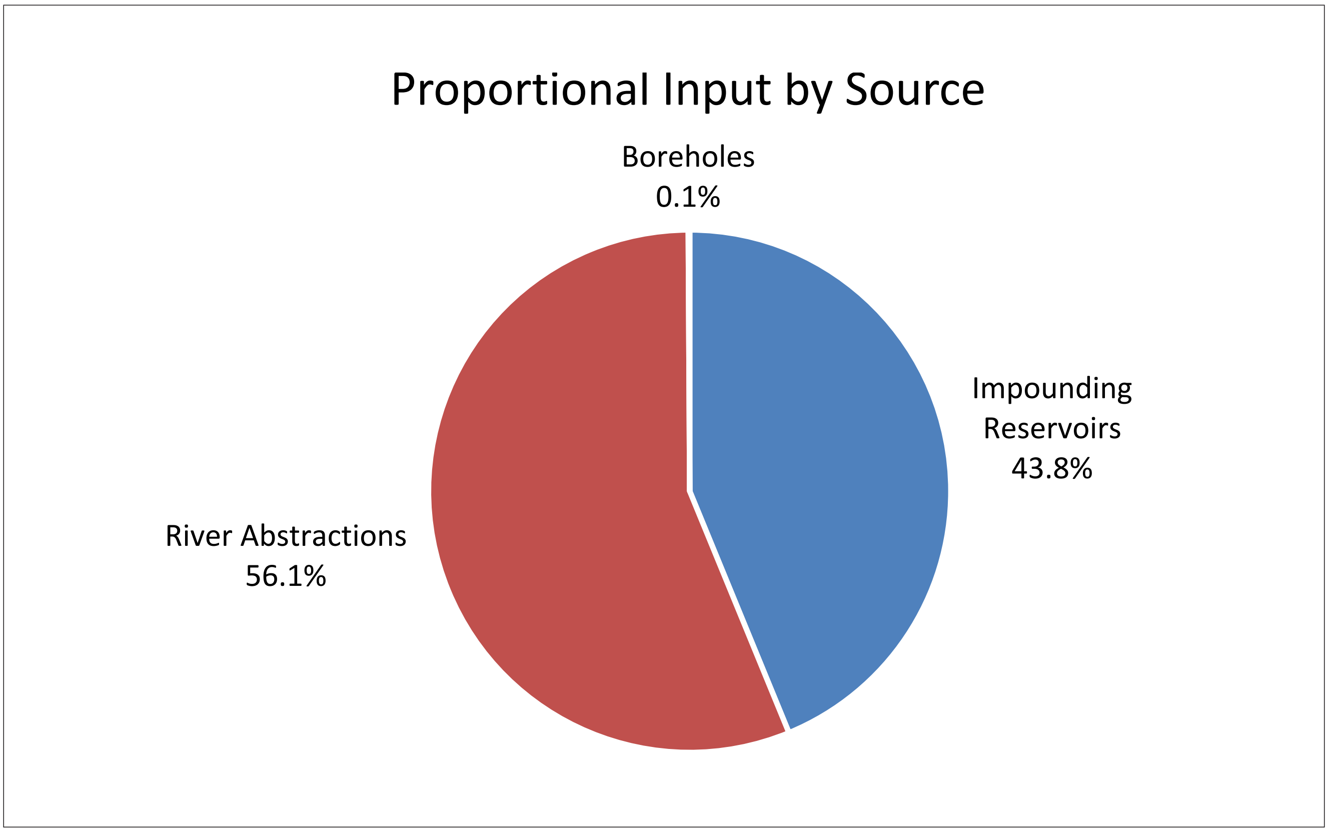
The WR&SR Plan is an important document for NI Water, as it demonstrates how the company will manage and develop water resources to make sure there is enough water to meet future supply needs.

The Plan considers changes in population, housing, water usage and incorporates any predicted changes to our climate. This includes how water supplies would be maintained during critical periods such as severe winters, drought and includes a drought plan.

NI Water has made significant changes in how the plan was developed from the previous version which was launched in 2020. These include:

- A longer-term planning horizon from 25 to 50 years.
- Changing future weather patterns require increased resilience to more frequent and extreme events. For example, this includes planning for more extreme drought events, typically what would be expected to occur once every 200 years.
- Increased focus on environmental sustainability in support of carbon Net Zero targets.

For the period of this report, water supplies in Northern Ireland were obtained from three types of sources, as shown:



# Drinking Water Inspectorate - Technical Audit

The Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI), a unit within the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, has an independent responsibility to audit drinking water quality compliance against the standards set in the Regulations.

Each year DWI undertakes a technical audit of the measures taken by NI Water to comply with the Regulations. The technical audit process includes:

- The transfer, to DWI, of analytical results of samples taken throughout the year, from water treatment works, water supply points, service reservoirs and customer taps
- A compliance assessment of this information against the prescribed regulatory frequencies and standards
- Carrying out an inspection programme which examines water treatment, storage, distribution, sampling processes and relevant procedures.

In 2025, eight technical audits were completed:

- An inspection of Killylane WTW
- An inspection of Networks Operations
- An inspection of Carmoney WTW
- An inspection of Sampling Procedures
- An inspection of Service Reservoirs
- An inspection of Consumer Contacts
- An inspection of the Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS)
- An inspection of Altnahinch WTW

DWI made a number of recommendations and suggestions, and NI Water continues to follow up on these issues. DWI will report on these inspections and the quality of water supplied by NI Water in its annual report, due to be published later in the year. DWI is located at Lisburn NIEA, 17 Antrim Road, Tonagh, Lisburn BT28 3AL.

## Water Quality Events

NI Water is required under the Drinking Water Regulations to notify the DWI whenever an event occurs that has the potential to impact on drinking water quality. NI Water fully investigates all events and provides the DWI with a substantive report for each. After investigation, the event may be shown not to have had a detrimental effect on water quality and is classified in the “Drinking Water Inspectorate’s Report” as “Not Significant” or “Minor” as opposed to “Significant”, “Serious” or “Major”.

A list of all Water Quality Events which were “Significant”, or above which occurred during 2025 is detailed in Appendix 4.

## Regulatory Enforcement

During 2025, three Regulation 31(4) Notices were closed:

- **Regulation 31(4) Notice 2023/001** required NI Water to install and have operational, a treatment system at Ballinrees WTW that is effective in the removal or reduction of MCPA to achieve a final water result that meets the maximum regulatory limit of MCPA of 0.10 µg/l by 20 December 2024. This was issued on 18 December 2023. Following completion of the works by this date and a subsequent period of operational work, NI Water provided evidence to demonstrate that the new treatment process meets the requirements of the Notice, DWI issued a Revocation Notice on 12 December 2025.
- **Regulation 31(4) Notice 2023/002** requires NI Water to install and have operational, a treatment system at Ballinrees WTW that is proven to be effective in the treatment of taste and odour parameters to achieve a final water and consumer tap result that is acceptable to the consumer and there is no abnormal change by 20 December 2024. This was issued on 18 December 2023. Following completion of the works by this date and a subsequent period of operational work, NI Water provided evidence to demonstrate that the new treatment process meets the requirements of the Notice, DWI issued a Revocation Notice on 12 December 2025.
- **Regulation 31(4) Notice 2021/001** required NI Water to install and have operational, a treatment system at Drumaroad WTW that is proven to be effective in the removal or reduction of Aluminium to achieve a final water result that meets the maximum regulatory limit of Aluminium of 200 µg/l by 30 April 2025. This was issued on 8 July 2021. This Notice was amended (DWI/Notice/NIW/2025/001) on 27 May 2025 to provide an additional 5 months to complete the required treatment upgrade by 30 September 2025. Following completion of the works by this date and evidence provided by NI Water demonstrating that the new treatment process meets the requirements of the Notice, DWI issued a Revocation Notice on 19 December 2025.

During 2025, three Warning Letters were issued:

- Carmoney WTW, contraventions of the individual pesticide standard for MCPA (0.01ug/l) in the final water. This was issued on 25 June 2025.
- Moyola WTW supply area, taste and odour complaints regarding water supplied from Moyola WTW. This was issued on 5 September 2025.
- Castor Bay WTW supply area, taste and odour complaints regarding water supplied from Castor Bay WTW. This was issued on 14 October 2025.

# Quality Assurance

The Regulations require water quality to be monitored using analytical systems, which can demonstrate that appropriate accuracy is achieved and maintained. NI Water attaches great importance to the integrity of the analysis and for this reason applies strict laboratory analytical quality control procedures. These systems and procedures are subject to external inspection and audit by DWI and an assessment of NI Water's performance is included in the Inspectorate's annual report.

NI Water has achieved the requirements of the Drinking Water Testing Specification (DWTS). This is a national scheme agreed between the Drinking Water Inspectorate and the United Kingdom Accreditation Service for quality assurance within laboratories carrying out analysis for the water industry.

In addition to this, both of NI Water's testing laboratories have attained the necessary standard of analytical excellence to the requirements of ISO 17025. UKAS auditors carry out an annual audit of the NI Water laboratories' quality system to maintain this.

NI Water laboratories provide an accredited analytical service to external customers for both drinking water quality testing and wastewater quality testing.

## Use of Technology for Increased Assurance

To assist in its ability to audit its sampling programme, NI Water has put in place an electronic system to produce an enhanced audit trail and eliminate errors in data transcription.

The system uses android phones with a bespoke Remote Sampler app. The phone camera is used to scan the labels on the sample bottles and the built in GPS (Global Positioning System) is used to give an accurate sample audit, location fix, and time for each sample as it is collected. When the sampler returns to the laboratory, this data is downloaded with all the ancillary audit data onto NI Water's Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) where it updates the existing sample information. This system has recently been upgraded to a cloud-based system to automate the audit trail and chain of custody more fully.

Within the laboratory environment, the majority of analytical results are transferred directly into LIMS via direct data capture from the laboratory instrumentation. This information transference minimises the possibility of transcription errors and again gives an enhanced audit trail.

# Water Quality Summary



## NI Water Sites in Service

During 2025, the numbers of NI Water sites in service were:

| Site Type | Number in Service |
|---|---|
| Water Treatment Works | 24 |
| Service Reservoirs | 288 |
| Water Supply Zones | 64 |
| Authorised Supply Points (see glossary) | 24 |

## Overall Water Quality Testing

During 2025, 102,334 microbiological, physical, and chemical tests were carried out for mandatory, and indicator consented parameters on water samples taken from water treatment works, service reservoirs and customer taps. Of these, 102,237 tests complied with the regulatory standards giving an overall percentage compliance of 99.91%.

| Location Type | No of Samples | Regulatory Parameters Analysed | Regulatory Parameters used for Compliance Assessment |
|---|---|---|---|
| Water Treatment Works | 6,200 | 43,634 | 18,835 |
| Service Reservoir | 14,908 | 89,447 | 29,816 |
| Zone (including Authorised Supply Point) | 5,784 | 70,043 | 53,683 |
| **Overall** | **26,892** | **203,124** | **102,334** |

As well as the regulatory required analyses, NI Water also carries out a large number of operational process control determinations, to ensure that its treatment processes are fully optimised.

# Water Quality Summary

## Microbiological Quality

Effective disinfection is fundamental to the treatment process. For effective disinfection the water the Regulations require that the water prior to disinfection must be treated to ensure that the turbidity of the water does not exceed 1 NTU. Water leaving water treatment works is disinfected with chlorine to safeguard public health by destroying microorganisms. This is the most important part of the water treatment process. NI Water has developed a disinfection policy for water treatment and individual disinfection statements for each water treatment works. This will continue to ensure that all water supplied by NI Water is adequately disinfected, and water supplied to customers is safe and pathogen free.

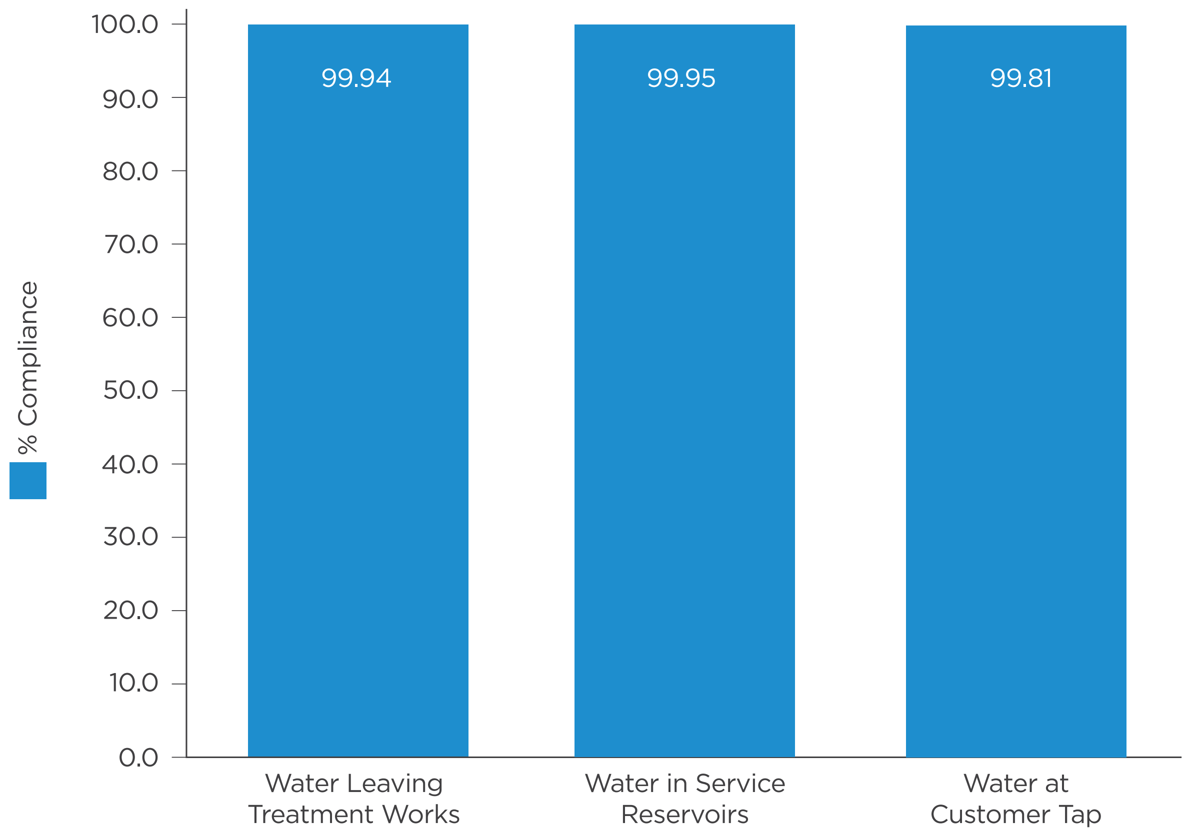
To ensure the effectiveness of the treatment and chlorination process, the wholesomeness of treated water is regularly examined to ensure the absence of coliform bacteria and faecal coliforms (E. coli) at water treatment works, service reservoirs and in the distribution system at customer taps.

The presence of these organisms may indicate potential microbiological contamination of water supplies, and if they are detected in drinking water, immediate action is taken to identify the source and to minimise any risk to public health.

Many instances of microbiological failure in samples taken from customer taps are due to contamination of the tap itself, in particular with mixer type kitchen taps. For this reason if a positive result is obtained, investigations are immediately carried out to identify if the positive result is due to the specific tap or the general system. If the contamination is found to be due to the tap or internal plumbing, NI Water will inform the customer in writing of the reason for the failure so that they can take appropriate action. A copy of the letter is also provided to the Public Health Agency, the local Environmental Health Officer, and the DWI.

A summary of the microbiological quality of water supplied in 2025 is given below.

### Overall Microbiological Water Quality



# Water Quality Summary

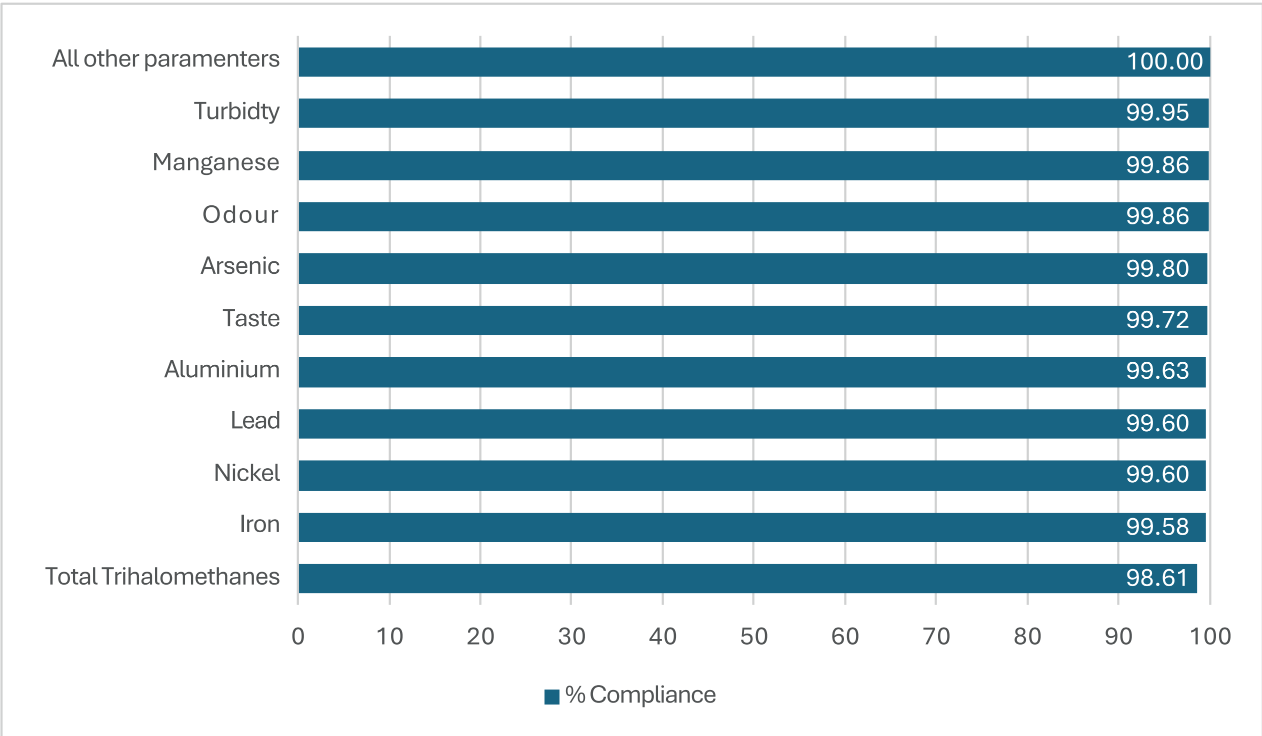
## Physical and Chemical Quality at Customer Tap

Physical and chemical quality standards apply to water supplied at customer taps. The Regulations lay down the required sampling frequency for each parameter or group of parameters dependent on the resident population of the water supply zones.

- During 2025, 41,375 physical and chemical tests were assessed against their consent for water samples taken at customer taps or authorised supply points. Of these, 41,331 tests complied with the regulatory standards giving a compliance of 99.88% for physical and chemical tests.

Appendix 2 shows the extent of NI Water's compliance with the regulatory standards at both customer tap and authorised supply point. For most parameters, compliance is judged based on the results of individual samples. If a single sample exceeds the PCV, that supply is deemed not to comply with the regulatory standards, even if the cause is outside NI Water's control, e.g. defective plumbing within premises. Improved compliance will be achieved through the water treatment works investment programme and thereafter through improvements to the water storage and distribution system.

### Percentage Compliance by Chemical Parameter



# Water Quality Summary

## Overall Water Quality

| | Number of Analytical Tests | Number of Tests Exceeding PCV | % Compliance with Regulatory Standards |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Water Leaving Treatment Works** | | | |
| Bacteriological Analysis | 12,400 | 7 | 99.94 |
| Indicator parameters | 6,435 | 9 | 99.86 |
| Total | 18,835 | 16 | 99.92 |
| **Water in Service Reservoirs** | | | |
| Bacteriological Analysis | 29,816 | 14 | 99.95 |
| Total | 29,816 | 14 | 99.95 |
| **Water at Customers' Taps or Authorised Supply Points** | | | |
| Bacteriological Anal. inc Coliforms | 12,308 | 23 | 99.81 |
| Zone Chemical Analysis | 31,873 | 43 | 99.87 |
| Supply Point Chemical Analysis | 9,502 | 1 | 99.99 |
| Total | 53,683 | 67 | 99.88 |
| Total Mandatory Parameters | 95,899 | 88 | 99.91 |
| **Overall Water Quality Total** | **102,334** | **97** | **99.91** |

Explanatory notes of exceedances of the microbiological and chemical quality standards with less than 100% compliance are provided in the following section.

# Water Quality Issues

## Aluminium

The standard set for aluminium is based on aesthetic considerations. A number of water supplies may contain concentrations of aluminium, which could exceed the standard from time to time because of changes in raw water quality or treatment process fluctuations. These treatment processes are regularly reviewed and optimised to reduce the aluminium levels to below regulatory levels. Improvements to the treatment processes at WTWs which have been identified for funding in the PC21 Price Control Process should result in an improving level of aluminium compliance.

## Iron

The iron standard has been set for aesthetic reasons as levels persistently above the standard can give rise to discoloured water and particulate matter. Where the standard for iron has not been met, this may be due to problems of corrosion of iron water mains. There is an ongoing proactive programme of flushing and cleaning of the distribution system to minimise the problem. In addition, NI Water has an ongoing Water Mains Rehabilitation Programme in which supply zones that experience water quality and other supply problems are subjected to a detailed assessment. This includes the analysis of historic water quality data (including iron), customer complaint information, and the implementation of targeted water quality sampling and analysis programmes to determine the nature and extent of the water quality problems. Appropriate solutions to the problems are then developed which include mains cleaning and renovation, and replacement of parts of the distribution system. Implementation of the solutions is undertaken either by NI Water or by its contractors.

## Lead

Water leaving treatment works and in the distribution systems, contains only trace amounts of lead. However, where lead has been used for service pipes between the water main and the kitchen tap or in domestic plumbing, there may be a risk of concentrations at the customer tap exceeding the lead standard.

Having lead pipework is likely to result in lead levels in drinking water, which are above the limits set out in drinking water regulations. The regulatory limit (PCV or Prescribed Concentration or Value) for lead in drinking water is 10 μg/l.

The Drinking Water Regulations require that NI Water must minimise the risk of exceedances of the regulatory limit for lead drinking water (10 μg/l) whether the risk for failure is due to the company or customer owned pipes. Orthophosphoric acid is added to the water supply, across Northern Ireland, to reduce the amount of lead 'pick up' from lead pipes, into the drinking water at the customer tap. This is a water industry wide practice to help to reduce the risk of lead exceedances and to meet the requirements of the drinking water regulations. Orthophosphate dosing has been very successful in mitigating the risk for lead failures. However, this treatment alone will not ensure 100% compliance due to the presence of lead supply pipes in customer property. The age and condition of lead pipe can result in lead in the drinking water being above the regulatory limit even with orthophosphate dosing in place. The only way to remove the risk for lead in drinking water is for all lead pipe to be removed, including within customer properties.

# Water Quality Issues


In addition to treatment of drinking water, to minimise lead pick up from pipework, NI Water has a programme to identify and replace lead communication pipes within its infrastructure, either through our targeted lead pipe replacement programme or the replacement of lead communication pipes encountered during water mains rehabilitation. As part of this programme, customers are informed when lead communication pipes (NI Water's responsibility) have been replaced and are encouraged to replace their lead supply pipe (customer's responsibility).

Lead monitoring, through customer tap sampling and analysis, forms part of our routine testing regime in line with the requirements of the Drinking Water Regulations. Where a sample taken for lead analysis is shown to exceed the regulatory limit for lead NI Water is required under the Drinking Water Regulations to inform the customers, and their neighbours, of the lead result.

In addition if a sample is found to exceed the limit for lead in drinking water the Public Health Agency, the local Environmental Health Officer, and DWI are notified by NI Water. Where it is found that the exceedance is attributable to a lead service pipe NI Water will replace free of charge, any of its lead pipes supplying the property. It will be the responsibility of the property owner to replace any lead pipework on the property.

Many older properties still have service pipes and internal plumbing wholly or partly comprised of lead. Lead pipework was used in many houses built in Northern Ireland before 1970 and much of it still exists.

# Water Quality Issues

It is therefore important for householders to check if they have any lead pipework in their property.

Some simple checks for householders to do include:

- Look in or behind the cupboards in your kitchen. You may also need to look in other places, such as the cupboard under the stairs. Find the pipe leading to the kitchen tap. Check if it is lead along as much of its length as possible. Unpainted lead pipes are dull grey, and the surface feels soft. If you scrape the surface gently with a kitchen knife, you will see the shiny, silver-coloured metal beneath.
- Open the flap of the stop valve outside your property. Examine the pipe leading from the stop valve to your property. If you can, scrape its surface gently.
- Some other pipe materials which you might come across which are normal and don't need replaced include copper, iron, and plastic.
- If you are still unsure, ask a plumber for a second opinion.

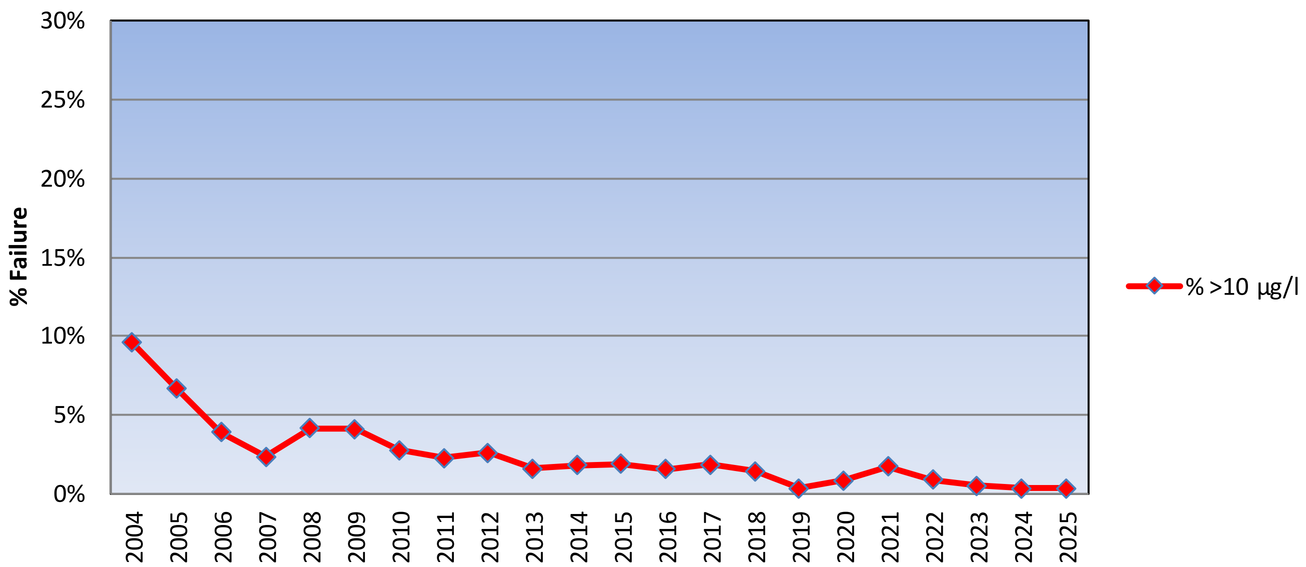
If you find lead pipes, you should have these replaced as soon as possible. It will be the responsibility of the property owner to replace any lead pipework on the property. NI Water will replace free of charge, any of its lead pipes supplying a property, if it receives a written request from a customer who has replaced the portion of lead service pipe for which the householder is responsible.

A leaflet on lead in drinking water is available from the NI Water website at www.niwater.com/about-your-water

Amongst other details, this leaflet explains who is responsible for replacing each part of the lead in the domestic system.

The effectiveness of the dosing can be seen in the graph below, showing the optimisation of the dosing from the water treatment works to meet the new regulations.

## % Lead Exceedances against the current 10 µg/l Standard




The lead in drinking water standard was reduced from 25µg/l to 10µg/l at the end of 2013.

# Water Quality Issues

## Manganese

Manganese occurs naturally in many water sources. Concentrations can vary seasonally or be attributed to the disturbance of accumulated deposits at the bottom of reservoirs when the water is drawn down or when water circulation occurs. Treatment is in place at our WTWs for manganese and this removes manganese to very low concentrations in the treated drinking water, However, manganese can deposit within the distribution system and may cause discoloured water if the deposits are disturbed during operational activity within the distribution network.

The standard for manganese has been set for aesthetic reasons to prevent unpleasant tastes, staining or discoloured water.

## Pesticides

Pesticides include insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, and algaecides. These can find their way into watercourses from a variety of sources, mainly from use in agriculture or weed control. NI Water has an ongoing pesticide monitoring programme, and analysed samples for 38 individual pesticides during 2025. NI Water liaises with other regulatory bodies in Northern Ireland such as the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) regarding the control of pesticide usage.

NI Water is engaged on an ongoing series of catchment management plans as part of its overall Drinking Water Safety Plans, which include looking at pesticide usage and control. The Water Catchment Partnership mentioned previously, has been setup to address pesticide problems across Northern Ireland and raise awareness of the risks of using pesticide products close to drinking water abstraction sources.

NI Water has treatment processes in place for pesticide removal at WTWs where there is an identified risk for the use of pesticides in the catchment. Capital investment was completed in 2023 at Derg WTW for improved pesticide (MCPA) removal. Work was undertaken at Ballinrees WTW to improve pesticide (MCPA) removal - this work was completed in December 2024. These improvement works will reduce the risk for exceedances of the regulatory standard for pesticides in drinking water in these supply areas.

## Total Trihalomethanes (THMs)

THMs are chlorination by-products arising from the reaction of chlorine, used for disinfection, with natural organic material present in water. The maintenance of microbiological quality by disinfection using chlorine is NI Water's main priority. NI Water's water abstractions are predominantly drawn from surface sources, which can contain these natural organic materials.

THM formation is dependent on a wide range of differing factors and so changes in THM concentrations may be a consequence of one or many factors. THM levels tend to increase with pH, temperature, contact time, residence time, length of the distribution network, and the level of "precursors" present. Precursors are the organic material that reacts with chlorine to form THM's.

NI Water has developed and put in place ongoing THM action plans to reduce the risk of THM failures. These action plans alongside our drinking water safety plan risk assessment process are used to help identify where investment may be required to reduce the risk of THM failures. NI Water's ongoing water treatment works investment programme is designed to provide improved treatment to reduce organic matter prior to chlorination and thereby reduce THM levels.

In addition to its ongoing programmes of work, NI Water is constantly reviewing its operational procedures to reduce THM levels in the distribution system, whilst maintaining microbiological quality.

Capital investment at a number of WTWs is planned during the PC21 period with THMs as the water quality driver. Improved compliance over all of Northern Ireland is expected as improvements to water treatment works and the distribution system continue.

# Water Quality Issues

## Turbidity

Turbidity is caused by very fine insoluble material that may be present in water. Levels are closely monitored during the treatment processes. The PCV at the WTW is 1 NTU.

Particulate matter, usually the re-suspension of sediments present in the distribution system due to disturbance from operational activity, can affect the turbidity of drinking water. Systematic flushing of the local pipe work will restore water quality. The PCV at the customer tap is 4 NTU.

## Taste and Odour

Customer concerns quite often relate to taste and odour. Analytical tests are carried out to measure the level of taste and odour and are performed by a specialist testing panel. There can be a variety of reasons for people to notice a slight change in the odour or taste of their water.

**This could include:**

- The use of chlorine as a disinfectant
- Seasonal changes
- A change in your water supply
- Moving from one area to another
- Your plumbing

Some customers describe their water this as smelling earthy/ musty or stale. It can have several sources:

- Long lengths of pipework within large buildings
- Volatile organic by-products of algae or harmless micro-organisms in the raw water sources
    - These natural organic compounds, Geosmin and Methyl-Isoborneol (MIB) can give an earthy or musty smell and taste to the water.
    - Geosmin and MIB are also commonly found in soil and foods such as beetroots, spinach and mushrooms. They are naturally occurring and are not harmful to health.
    - Geosmin and MIB can be detected by some people even at incredibly low concentrations, which means that even at concentrations of these compounds as low as 5 parts per trillion in drinking water (equivalent to 1 teaspoon in 200 Olympic swimming pools), some people can still detect them.
    - They are not harmful to health and in the areas where we know this is a problem, we treat the water with activated carbon and or ozone.

## Summary

All exceedances of the regulatory standard are investigated following procedures agreed with the Health Authorities and the Drinking Water Inspectorate. Closure of an event cannot take place without their approval.

## Further information

Various information leaflets giving more details of water information may be found at www.niwater.com/about-your-water

# The Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations (NI) 2009

NI Water was granted an operating licence to provide water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland on 1 April 2007, implemented under the provisions of the Water and Sewerage Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 (known the Order). The Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009 (known the Regs) were subsequently made by the then DRD under Articles 114 and 300(2) of the Order and came into operation on 3 August 2009.

These Regs are key public health legislation and are designed to prevent the waste, misuse, undue consumption, or erroneous measurement of water, and, most importantly, to protect wholesome water supplies from contamination. Owners and occupiers of premises, as well as any persons installing plumbing systems or water fittings, have a legal duty to ensure that such systems comply with the requirements of the Regs. The Order empowers NI Water to inspect premises to ensure compliance with the Regs.

While voluntary compliance is encouraged, NI Water is also duly authorised to take formal enforcement action in cases of non-compliance. A process of Advance Notification is also in place enabling proposed installations or alterations of plumbing systems to be approved in advance and enable compliance prior to instigation.

The Department for Infrastructure (DfI), through its Water and Drainage Policy Division (WDPD), acts as the Regulator for this activity. DfI meets regularly with NI Water to review issues arising under the Regs, including compliance performance and identified contraventions. NI Water is also required to publish an annual report on customer compliance activities by 30 June each year, with a copy submitted to DfI. Details of NI Water's implementation of the Regs are set out in Appendix 5. The table below summarises the number of inspections completed, contraventions identified, and contraventions awaiting customer resolution during the 2025 calendar year.

| Description | Number (by 2025 calendar year) |
|---|---|
| Number of Domestic and Non Domestic Inspections | 1,096 |
| • Proactive | 1,050 |
| • Reactive | 46 |
| Number of Premises/Bodies visited | 1,060 |
| Number of Contraventions recorded | 3,140 |
| Number of Contraventions recorded (All FC1-3) | 2,833 |
| Number of Contraventions recorded (All FC4-5) | 307 |
| Number of Contraventions rectified (FC1-3) | 1,766 |
| Number of Contraventions rectified (FC4-5) | 134 |
| Number of Outstanding Contraventions | 1,106 |
| Referred for enforcement (Legal Department) | 0 |

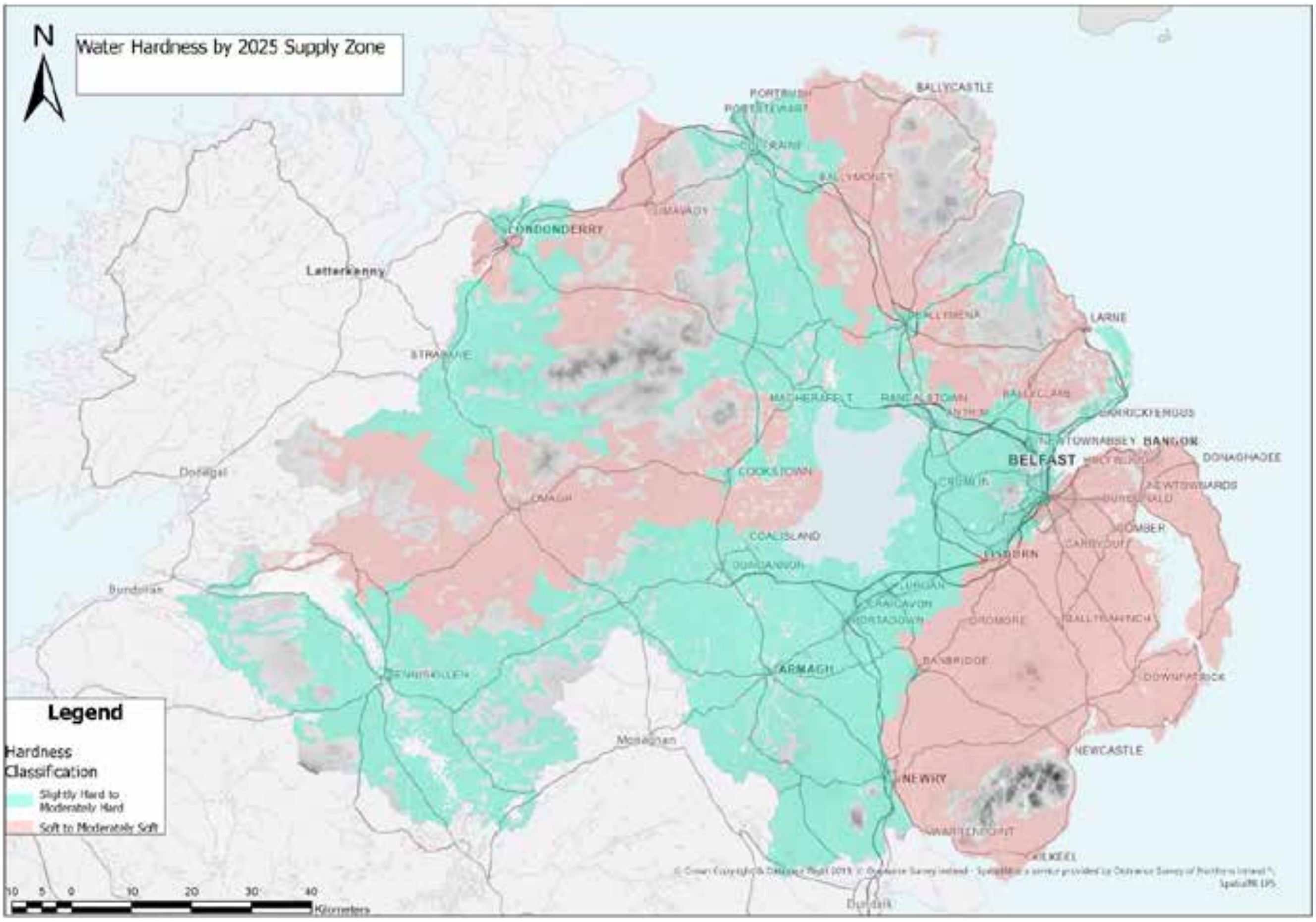
# Public Information



## Drinking Water Register

A Drinking Water Register is available from NI Water's website at www.niwater.com/water-quality-results/ showing the most recent year's detailed water quality results for customers based on their postcode, and details of water hardness to enable customers to set up dishwashers etc correctly.

## Water Hardness Map




Hardness of water is natural and is normally caused by the rocks through which the water has passed. Hardness is a measure of the calcium and magnesium concentrations in water. Hardness means you may have to use more soap when washing as lard water lathers less than soft water. Hardness has no adverse effects on heath and is safe to drink. There is no standard specified within the drinking water regulations.

If you are unable to access the website, the Register may be requested, free of charge, during normal working office hours through the customer relations centre below. Customers may request and obtain a free copy of the information for the water supply zone they live in. A charge may be made for printed information on other zones.

# Public Information

Customers, who wish to receive information about the quality of water in their water supply zone by post, can write to the address listed below:

Northern Ireland Water
PO Box 2376,
Belfast,
BT13 3DX

Customers can contact the Customer Relations Centre on our Waterline: **03457 440088**

Customers who have hearing difficulties can also contact us via Text Relay on: **03457 440088**

Customers may also contact Customer Services by email on: **waterline@niwater.com**

Further information for customers may be obtained at the following website: **www.niwater.com**

This site also contains a PDF version of the most recent Water Quality report.

## Social Media

NI Water actively uses social media to interact with and inform its customers. This includes:

### Facebook

This is updated routinely and in the event of a major incident will be used to communicate directly with customers on **www.facebook.com/niwater/**

### YouTube

NI Water has its own YouTube channel **www.youtube.com/northernirelandwater** that hosts NI Water videos such as “How to protect your pipes”, “Saving water in the home” or “Your water bill explained”. It can also be used to host video messages for customers during a major incident.

### X (Formerly Twitter)

NI Water’s X account is routinely used to respond directly to customers queries at **@niwnews.**

We have introduced LiveChat at **www.niwater.com/contact-us/** providing more ways to keep our customers informed and offering them more choices for interacting with us.

# Public Information

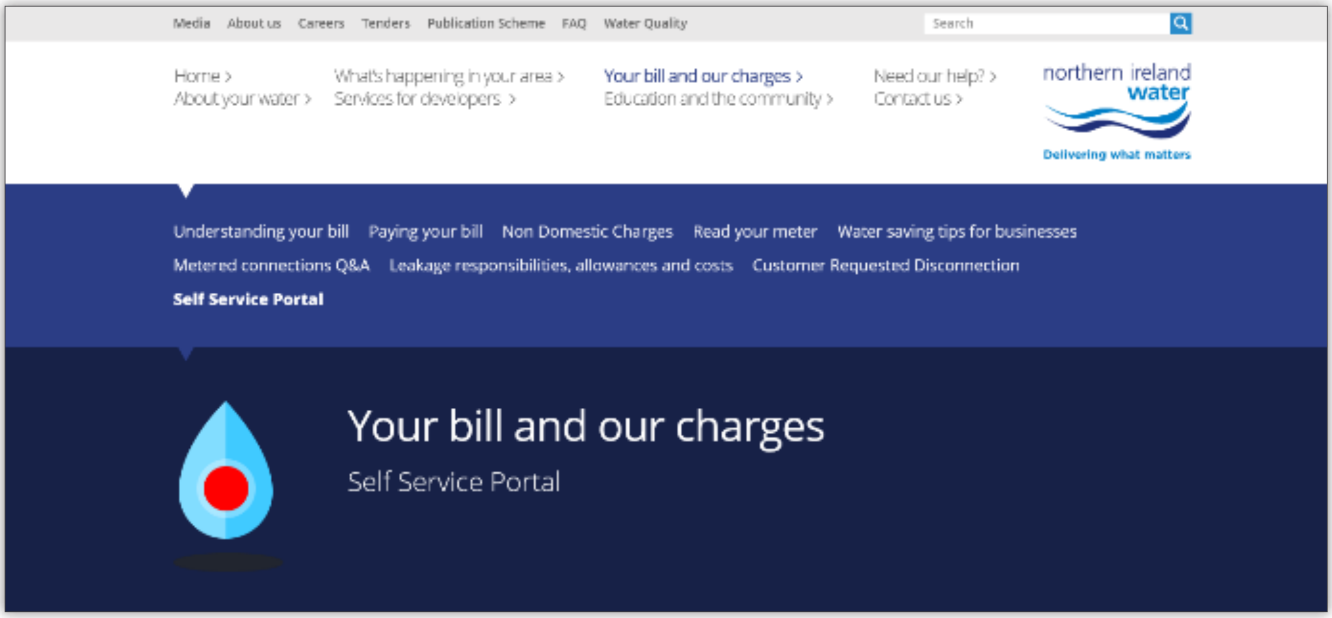
## Customer Services

Staff in the Customer Relations Centre record details and the nature of all enquiries, requests for services, emergencies, and complaints. All contacts are logged and routed directly to staff who will investigate the matter and resolve the problem as quickly as possible.

Customer Services produces a range of leaflets about services provided, including those designed to give customers the opportunity to learn more about water quality standards, water efficiency and the need to use water wisely. The leaflets can be obtained from the Customer Relations Centre or may be viewed on the above website at **www.niwater.com/about-your-water**

## Self Service Portal

As part of our ongoing efforts to improve the overall customer experience, we have taken steps to make interactions more convenient by developing a web-based Self Service platform. This allows customers to log into their personal account online and access their details at a time that is convenient to them.



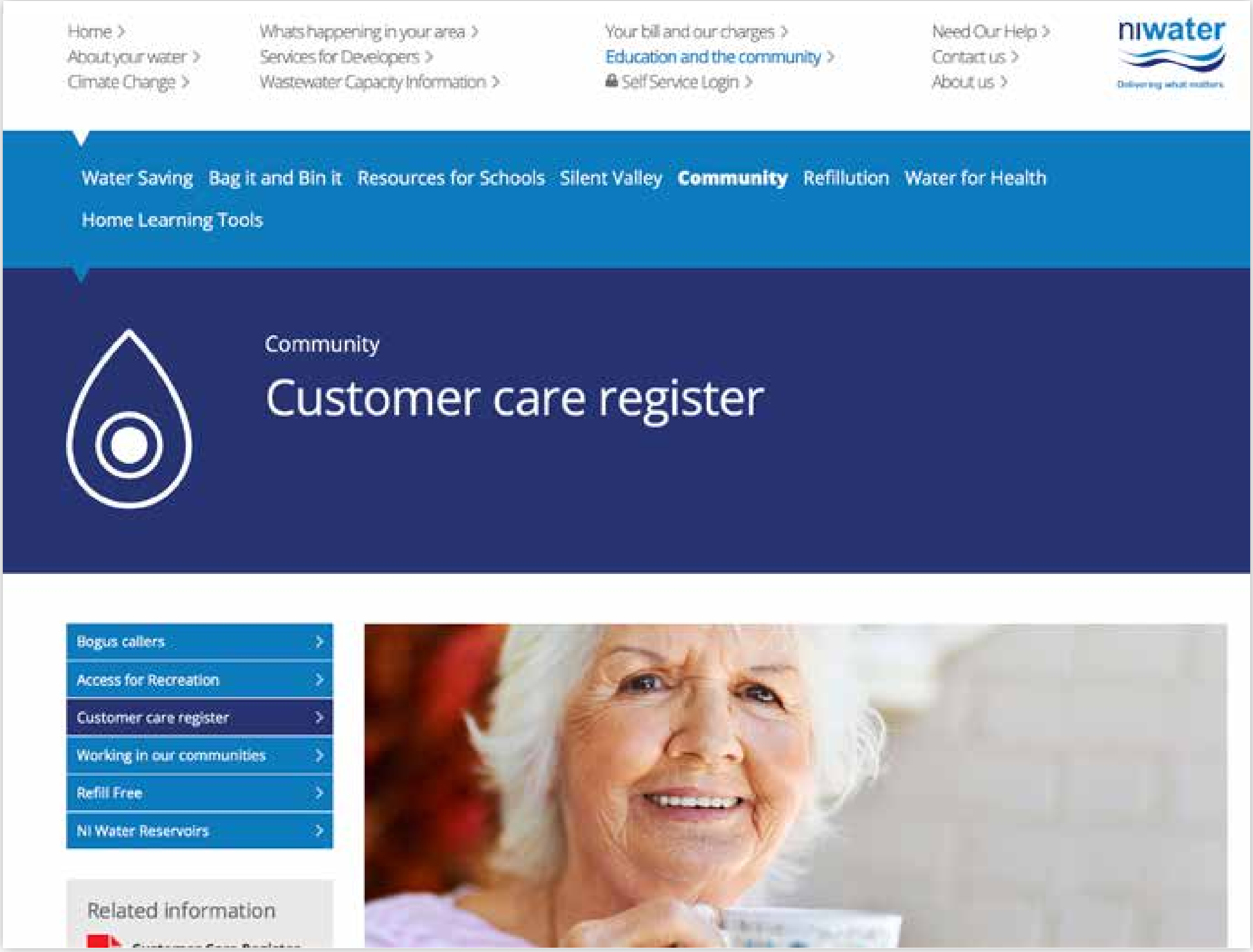

Customers are able to apply online for:

- **Pay a Bill**
  - Businesses and Non-Domestic customers can manage their account details and payments
- **Desludge Request**
  - Both Domestic and Non-Domestic customers can request a septic tank desludge
- **Developer Services (Requires Login)**
  - A new water and/or a wastewater connection to our network
  - A sewer adoption (Article 161)
- **Trade Effluent (Requires Login)**
  - A new consent or manage an existing consent

This web portal is found at:
**digitalservice.niwater.com**

# Public Information

## Customer Care Register




NI Water provides essential services for all our customers throughout Northern Ireland.

We offer a range of free additional services if you are an older customer, have a serious medical condition, or need extra help for any other reason.

You need to join our Customer Care Register at this link to get the extra free services you or anyone in your household would like to receive.

Alternatively, telephone Waterline on 03457 440088

**Doorstep Service**
If you have a hearing difficulty, we will knock the door louder and speak clearly when we call with you. If you have a mobility problem, we will allow more time for you to answer the door.

**Password scheme**
You can ask for a password to help you identify our staff. Please arrange a password with us. Our staff will always use this password when they visit you.

If someone claims to work for us but does not know your password, do not let them in.

Instead, please get in touch with us and we will check to see if the caller really works for us.

**Carers Contact Service**
You can name a carer or relative who:

- can contact us on your behalf
- we can contact if we need to reach you at anytime
- we can post information directly to

# Major Incident Information

In a major incident or emergency (such as freeze/thaw events following a prolonged period of extremely cold weather), NI Water can experience a massive increase in demand for information by our customers which would overwhelm the normal systems in place.

To increase the number of calls answered and the quality of information provided, NI Water has installed a High Volume Call Answering (HVCA) system. This "always-on" service monitors all incoming calls to Waterline and takes on the additional load during unexpected peaks. The NI Water HVCA system recognises customers using the telephone number held on their customer record or it can use Voice Recognition to allow customers to state their Post Code etc. (Voice Recognition like this is used on many smartphones and call handling systems in banks etc).

NI Water's customers should have a better experience when they ring us because their call will always be answered, and they should be provided with up-to-date information.

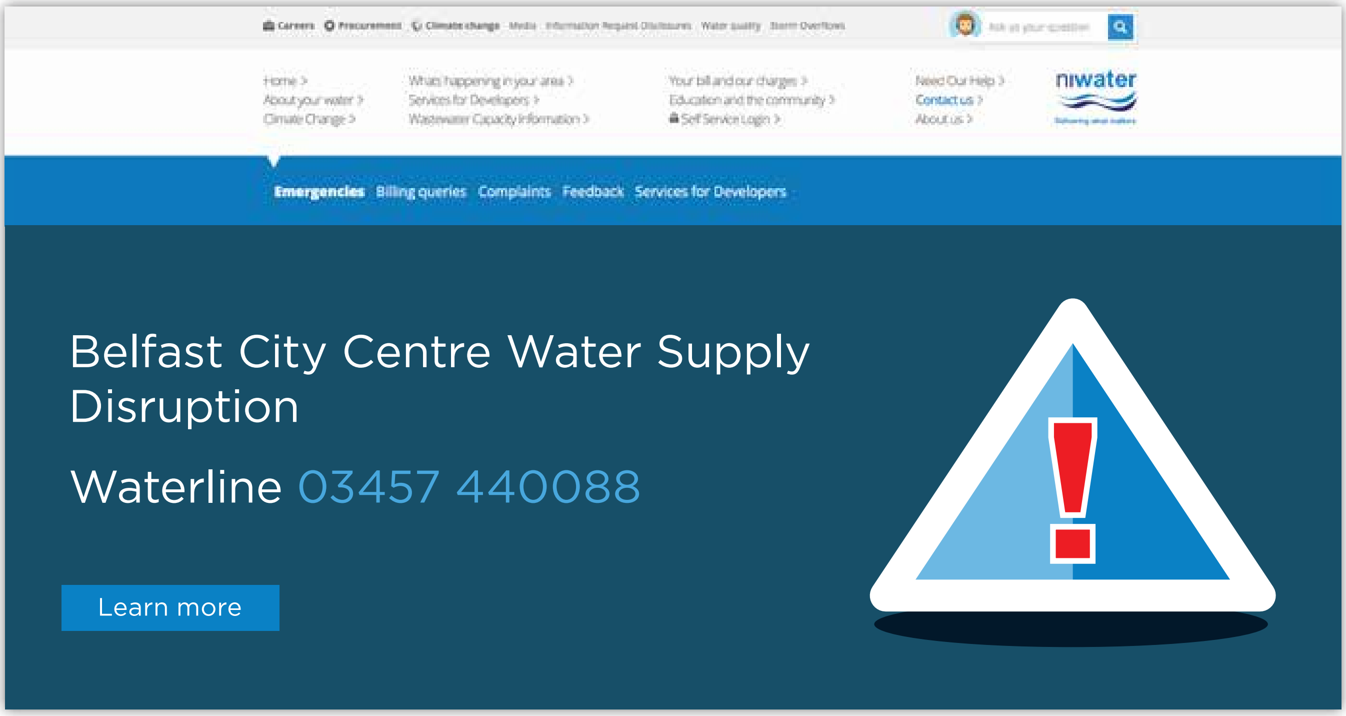
NI Water's management of the incident will be improved because we will know when, and why, each customer has called.

This allows a more detailed picture of the reasons customers are calling and the potential causes to be built up. This technology puts NI Water on a par with other utilities in Northern Ireland and other water companies in the UK.

## Major Incident and Major Emergency

NI Water's website routinely provides information to its customers regarding interruptions, repairs, and planned upgrades as well as frequently asked questions and answers and links to helpful sites e.g. to find a plumber etc.

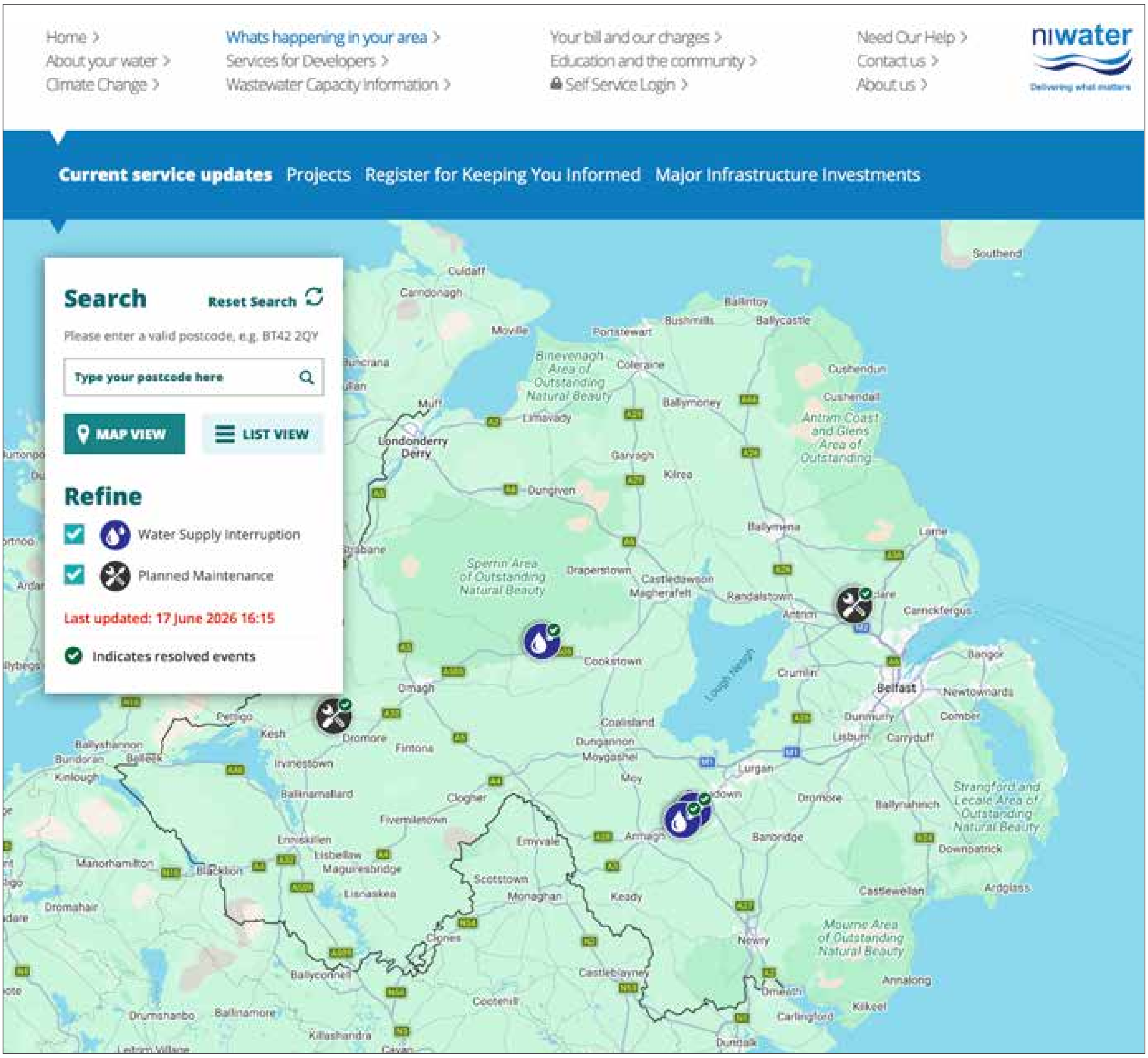
If a major incident or emergency is declared, NI Water's normal website has the facility to become a dedicated portal for emergency information. This allows customers to quickly find out information based on their postcode.



# Major Incident Information

**Information available includes:**

- Bursts
- Alternative Water Supplies
- Planned Restrictions to Supply
- Low Reservoir Levels
- Boil Notices



# Appendix 1

## Drinking Water Quality Standards

Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017

## Schedule 1: Prescribed Concentrations and Values

### Table A: Microbiological Parameters

Part I: Directive Requirements

| Parameters | Concentration or Value (maximum) | Units of Measurement | Point of compliance |
|---|---|---|---|
| Enterococci | 0 | number/100ml | Customers' taps |
| *Escherichia coli (E. coli)* | 0 | number/100ml | Customers' taps |
| Coliform bacteria | 0 | number/100ml | Customers' taps |

### Table B: Chemical Parameters

Part I: Directive requirements

| Parameters | Concentration or Value (maximum) | Units of Measurement | Point of compliance |
|---|---|---|---|
| Acrylamide | 0.10 | μg/l | (i) |
| Antimony | 5 | μg Sb/l | Customers' taps |
| Arsenic | 10 | μg As/l | Customers' taps |
| Benzene | 1 | μg/l | Customers' taps |
| Benzo(a)pyrene | 0.01 | μg/l | Customers' taps |
| Boron | 1 | mg B/l | Customers' taps |
| Bromate | 10 | μg $BrO_3$/l | Customers' taps |
| Cadmium | 5 | μg Cd/l | Customers' taps |
| Chromium | 50 | μg Cr/l | Customers' taps |
| Copper | 2 | mg Cu/l | Customers' taps |
| Cyanide | 50 | μg CN/l | Customers' taps |
| 1,2 Dichloroethane | 3 | μg/l | Customers' taps* |
| Epichlorohydrin | 0.10 | μg/l | (i) |
| Fluoride | 1.5 | mg F/l | Customers' taps |
| Lead | 10 | μg Pb/l | Customers' taps |
| Mercury | 1 | μg Hg/l | Customers' taps |
| Nickel | 20 | μg Ni/l | Customers' taps |
| Nitrate | 50 | mg $NO_3$/l | Customers' taps |
| Nitrite | 0.5 | mg $NO_2$/l | Customers' taps |
| Aldrin | 0.03 | μg/l | Customers' taps* |
| Dieldrin | 0.03 | μg/l | Customers' taps* |
| Heptachlor | 0.03 | μg/l | Customers' taps* |
| Heptachlor epoxide | 0.03 | μg/l | Customers' taps* |

# Appendix 1

| Parameters | Concentration or Value (maximum) | Units of Measurement | Point of compliance |
|---|---|---|---|
| Other pesticides | 0.1 | µg/l | Customers' taps* |
| Total Pesticides (ii) | 0.5 | µg/l | Customers' taps* |
| PAH - Sum of four substances (iii) | 0.1 | µg/l | Customers' taps |
| Selenium | 10 | µg Se/l | Customers' taps |
| Tetrachloroethene/ Trichloroethene – Sum (iv) | 10 | µg/l | Customers' taps* |
| Total Trihalomethanes (v) | 100 | µg/l | Customers' taps |
| Vinyl chloride | 0.50 | µg/l | (i) |

## Notes:

(i) The parametric value refers to the residual monomer concentration in the water as calculated according to specifications of the maximum release from the corresponding polymer in contact with the water. This is controlled by product specification.

(ii) Total Pesticides: means the sum of the concentrations of the individual pesticides detected and quantified in the monitoring procedure.

(iii) The specified compounds are:
- benzo(b)fluoranthene
- benzo(k)fluoranthene
- benzo(ghi)perylene
- Indeno (1,2,3-cd) pyrene

(iv) The parametric value applies to the sum of the concentrations of the individual compounds detected and quantified in the monitoring process.

(v) The specified compounds are:
- chloroform
- bromoform
- dibromochloromethane
- bromodichloromethane

* May be monitored from samples of water leaving treatment works or other supply point, as no significant change during distribution.

Part II: National Requirements

| Parameters | Concentration Or Value (Maximum Unless Otherwise Stated) | Units Of Measurement | Point Of Compliance |
|---|---|---|---|
| Aluminium | 200 | µg Al/l | Customers' taps |
| Colour | 20 | mg/l Pt/Co | Customers' taps |
| Iron | 200 | µg Fe/l | Customers' taps |
| Manganese | 50 | µg Mn/l | Customers' taps |
| Odour | 0 | Dilution Number | Customers' taps |
| Sodium | 200 | mg Na/l | Customers' taps |
| Taste | 0 | Dilution Number | Customers' taps |
| Tetrachloromethane | 3 | µg/l | Customers' taps |
| Turbidity | 4 | NTU | Customers' taps |

# Appendix 1

## Schedule 2: Indicator Parameters

| Parameters | Specification Concentration or Value (maximum) or State | Units Of Measurement | Point Of Monitoring |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ammonium | 0.5 | mg $NH_4$/l | Customers' taps |
| Chloride (i) | 250 | mg Cl/l | Supply point* |
| Clostridium perfringens (including spores) | 0 | Number/100ml | Supply point* |
| Colony counts | No abnormal change | Number/1ml at 22°C<br>Number/1ml at 37°C | Customers' taps, service reservoirs and treatment works |
| Conductivity (i) | 2500 | µS/cm at 20°C | Supply point* |
| Hydrogen ion | 9.5 | pH value | Customers' taps |
| | 6.5 (minimum) | pH value | |
| Sulphate (i) | 250 | mg $SO_4$/l | Supply point* |
| Total indicative dose (for radioactivity) (ii) | 0.1 | mSv/year | Supply point* |
| Total organic carbon (TOC) | No abnormal change | mg C/l | Supply point* |
| Tritium (for radioactivity) | 100 | Bq/l | Supply point* |
| Turbidity | 1 | NTU | Treatment works |

### Notes:

(i) The water should not be aggressive.

(ii) Excluding tritium, potassium-40, radon, and radon decay products.

* May be monitored from samples of water leaving treatment works or other supply point, as no significant change during distribution.

### Explanatory Notes

**Measurement Units:**

Milligram per litre (mg/l) means one part in a million.
Microgram per litre (µg/l) means one part in a thousand million.

**Parameter:**

A parameter refers to any substance, organism or property listed above.

# Appendix 2

## Water Quality Report for Water Supply Zones

| Schedule 1 parameters | Units | 2025 Samples | No > PCV | % > PCV |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1,2 Dichloroethane | µg/l | 504 | 0 | 0.00% |
| Aluminium | µg Al/l | 2,139 | 8 | 0.37% |
| Antimony | µg Sb/l | 502 | 0 | 0.00% |
| Arsenic | µg As/l | 503 | 1 | 0.20% |
| Benzene | µg/l | 504 | 0 | 0.00% |
| Benzo(a)pyrene | ng/l | 504 | 0 | 0.00% |
| Boron | µg B/l | 501 | 0 | 0.00% |
| Bromate | µg/l | 504 | 0 | 0.00% |
| Cadmium | µg Cd/l | 503 | 0 | 0.00% |
| Chromium | µg Cr/l | 503 | 0 | 0.00% |
| Colour | mg/l Pt/Co | 2,144 | 0 | 0.00% |
| Copper | mg Cu/l | 504 | 0 | 0.00% |
| E. coli | No./100ml | 5,784 | 2 | 0.03% |
| Enterococci | No./100ml | 504 | 1 | 0.20% |
| Fluoride | mg F/l | 504 | 0 | 0.00% |
| Iron | µg Fe/l | 2,139 | 9 | 0.42% |
| Lead | µg Pb/l | 504 | 2 | 0.40% |
| Manganese | µg Mn/l | 2,139 | 3 | 0.14% |
| Mercury | µg Hg/l | 504 | 0 | 0.00% |
| Nickel | µg Ni/l | 504 | 2 | 0.40% |
| Nitrate | mg NO3/l | 504 | 0 | 0.00% |
| Nitrite | mg NO2/l | 504 | 0 | 0.00% |
| Odour | dilution No | 2,144 | 3 | 0.14% |
| PAH - Sum of four substances | µg Se/l | 504 | 0 | 0.00% |
| Selenium | mg Na/l | 503 | 0 | 0.00% |
| Sodium | dilution No | 504 | 0 | 0.00% |
| Taste | µg/l | 2,144 | 6 | 0.28% |
| Tetrachloroethene/Trichloroethene - Sum | µg/l | 504 | 0 | 0.00% |
| Tetrachloromethane | µg/l | 504 | 0 | 0.00% |
| Total Trihalomethanes | µg/l | 503 | 7 | 1.39% |
| Turbidity | FTU | 2,144 | 1 | 0.05% |

| Indicator parameters | Units | 2025 Samples | No > PCV | % > PCV |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Coliform bacteria | No./100ml | 5,784 | 20 | 0.35% |
| Total - Residual disinfectant | mg Cl/l | 5,784 | - | - |
| Free - Residual disinfectant | mg Cl/l | 5,784 | - | - |
| Colony Counts 37 (48hrs) | No./1 ml | 2,144 | - | - |
| Colony Counts 22 | No./1 ml | 2,144 | - | - |
| Total Organic Carbon | mg C/l | 504 | - | - |
| Ammonium | mg NH4/l | 504 | 0 | 0.00% |
| Chloride | mg Cl/l | 504 | 0 | 0.00% |
| Hydrogen Ion | pH value | 2,144 | 1 | 0.05% |
| Conductivity | µS/cm 20 | 2,144 | 0 | 0.00% |
| Sulphate | mg SO4/l | 504 | 0 | 0.00% |

# Appendix 2

## Water Quality Report for Authorised Supply Points

| Schedule 1 parameters | Units | 2025 Samples | No > PCV | % > PCV |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cyanide | µg CN/l | 236 | 0 | 0.00% |
| Pesticides - Total Substances | µg/l | 236 | 0 | 0.00% |
| All other analysed Pesticides | µg/l | 8,968 | 1 | 0.01% |

| Indicator parameters | Units | 2025 Samples | No > PCV | % > PCV |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Clostridium perfringens (sulph red) | No./100 m | 236 | 0 | 0.00% |
| Total Indicative Dose | | 31 | 0 | 0.00% |
| Tritium | Bq/l | 31 | 0 | 0.00% |

## Water Quality Report for Water Treatment Works

| Schedule 1 parameters | Units | 2025 Samples | No > PCV | % > PCV |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Coliform bacteria | No./100ml | 6,200 | 7 | 0.11% |
| E. coli | No./100ml | 6,200 | 0 | 0.00% |
| Nitrite | mg NO2/l | 236 | 0 | 0.00% |

| Indicator parameters | Units | 2025 Samples | No > PVC | % > PVC |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Turbidity | FTU | 6,199 | 9 | 0.15% |
| Total - Residual disinfectant | mg Cl/l | 6,200 | - | - |
| Free - Residual disinfectant | mg Cl/l | 6,200 | - | - |
| Colony Counts 37 (48hrs) | No./1 ml | 6,199 | - | - |
| Colony Counts 22 | No./1 ml | 6,200 | - | - |

## Water Quality Report for Service Reservoirs

| Schedule 1 parameters | Units | 2025 Samples | No > PCV | % > PCV |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Coliform bacteria | No./100m | 14,908 | 14 | 0.09% |
| E. coli | No./100ml | 14,908 | 0 | 0.00% |

| Indicator 1 parameters | Units | 2025 Samples | No > PVC | % > PVC |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Colony Counts 37 (48hrs) | No./1 ml | 14,907 | - | - |
| Colony Counts 22 | No./1 ml | 14,908 | - | - |
| Total - Residual disinfectant | mg Cl/l | 14,908 | - | - |
| Free - Residual disinfectant | mg Cl/l | 14,908 | - | - |

# Appendix 3

## Water Quality by Northern Ireland Council Area

This section of the Drinking Water Quality Report is designed to demonstrate water quality by individual council area based on the Percentage Compliance at Customer Tap (including Supply Points) over the water supply zones associated with that council area, as shown on the associated maps.

For monitoring purposes, NI Water's supply area is divided into water supply zones as required under the drinking water regulations. These are areas serving not more than 100,000 people, each of which are normally supplied from a single water supply source or combination of sources. There are areas where owing to topography and dispersal of population, it is not practicable to provide a mains water supply. Currently over 99.9% of Northern Ireland's population receive public water supplies.

In a number of cases, water supply zones overlap council boundaries. The council reports indicate which water supply zones are wholly or partially contained within the council areas, including those zones that may have a relatively small area within the council area. Separation of data within these water supply zones across council boundaries is not practicable, therefore the information used in calculating the zonal and council compliance relates to the whole zone and not merely the part included within a council boundary. Following discussions with the Drinking Water Inspectorate, water supply zones with fewer than 40 properties within the council area have not been used to calculate the individual council compliance. The information is based on samples taken randomly from customer taps in each water supply zone and from planned samples at authorised supply points. Due to the nature of random sampling, there may be fluctuations in water quality across the water supply zones.

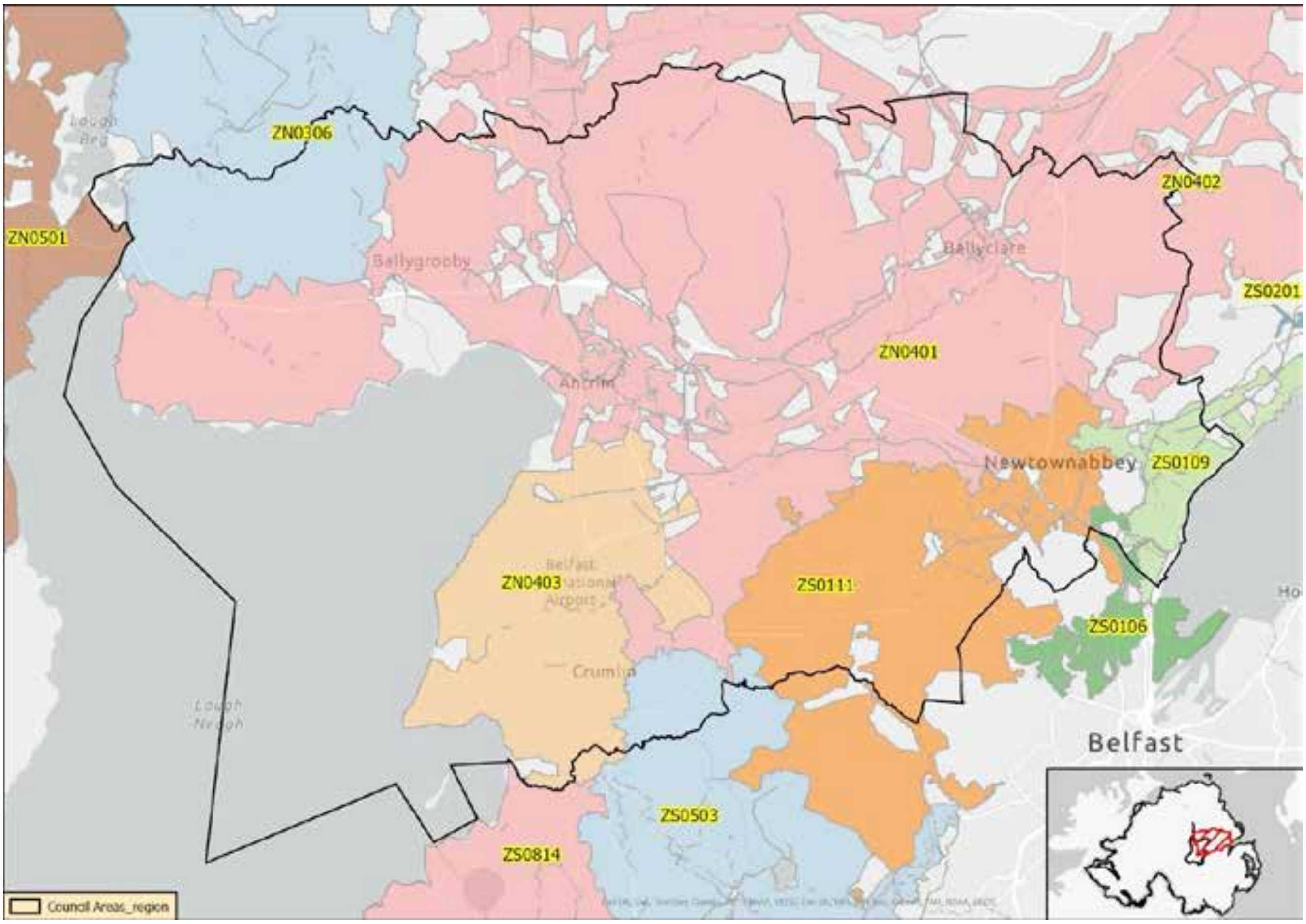
The report also details Capital Work Programmes affecting the council area, which directly related to water quality during the reporting period.

Small variations in water quality compliance performance occur across Northern Ireland. This reflects the need to continue to invest in and to maintain water treatment works, and to improve the water mains network.

NI Water has identified the need to deliver a significant volume of water mains rehabilitation and other works across its ageing network. The works are necessary to ensure the efficient and cost-effective operation of its water supply system in the immediate future and longer term as well as ensuring adequate levels of water quality and customer supply. To achieve this goal, NI Water has implemented a Water mains Rehabilitation Framework, within which it undertakes work on a Northern Ireland wide basis as identified by the zonal study programme of work.

# Appendix 3

## Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council




### Percentage Compliance at Customer Tap (including Supply Points)

| | Target | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Northern Ireland Compliance | 99.7% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% |
| Antrim and Newtownabbey Compliance | 99.7% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% |

### 2025 water supply zones wholly or partially within the council area:

| Zone Code | Zone Name | Zone Code | Zone Name |
|---|---|---|---|
| ZN0306 | Dungonnell Portglenone | ZS0106 | Dunore Belfast North |
| ZN0401 | Dunore Point Antrim | ZS0109 | Dorisland Whiteabby |
| ZN0402 | Killylane Ballynure | ZS0111 | Dunore Point Hydepark |
| ZN0403 | Dunore Point Crumlin | ZS0503 | Castor Bay Stoneyford |

# Appendix 3

## 2025 water quality Capital Works Programmes affecting the council area:

2021 Drought Mitigation Project

Abstraction Monitoring

Antrim South WIIM 2.1 Work Package

Back siphonage at WTW

Clean Water Network Modelling 2021 to 2024

DS14120 - Watermain - Belmont Road Antrim

DS33565 - Hightown Road, Glengormley Watermain Upgrade

Eastern Super work package Phase 2

Facilities Management Review

Feasibility Study for using Groundwater Abstraction

High Demand - External Modelling

Lismacloskey Road watermain Rehabilitation

MIMP Central (Major Incident Mitigation Project Central Region) Freeze Thaw Improvements

MIMP East (Major Incident Mitigation Project East Region) Freeze Thaw Improvements

Newtownabbey Zone Watermain Improvements Phase 3

NIAMP5 Project Support

Northern WRZ Resilience

Owner Controlled Insurance Programme (OCIP)

PC15 Lead Communication Pipe Replacement Programme

PC15 Year 1 Base Maintenance - Chlorine Dosing Sites

PC27 Water Treatability optimisation pilot plant

Preparation of Initial Work packages for PC21

Professional Services - PC21 Watermain Rehabilitation, New and Replacement and First Time Services

Professional Services Framework Watermain Network PC15

SEMD Surveys PC10 Water

Service Reservoir Security Phase 1

Trunk main Rehab PC21 Year 1

Water Efficiency and Innovation Support Services

Water Resource & Supply Resilience Plan

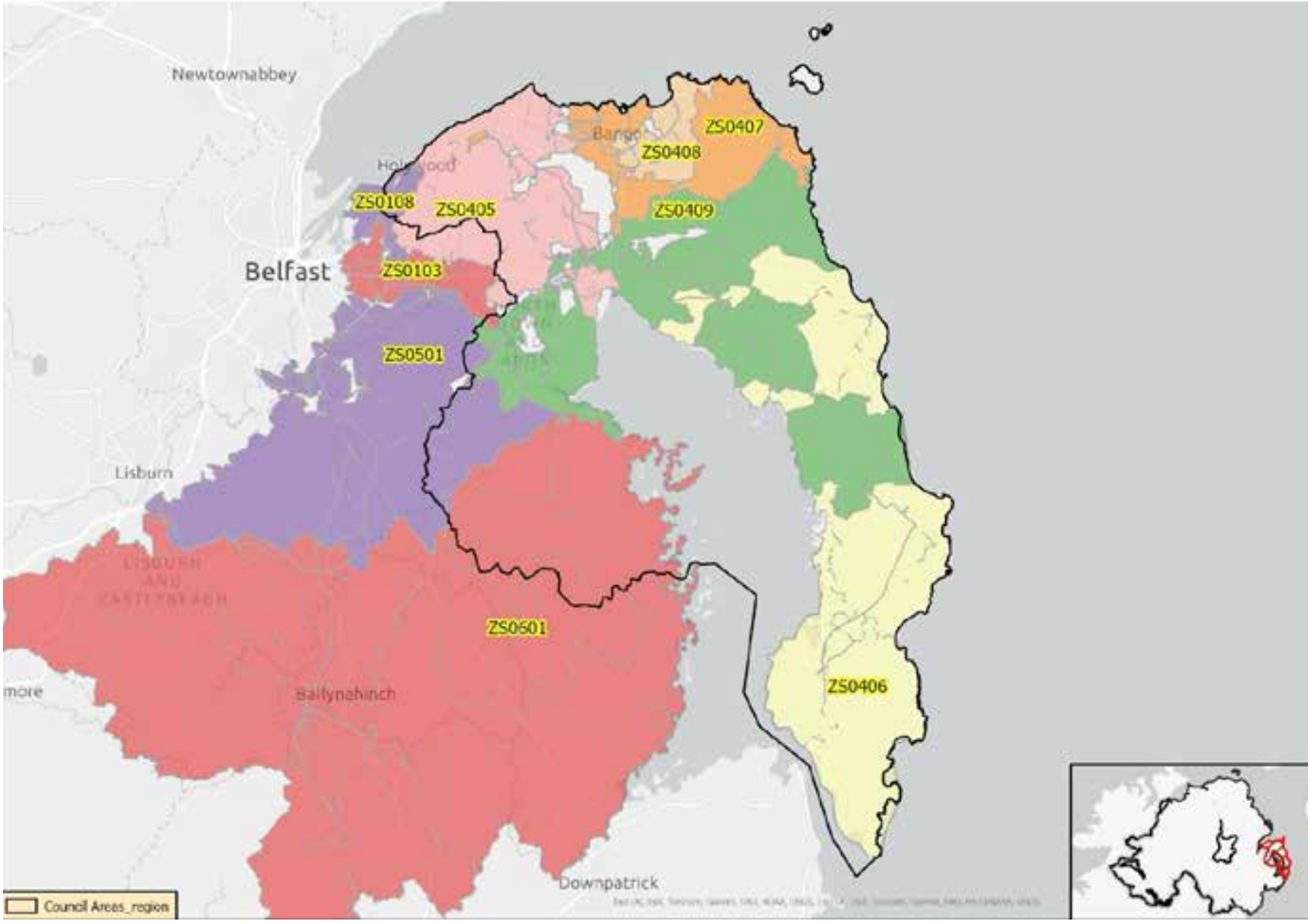
Watermain New - Lead Pipe Replacement Programme

Watermain Rehabilitation, New & Replacement Incorporating First Time Services - Professional Fees

WIIM Phase 2 Dunore East WP

# Appendix 3

## Ards and North Down Borough Council




### Percentage Compliance at Customer Tap (including Supply Points)

| | Target | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Northern Ireland Compliance | 99.7% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% |
| Ards and North Down Compliance | 99.7% | 100.0% | 99.9% | 100.0% | 99.9% | 99.9% |

### 2025 water supply zones wholly or partially within the council area:

| Zone Code | Zone Name | Zone Code | Zone Name |
|---|---|---|---|
| ZS0108 | Belfast Purdysburn | ZS0408 | Drumaroad Bangor East |
| ZS0405 | Drumaroad Ards West | ZS0409 | Drumaroad Ards East |
| ZS0406 | Drumaroad Portaferry | ZS0501 | Drumaroad Lisburn |
| ZS0407 | Drumaroad Bangor West | ZS0601 | Drumaroad Ballynahinch |

# Appendix 3

## 2025 water quality Capital Works Programmes affecting the council area:

2021 Drought Mitigation Project

Abstraction Monitoring

Back siphonage at WTW

Bangor Road, Holywood, Watermain Extension

Clean Water Network Modelling 2021 to 2024

Eastern Super work package Phase 2

Facilities Management Review

Feasibility Study for using Groundwater Abstraction

High Demand - External Modelling

MIMP East (Major Incident Mitigation Project East Region) Freeze Thaw Improvements

NIAMP5 Project Support

Owner Controlled Insurance Programme (OCIP)

PC15 Lead Communication Pipe Replacement Programme

PC15 Year 1 Base Maintenance - Chlorine Dosing Sites

PC27 Water Treatability optimisation pilot plant

Preparation of Initial Work packages for PC21

Professional Services - PC21 Watermain Rehabilitation, New and Replacement and First Time Services

Professional Services Framework Watermain Network PC15

SEMD Surveys PC10 Water

Service Reservoir Security Phase 1

Trunk main Rehab PC21 Year 1

Water Efficiency and Innovation Support Services

Water Resource & Supply Resilience Plan

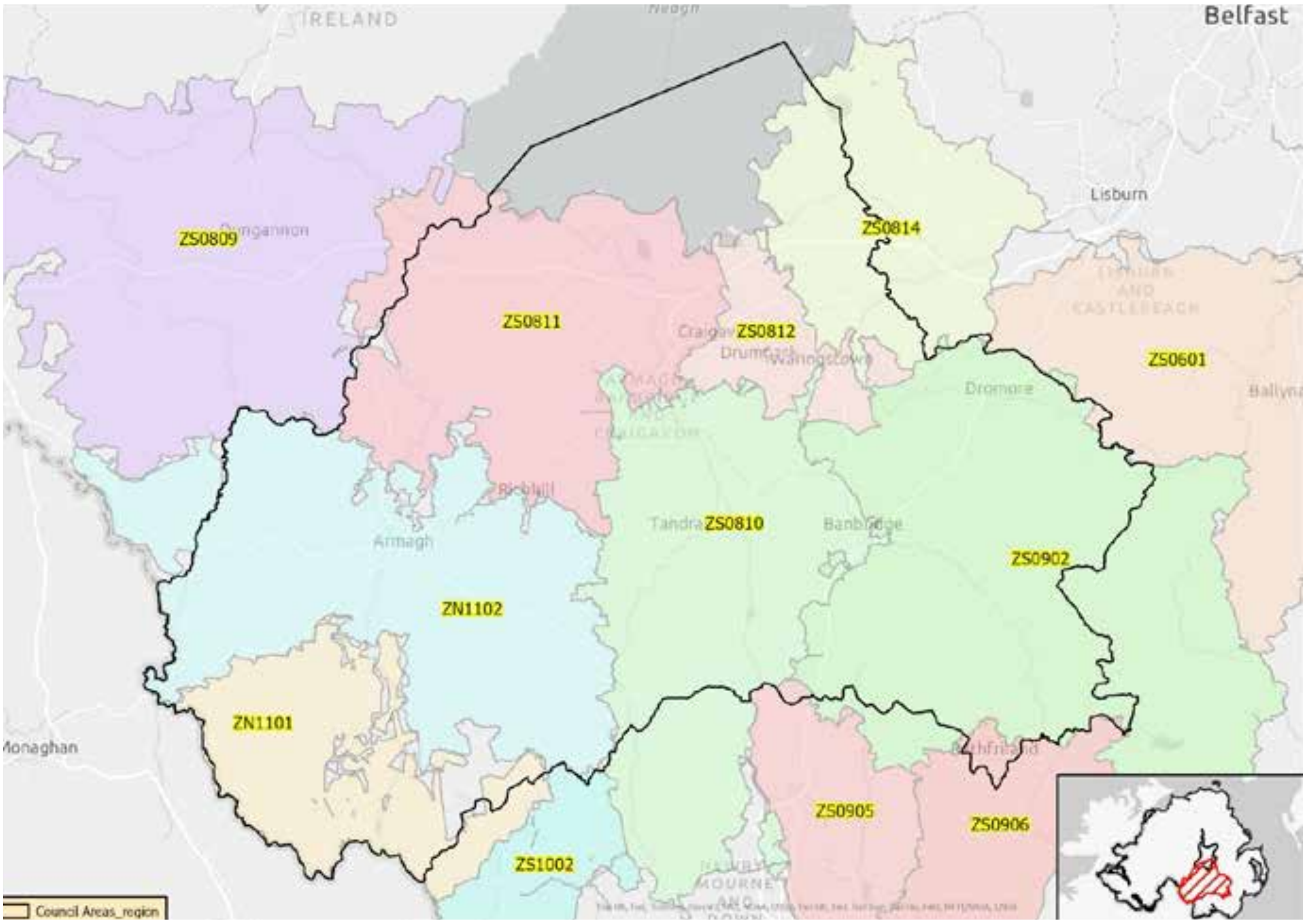
Watermain New - Lead Pipe Replacement Programme

Watermain Rehabilitation, New & Replacement Incorporating First Time Services - Professional Fees

Whitespots Trunk main

# Appendix 3

## Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council




### Percentage Compliance at Customer Tap (including Supply Points)

| | Target | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Northern Ireland Compliance | 99.7% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% |
| Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon Compliance | 99.7% | 99.7% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% |

### 2025 water supply zones wholly or partially within the council area:

| Zone Code | Zone Name | Zone Code | Zone Name |
|---|---|---|---|
| ZN1101 | Clay Lake Keady | ZS0812 | Castor Bay Craigavon East |
| ZN1102 | Seagahan Armagh | ZS0814 | Castor Bay Moira |
| ZS0810 | Castor Bay Tandragee | ZS0902 | Fofanny Dromore |
| ZS0811 | Castor Bay Portadown | ZS0906 | Fofanny Hilltown |

# Appendix 3

## 2025 water quality Capital Works Programmes affecting the council area:

2021 Drought Mitigation Project

Abstraction Monitoring

Back siphonage at WTW

Banbridge South Armagh WIIM 2.1 Work Package

Castor Bay Outage

Castor Bay to Ballydougan Trunk Main

Castor Bay to Dungannon Strategic Trunk Mains

Clean Water Network Modelling 2021 to 2024

Craigavon WIIM 2.1 Work Package

CWT - Seagahan

Facilities Management Review

Feasibility Study for using Groundwater Abstraction

High Demand - External Modelling

Lurgan Moira WIIM 2.1 Work Package

NIAMP5 Project Support

Owner Controlled Insurance Programme (OCIP)

PC15 Lead Communication Pipe Replacement Programme

PC15 Year 1 Base Maintenance - Chlorine Dosing Sites

PC27 Water Treatability optimisation pilot plant

Preparation of Initial Work packages for PC21

Professional Services - PC21 Watermain Rehabilitation, New and Replacement and First Time Services

Professional Services Framework Watermain Network PC15

SEMD Surveys PC10 Water

Service Reservoir Security Phase 1

Slaterock Watermain Scheme

Trunk main Rehab PC21 Year 1

Water Efficiency and Innovation Support Services

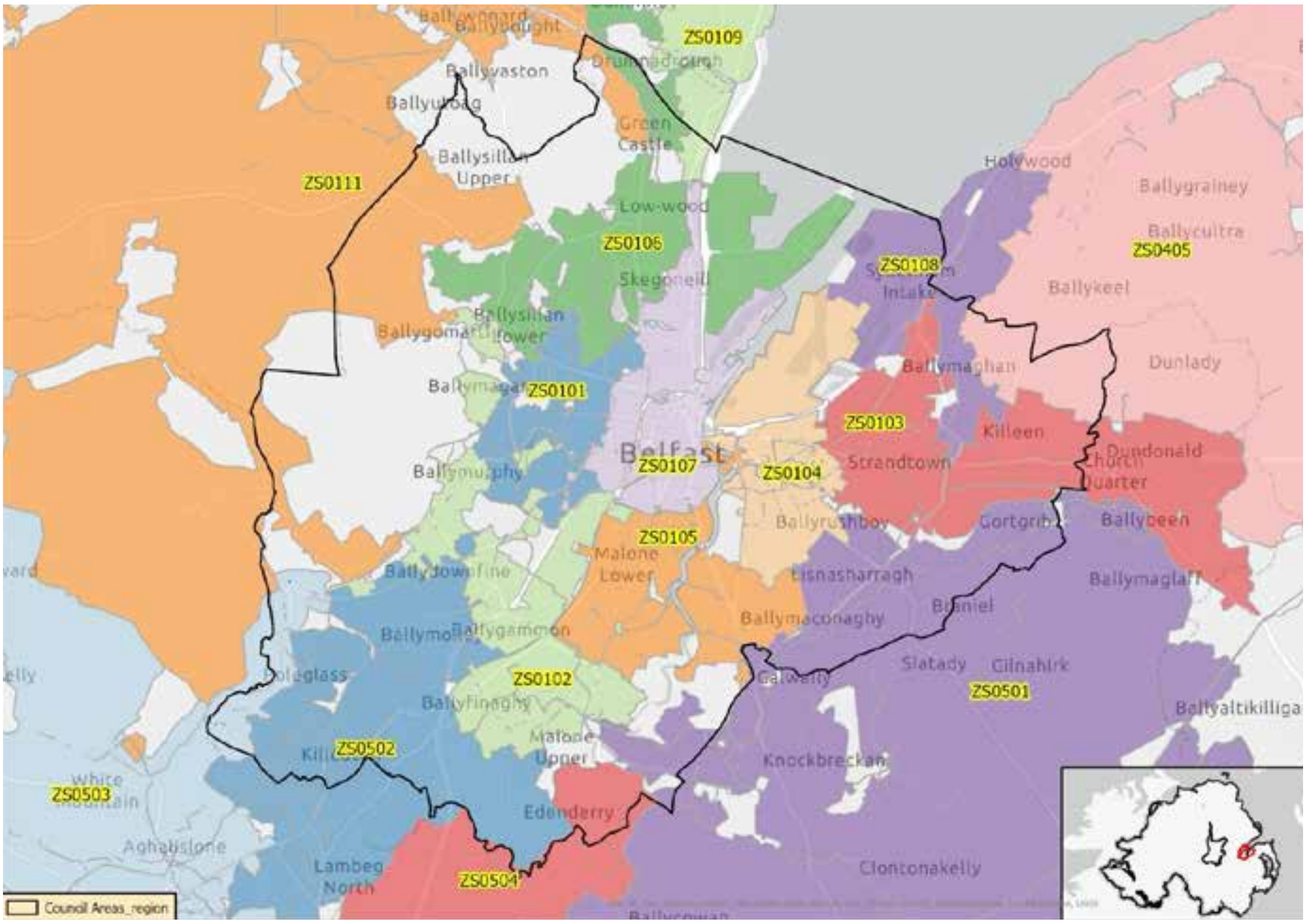
Water Resource & Supply Resilience Plan

Watermain New - Lead Pipe Replacement Programme

Watermain Rehabilitation, New & Replacement Incorporating First Time Services - Professional Fees

# Appendix 3

## Belfast City Council




### Percentage Compliance at Customer Tap (including Supply Points)

| | Target | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Northern Ireland Compliance | 99.7% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% |
| Belfast Compliance | 99.7% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% |

### 2025 water supply zones wholly or partially within the council area:

| Zone Code | Zone Name | Zone Code | Zone Name |
|---|---|---|---|
| ZS0101 | Dunore Ballygomartin North | ZS0108 | Belfast Purdysburn |
| ZS0102 | Dunore Ballygomartin South | ZS0109 | Dorisland Whiteabbey |
| ZS0103 | Belfast Ballyhanwood | ZS0111 | Dunore Point Hydepark |
| ZS0104 | Belfast Breda North | ZS0405 | Drumaroad Ards West |
| ZS0105 | Belfast Breda South | ZS0501 | Drumaroad Lisburn |
| ZS0106 | Dunore Belfast North | ZS0502 | Poleglass Dunmurry |
| ZS0107 | Belfast Oldpark | ZS0503 | Castor Bay Stoneyford |
| | | ZS0504 | Lisburn South |

# Appendix 3

## 2025 water quality Capital Works Programmes affecting the council area:

2021 Drought Mitigation Project

Abstraction Monitoring

Back siphonage at WTW

Clean Water Network Modelling 2021 to 2024

Eastern Super work package Phase 2

Facilities Management Review

High Demand - External Modelling

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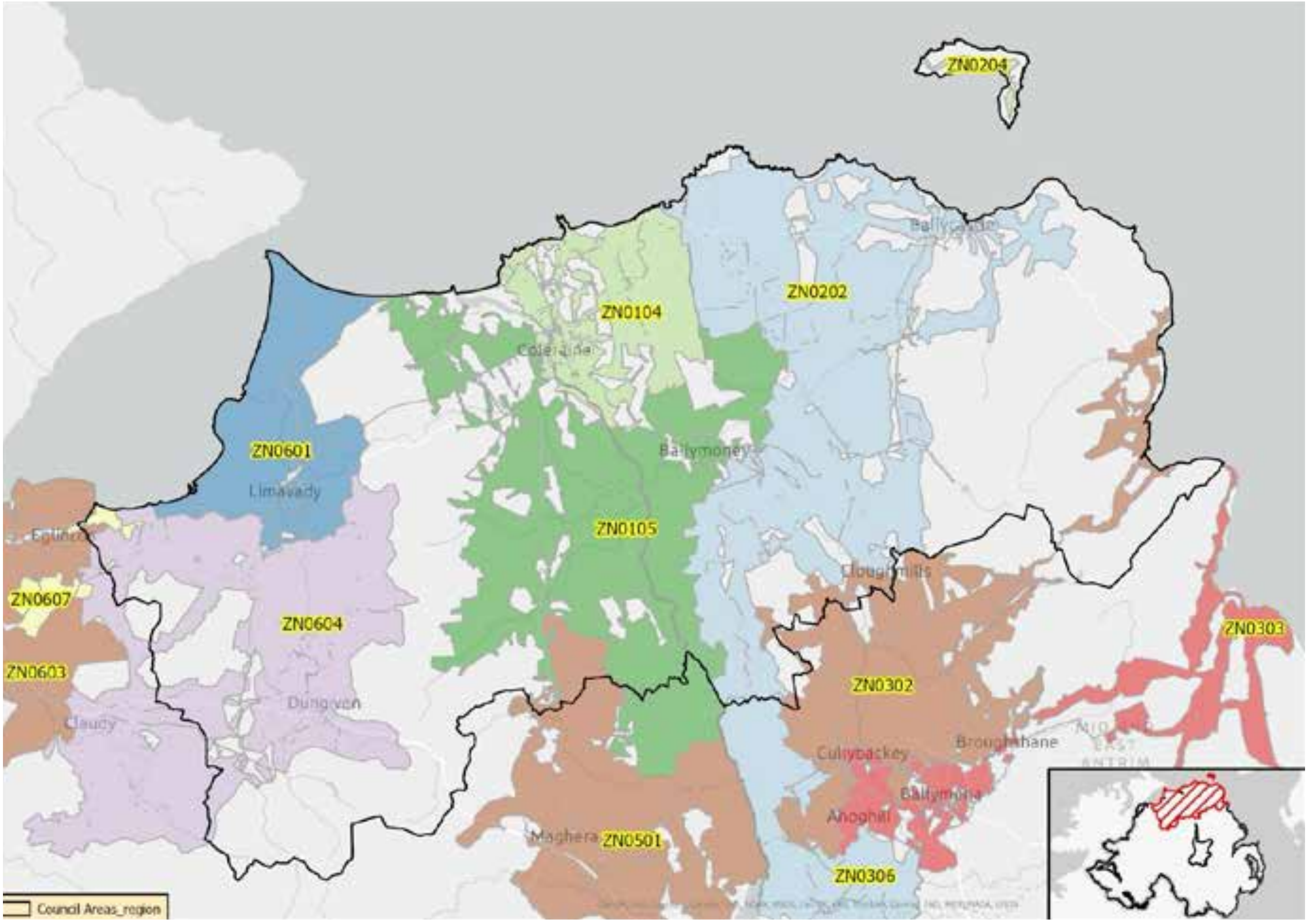
Water Resource & Supply Resilience Plan

Watermain New - Lead Pipe Replacement Programme

Watermain Rehabilitation, New & Replacement Incorporating First Time Services - Professional Fees

# Appendix 3

## Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council




## Percentage Compliance at Customer Tap (including Supply Points)

| | Target | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Northern Ireland Compliance | 99.7% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% |
| Causeway Coast and Glens Compliance | 99.7% | 99.7% | 99.8% | 99.8% | 99.7% | 99.8% |

## 2025 water supply zones wholly or partially within the council area:

| Zone Code | Zone Name | Zone Code | Zone Name |
|---|---|---|---|
| ZN0104 | Ballinrees North | ZN0501 | Moyola Magherafelt |
| ZN0105 | Ballinrees South | ZN0601 | Ballinrees Limavady |
| ZN0202 | Altnahinch Bushmills | ZN0603 | Carmoney Eglinton |
| ZN0204 | Rathlin Island | ZN0604 | Caugh Hill Dungiven |
| ZN0302 | Dungonnell Glarryford | ZN0607 | Corrody Derry |

# Appendix 3

## 2025 water quality Capital Works Programmes affecting the council area:

2021 Drought Mitigation Project

A6 Dungiven Drumahoe

Abstraction Monitoring

Altnahinch Pilot Plant Study

Antrim North WIIM 2.1 Work Package

Back siphonage at WTW

Clean Water Network Modelling 2021 to 2024

Facilities Management Review

High Demand - External Modelling

NIAMP5 Project Support

Northern WRZ Resilience

Owner Controlled Insurance Programme (OCIP)

PC15 Lead Communication Pipe Replacement Programme

PC15 Year 1 Base Maintenance - Chlorine Dosing Sites

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SEMD Surveys PC10 Water

Service Reservoir Security Phase 1

Trunk main Rehab PC21 Year 1

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Water Resource & Supply Resilience Plan

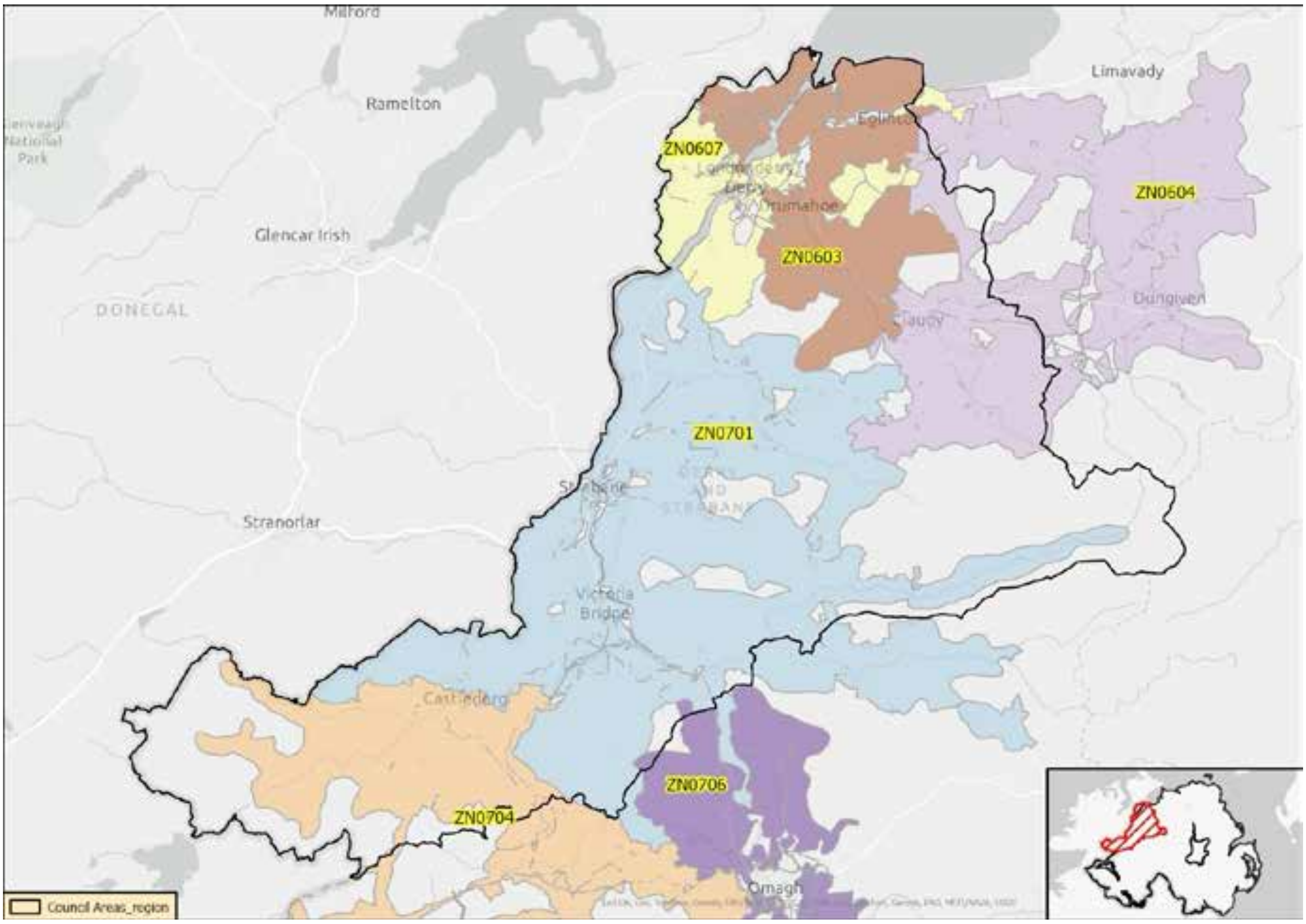
Watermain New - Lead Pipe Replacement Programme

Watermain Rehabilitation, New & Replacement Incorporating First Time Services - Professional Fees

WIIM Phase 2 Ballinrees Limavady WP

# Appendix 3

## Derry City and Strabane District Council




### Percentage Compliance at Customer Tap (including Supply Points)

| | Target | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Northern Ireland Compliance | 99.7% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% |
| Derry City & Strabane Compliance | 99.7% | 99.7% | 99.7% | 99.7% | 99.8% | 99.8% |

### 2025 water supply zones wholly or partially within the council area:

| Zone Code | Zone Name | Zone Code | Zone Name |
|---|---|---|---|
| ZN0603 | Carmoney Eglinton | ZN0701 | Derg Strabane |
| ZN0604 | Caugh Hill Dungiven | ZN0704 | Lough Bradan Drumquin |
| ZN0607 | Corrody Derry | | |

# Appendix 3

## 2025 water quality Capital Works Programmes affecting the council area:

2021 Drought Mitigation Project

A6 Dungiven Drumahoe

Abstraction Monitoring

Back siphonage at WTW

Buncrana Road / Skeoge Link Trunk Main

Caugh Hill, Carmoney to Strabane Strategic Link Watermain

Clean Water Network Modelling 2021 to 2024

Crescent Link Trunk Main

Derg WTW MCPA PEO Undertakings

Facilities Management Review

Feasibility Study for using Groundwater Abstraction

High Demand - External Modelling

NIAMP5 Project Support

Omagh Phase 2 Watermain Rehab

Owner Controlled Insurance Programme (OCIP)

PC15 Lead Communication Pipe Replacement Programme

PC15 Year 1 Base Maintenance - Chlorine Dosing Sites

PC27 Water Treatability optimisation pilot plant

Preparation of Initial Work packages for PC21

Professional Services - PC21 Watermain Rehabilitation, New and Replacement and First Time Services

Professional Services Framework Watermain Network PC15

SEMD Surveys PC10 Water

Service Reservoir Security Phase 1

Trunk main Rehab PC21 Year 1

Water Efficiency and Innovation Support Services

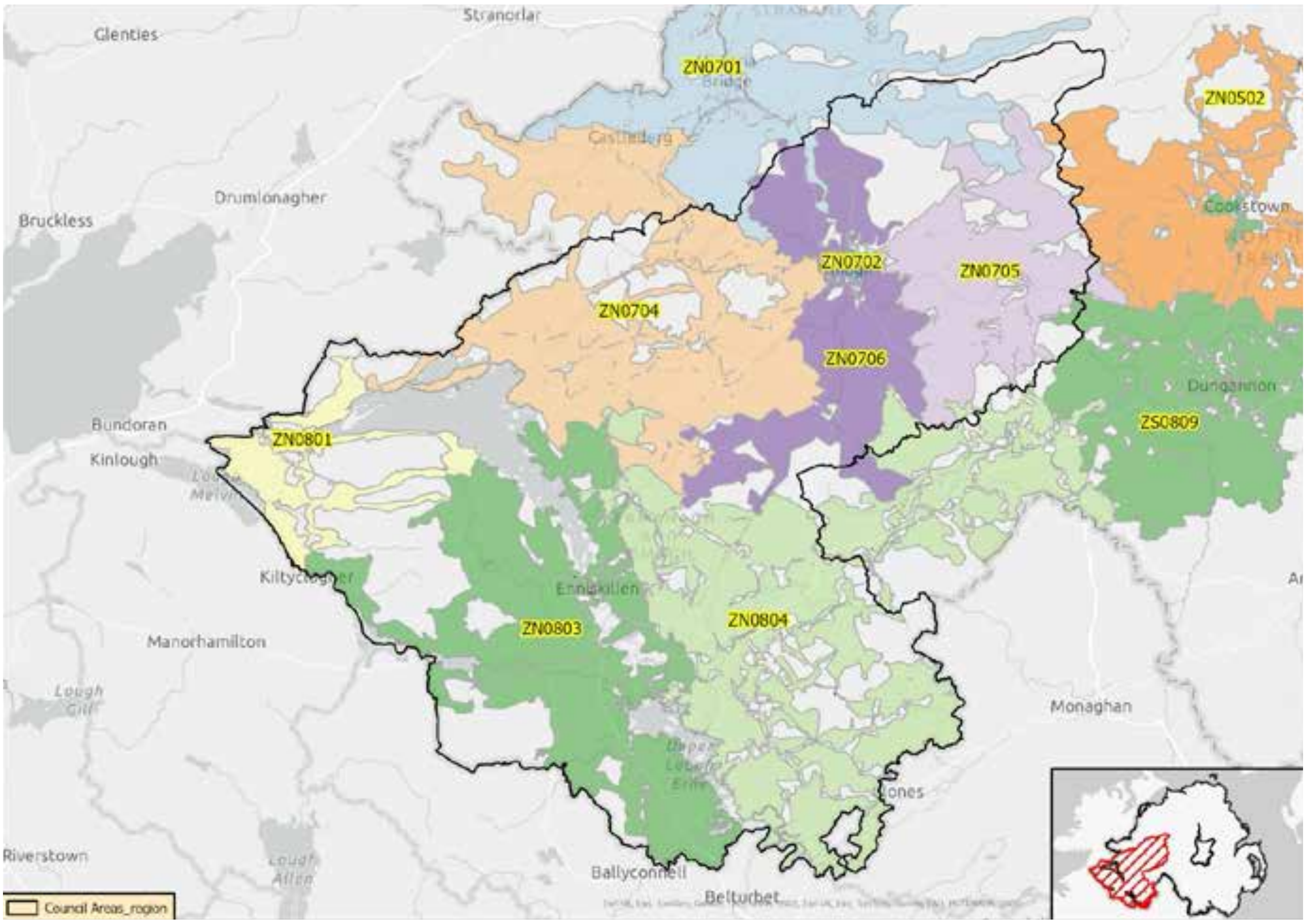
Water Resource & Supply Resilience Plan

Watermain New - Lead Pipe Replacement Programme

Watermain Rehabilitation, New & Replacement Incorporating First Time Services - Professional Fees

# Appendix 3

## Fermanagh and Omagh District Council




### Percentage Compliance at Customer Tap (including Supply Points)

| | Target | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Northern Ireland Compliance | 99.7% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% |
| Fermanagh & Omagh Compliance | 99.7% | 99.8% | 99.9% | 99.8% | 99.9% | 99.9% |

### 2025 water supply zones wholly or partially within the council area:

| Zone Code | Zone Name | Zone Code | Zone Name |
|---|---|---|---|
| ZN0701 | Derg Strabane | ZN0706 | Lough Macrory Killyclogher |
| ZN0702 | Glenhordial Omagh | ZN0801 | Belleek Garrison |
| ZN0704 | Lough Bradan Drumquin | ZN0803 | Killyhevlin West |
| ZN0705 | Lough Macrory Beragh | ZN0804 | Killyhevlin East |

# Appendix 3

## 2025 water quality Capital Works Programmes affecting the council area:

2021 Drought Mitigation Project

Abstraction Monitoring

Alleyhill to Doochrock Watermain

Back siphonage at WTW

Clean Water Network Modelling 2021 to 2024

Derg Treatability Improvements

Facilities Management Review

Fermanagh North WIIM 2.1 Work Package

High Demand - External Modelling

Killyhevlin Clear Water Tank

Killyhevlin to Cavanacross Trunk Main

NIAMP5 Project Support

Omagh Phase 2 Watermain Rehab

Owner Controlled Insurance Programme (OCIP)

PC 21 Western Resource Zone - Resilience

PC15 Lead Communication Pipe Replacement Programme

PC15 Year 1 Base Maintenance - Chlorine Dosing Sites

PC27 Water Treatability optimisation pilot plant

Preparation of Initial Work packages for PC21

Professional Services - PC21 Watermain Rehabilitation, New and Replacement and First Time Services

Professional Services Framework Watermain Network PC15

SEMD Surveys PC10 Water

Service Reservoir Security Phase 1

SR - Loughmacrory Hill

Trunk main Rehab PC21 Year 1

Tyrone South WIIM 2.1 Work Package

Water Efficiency and Innovation Support Services

Water Resource & Supply Resilience Plan

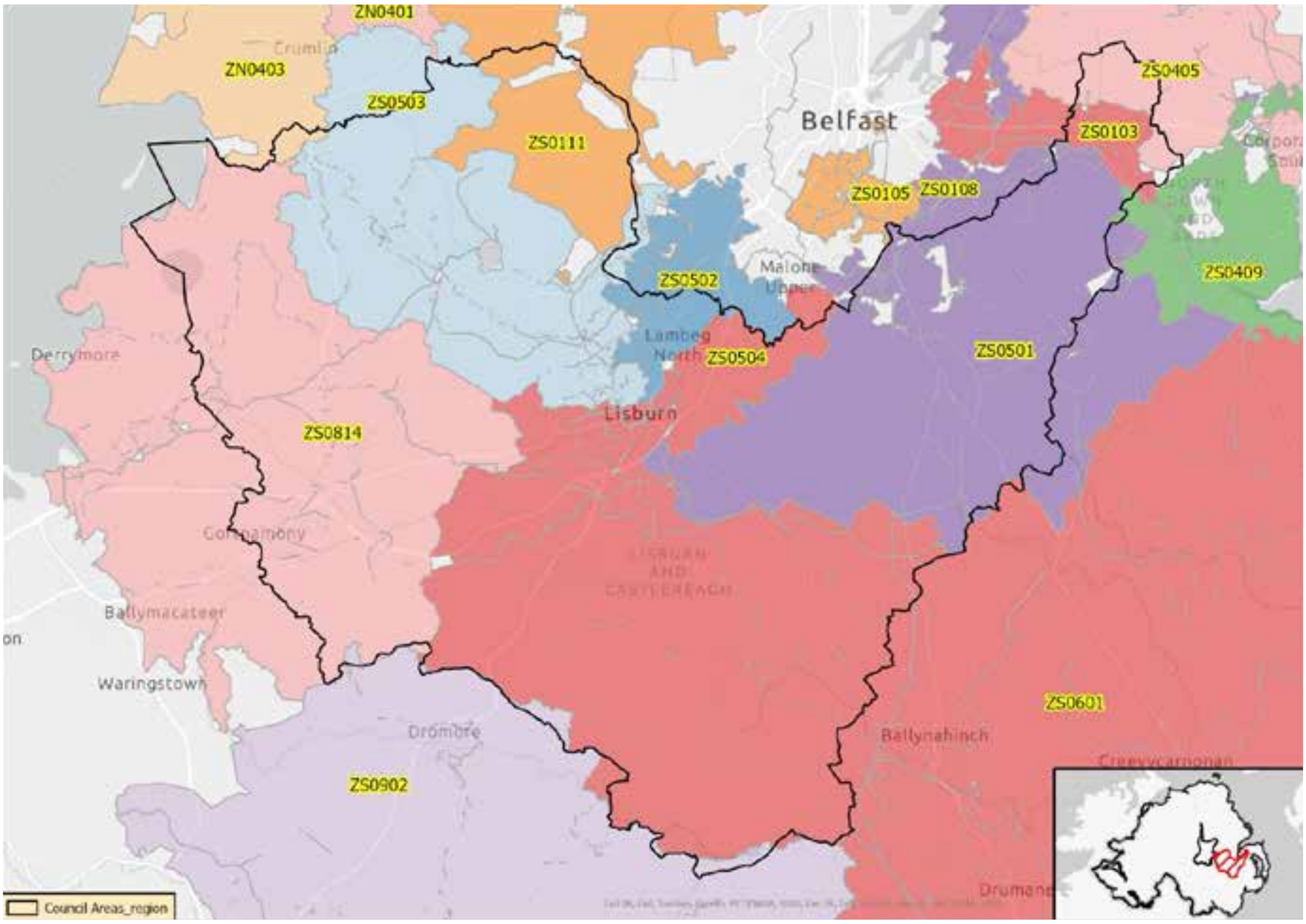
Watermain New - Lead Pipe Replacement Programme

Watermain Rehabilitation, New & Replacement Incorporating First Time Services - Professional Fees

WIIM Phase 2 Loughmacrory WP

# Appendix 3

## Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council




### Percentage Compliance at Customer Tap (including Supply Points)

| | Target | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Northern Ireland Compliance | 99.7% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% |
| Lisburn & Castlereagh Compliance | 99.7% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% |

### 2025 water supply zones wholly or partially within the council area:

| Zone Code | Zone Name | Zone Code | Zone Name |
|---|---|---|---|
| ZN0403 | Dunore Point Crumlin | ZS0502 | Poleglass Dunmurry |
| ZS0103 | Belfast Ballyhanwood | ZS0503 | Castor Bay Stoneyford |
| ZS0108 | Belfast Purdysburn | ZS0504 | Lisburn South |
| ZS0111 | Dunore Point Hydepark | ZS0601 | Drumaroad Ballynahinch |
| ZS0405 | Drumaroad Ards West | ZS0814 | Castor Bay Moira |
| ZS0501 | Drumaroad Lisburn | ZS0902 | Fofanny Dromore |

# Appendix 3

## 2025 water quality Capital Works Programmes affecting the council area:

2021 Drought Mitigation Project

Abstraction Monitoring

AFM Feasibility trials and filter trial unit modifications

Back siphonage at WTW

Clean Water Network Modelling 2021 to 2024

Drumaroad Treatability Improvements

Eastern Super work package Phase 2

Facilities Management Review

High Demand - External Modelling

Hillsborough Forest Park Watermain Extension

Lurgan Moira WIIM 2.1 Work Package

MIMP East (Major Incident Mitigation Project East Region) Freeze Thaw Improvements

NIAMP5 Project Support

Owner Controlled Insurance Programme (OCIP)

PC15 Lead Communication Pipe Replacement Programme

PC15 Year 1 Base Maintenance - Chlorine Dosing Sites

PC27 Water Treatability optimisation pilot plant

Preparation of Initial Work packages for PC21

Professional Services - PC21 Watermain Rehabilitation, New and Replacement and First Time Services

Professional Services Framework Watermain Network PC15

SEMD Surveys PC10 Water

Service Reservoir Security Phase 1

Sprucefield Park and Ride Watermain Extension

Trunk main Rehab PC21 Year 1

Water Efficiency and Innovation Support Services

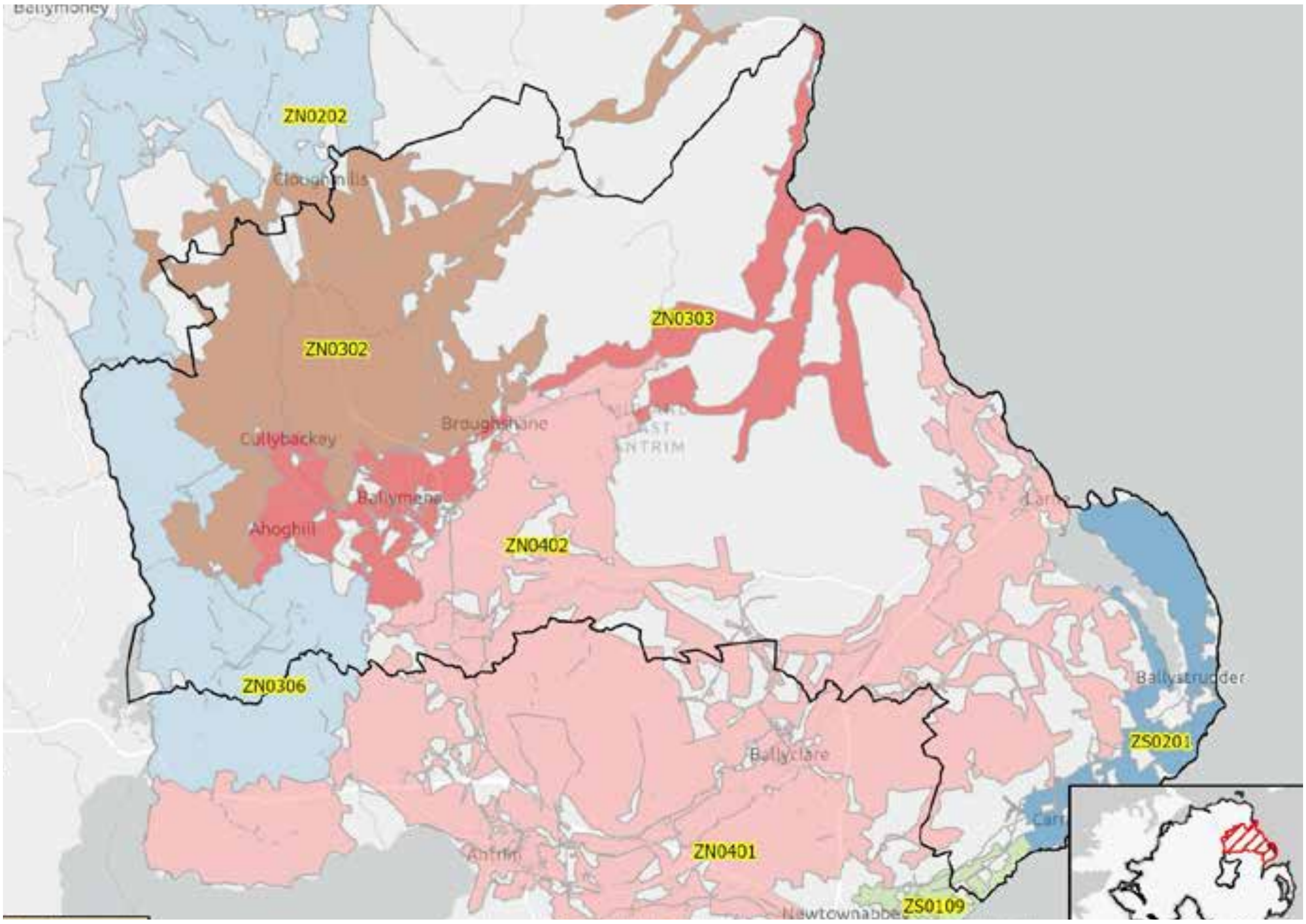
Water Resource & Supply Resilience Plan

Watermain New - Lead Pipe Replacement Programme

Watermain Rehabilitation, New & Replacement Incorporating First Time Services - Professional Fees

# Appendix 3

## Mid and East Antrim Borough Council




### Percentage Compliance at Customer Tap (including Supply Points)

| | Target | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Northern Ireland Compliance | 99.7% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% |
| Mid & East Antrim Compliance | 99.7% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% |

### 2025 water supply zones wholly or partially within the council area:

| Zone Code | Zone Name | Zone Code | Zone Name |
|---|---|---|---|
| ZN0302 | Dungonnell Glarryford | ZN0402 | Killylane Ballynure |
| ZN0303 | Dunore Point Ballymena | ZS0109 | Dorisland Whiteabbey |
| ZN0306 | Dungonnell Portglenone | ZS0201 | Dorisland Carrick |
| ZN0401 | Dunore Point Antrim | | |

# Appendix 3



## 2025 water quality Capital Works Programmes affecting the council area:

2021 Drought Mitigation Project

Abstraction Monitoring

Antrim North WIIM 2.1 Work Package

Antrim South WIIM 2.1 Work Package

Back siphonage at WTW

Clean Water Network Modelling 2021 to 2024

Dorisland WTW treatability recommended improvements.

Facilities Management Review

Feasibility Study for using Groundwater Abstraction

High Demand - External Modelling

MIMP Central (Major Incident Mitigation Project Central Region) Freeze Thaw Improvements

MIMP East (Major Incident Mitigation Project East Region) Freeze Thaw Improvements

NIAMP5 Project Support

Owner Controlled Insurance Programme (OCIP)

Parkmore Water Pumping Station Relocation

PC15 Lead Communication Pipe Replacement Programme

PC15 Year 1 Base Maintenance - Chlorine Dosing Sites

PC27 Water Treatability optimisation pilot plant

Preparation of Initial Work packages for PC21

Professional Services - PC21 Watermain Rehabilitation, New and Replacement and First Time Services

Professional Services Framework Watermain Network PC15

SEMD Surveys PC10 Water

Service Reservoir Security Phase 1

Trunk main Rehab PC21 Year 1

Water Efficiency and Innovation Support Services

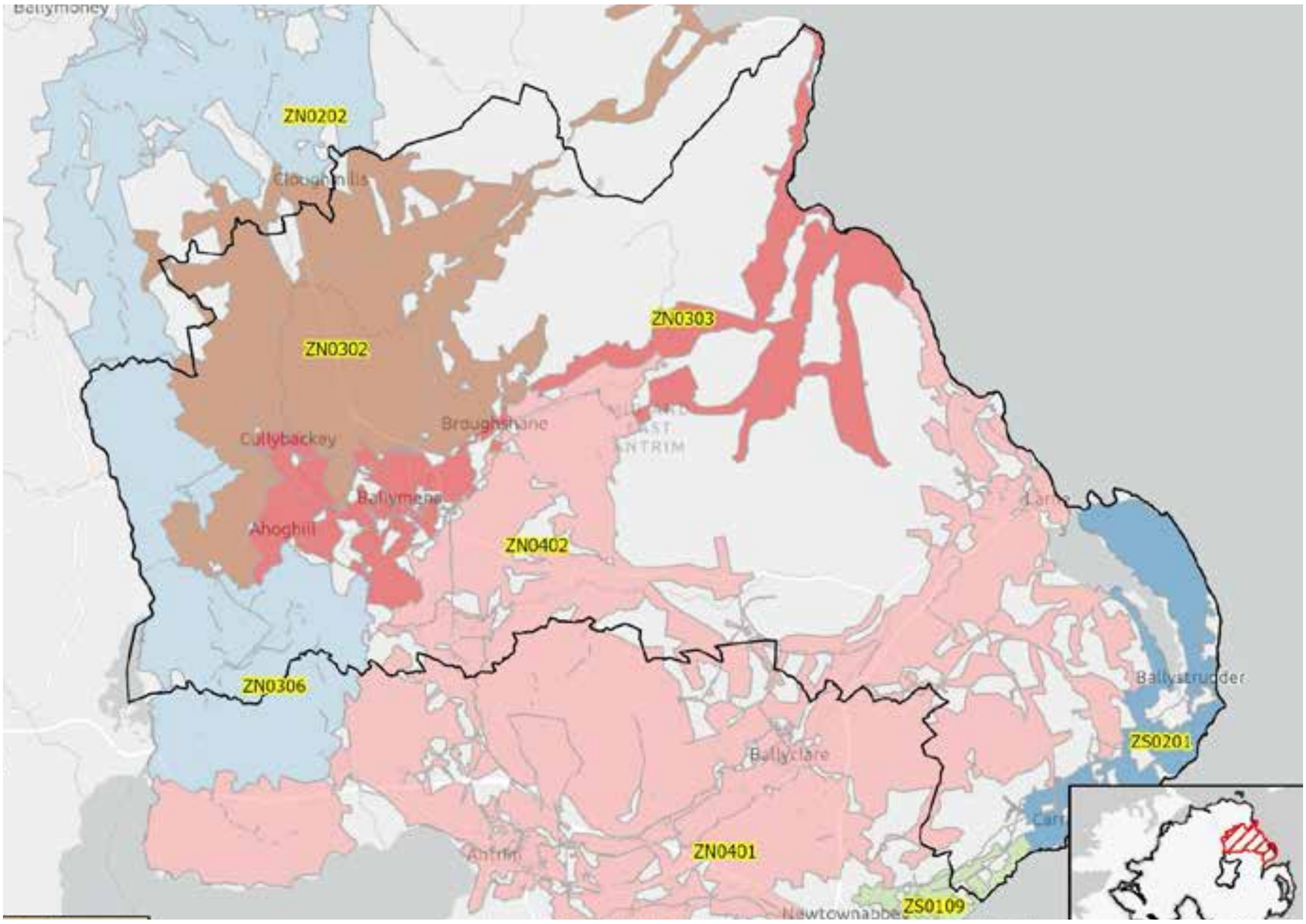
Water Resource & Supply Resilience Plan

Watermain New - Lead Pipe Replacement Programme

Watermain Rehabilitation, New & Replacement Incorporating First Time Services - Professional Fees

# Appendix 3

## Mid Ulster District Council




### Percentage Compliance at Customer Tap (including Supply Points)

| | Target | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Northern Ireland Compliance | 99.7% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% |
| Mid Ulster Compliance | 99.7% | 99.8% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% |

### 2025 water supply zones wholly or partially within the council area:

| Zone Code | Zone Name | Zone Code | Zone Name |
|---|---|---|---|
| ZN0105 | Ballinrees South | ZN0706 | Lough Macrory Killyclogher |
| ZN0501 | Moyola Magherafelt | ZN0804 | Killyhevlin East |
| ZN0502 | Lough Fea Cookstown | ZN1102 | Seagahan Armagh |
| ZN0504 | Moyola Unagh Mormeal | ZS0809 | Castor Bay Dungannon |
| ZN0505 | Moneymore | ZS0811 | Castor Bay Portadown |
| ZN0705 | Lough Macrory Beragh | | |

# Appendix 3

## 2025 water quality Capital Works Programmes affecting the council area:

2021 Drought Mitigation Project

Abstraction Monitoring

AFM Feasibility trials and filter trial unit modifications

Altmore Phase 2 Watermain Rehabilitation

Antrim North WIIM 2.1 Work Package

Back siphonage at WTW

Castor Bay to Dungannon Strategic Trunk Mains

Central WRZ Resilience and Supply

Clean Water Network Modelling 2021 to 2024

Facilities Management Review

Falgotrevy Road, Maghera, Watermain Replacement

Feasibility Study for using Groundwater Abstraction

Granville Dungannon Invest NI Watermain Extension

High Demand - External Modelling

Lough Fea CWB Capacity Increase

MIMP Central (Major Incident Mitigation Project Central Region) Freeze Thaw Improvements

NIAMP5 Project Support

Omagh Phase 2 Watermain Rehab

Owner Controlled Insurance Programme (OCIP)

PC15 Lead Communication Pipe Replacement Programme

PC15 Year 1 Base Maintenance - Chlorine Dosing Sites

PC27 Water Treatability optimisation pilot plant

Preparation of Initial Work packages for PC21

Professional Services - PC21 Watermain Rehabilitation, New and Replacement and First Time Services

Professional Services Framework Watermain Network PC15

SEMD Surveys PC10 Water

Service Reservoir Security Phase 1

Trunk main Rehab PC21 Year 1

Water Efficiency and Innovation Support Services

Water Resource & Supply Resilience Plan

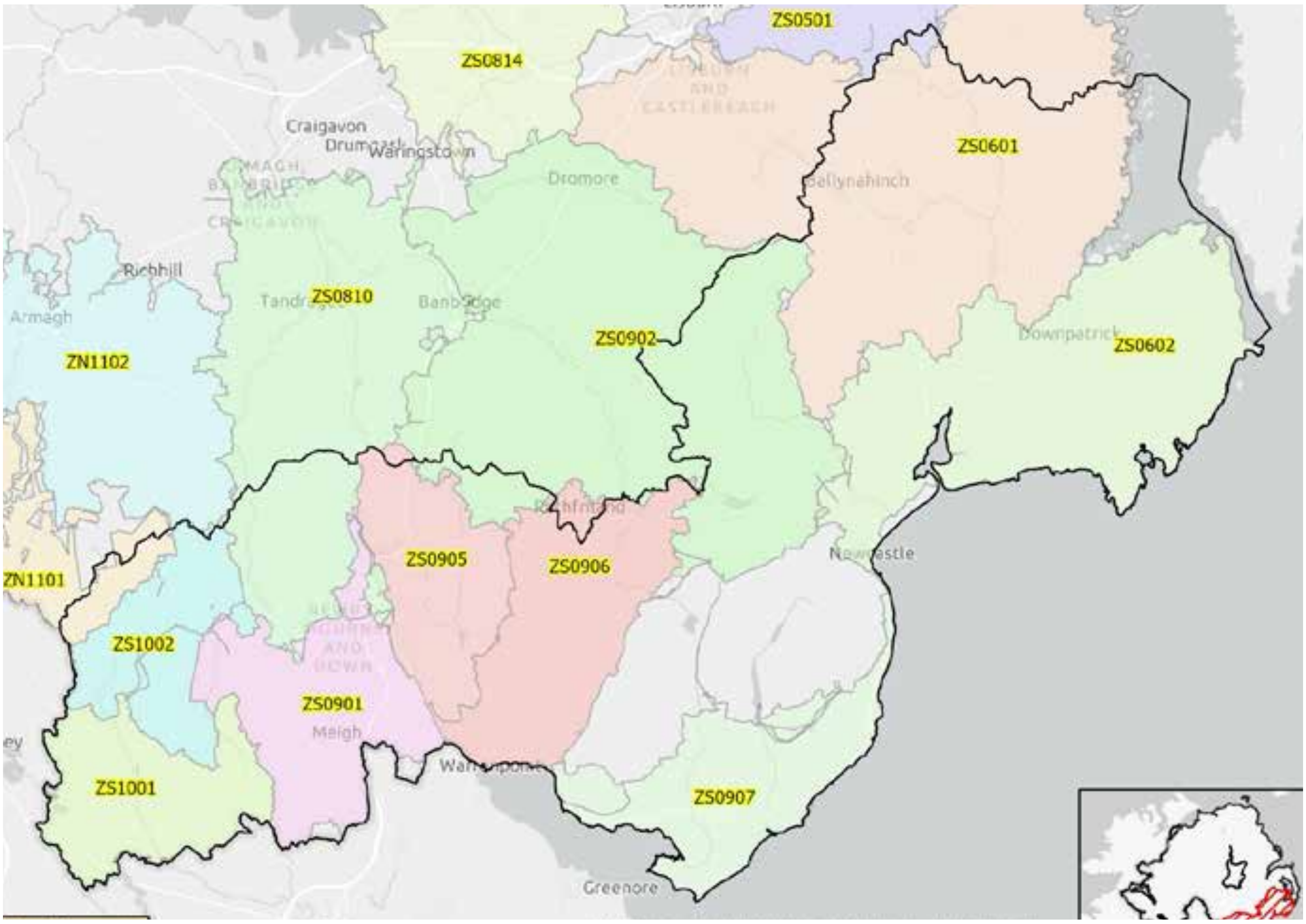
Watermain New - Lead Pipe Replacement Programme

Watermain Rehabilitation, New & Replacement Incorporating First Time Services - Professional Fees

WIIM Phase 2 Moyola Magherafelt WP

# Appendix 3

## Newry, Mourne and Down District Council




## Percentage Compliance at Customer Tap (including Supply Points)

| | Target | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Northern Ireland Compliance | 99.7% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% |
| Newry, Mourne & Down Compliance | 99.7% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.9% |

## 2025 water supply zones wholly or partially within the council area:

| Zone Code | Zone Name | Zone Code | Zone Name |
|---|---|---|---|
| ZN1101 | Clay Lake Keady | ZS0902 | Fofanny Dromore |
| ZS0501 | Drumaroad Lisburn | ZS0905 | Fofanny Newry |
| ZS0601 | Drumaroad Ballynahinch | ZS0906 | Fofanny Hilltown |
| ZS0602 | Drumaroad Downpatrick | ZS0907 | Fofanny Kilkeel |
| ZS0810 | Castor Bay Tandragee | ZS1001 | Carran Hill Crossmaglen |
| ZS0901 | Castor Bay Newry West | ZS1002 | Carran Hill Camly |

# Appendix 3



## 2025 water quality Capital Works Programmes affecting the council area:

2021 Drought Mitigation Project

Abstraction Monitoring

Back siphonage at WTW

Ballintemple Zone Watermain Improvements

Banbridge South Armagh WIIM 2.1 Work Package

Camlough/Bessbrook Sewerage Scheme - Phases 2&3

Clean Water Network Modelling 2021 to 2024

Facilities Management Review

Feasibility Study for using Groundwater Abstraction

Fofanny CWB

High Demand - External Modelling

High Trees Donaghadee

Mill Road Kilcoo

MIMP East (Major Incident Mitigation Project East Region) Freeze Thaw Improvements

NIAMP5 Project Support

Owner Controlled Insurance Programme (OCIP)

PC15 Lead Communication Pipe Replacement Programme

PC15 Year 1 Base Maintenance - Chlorine Dosing Sites

PC27 Water Treatability optimisation pilot plant

Preparation of Initial Work packages for PC21

Professional Services - PC21 Watermain Rehabilitation, New and Replacement and First Time Services

Professional Services Framework Watermain Network PC15

SEMD Surveys PC10 Water

Service Reservoir Security Phase 1

Trunk main Rehab PC21 Year 1

Water Efficiency and Innovation Support Services

Water Resource & Supply Resilience Plan

Watermain Improvements, Newry, Phase 3

Watermain New - Lead Pipe Replacement Programme

Watermain Rehabilitation, New & Replacement Incorporating First Time Services - Professional Fees

WIIM 2.2 Fofanny South Work Package

# Appendix 4

## Major Drinking Water Quality Events in 2025

| Date of Event | Area Affected | Nature and Cause of Serious Event | Associated Council Area(s) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 24/01/2025 -28/01/2025 | Throughout Northern Ireland | Ahead of the red weather warning for Storm Éowyn on 23 January 2025, NI Water declared a Category 1 major incident. In the days preceding Storm Éowyn NI Water took action to maximise water levels at Service Reservoirs and Clear Water Tanks to optimise storage levels of treated water to mitigate against customer supply interruptions. Severe winds across Northern Ireland disrupted electricity and telecommunications services and damaged NI Water infrastructure. Around 6,000 properties experienced mains water supply interruptions. Substantial resources including; generators, bottled water and asset-to-asset tankering were deployed in response to restore and maintain customer supplies. Drinking water quality was not impacted. | All Council Areas |

## Serious Drinking Water Quality Events in 2025

| Date of Event | Area Affected | Nature and Cause of Serious Event | Associated Council Area(s) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 09/01/2025 -16/01/2025 | Throughout Northern Ireland | A period of freezing weather followed by thaw caused burst mains across the network, increasing water demand and interrupting supply. NI Water declared a Category 1 Incident. Proactive measures were put in place by NI Water ahead of the thaw period in anticipation of the increased demand. Burst repairs were prioritised, output from treatment works was increased to meet demand, and re-zoning and asset-to-asset tankering were used where necessary to restore water levels. Drinking water quality was not affected. | All Council Areas |
| 17/02/2025 -07/03/2025 | Glenhordial WTW supply area | A high number of consumers reported taste and odour issues with the mains water supply in the Glenhordial WTW area. Investigations indicated that the most probable cause was due to changes in the raw water quality. | Fermanagh and Omagh District |
| 01/11/2025 -07/11/2025 | Cam SR supply area | Discoloured water complaints were received after a telecommunications fault at the pumping station supplying Cam SR resulted in low levels and scouring of the outlet main. Two samples from consumer properties contravened the standards for metals and turbidity. Targeted flushing was carried out in the area All subsequent samples were satisfactory. | Causeway Coast and Glens Borough |

# Appendix 4

## Significant Drinking Water Quality Events in 2025

| Date of Event | Area Affected | Nature and Cause of Serious Event | Associated Council Area(s) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 14/01/2025 -17/01/2025 | Belfast Road, Muckamore, Antrim (six properties). | A precautionary 'Boil Water Before Use Until Further Notice' advice was issued to six properties after a distribution main was damaged during repairs to a burst sewage main in the vicinity. The Public Health Agency agreed with NI Water's response. The main was repaired and follow-up bacteriological samples were satisfactory. | Mid and East Antrim Borough Council |
| 01/03/2025 -03/03/2025 | Downstream of Ormeau Bridge, Belfast | A third-party contractor caused damage to an 18-inch trunk main. Discoloured water complaints were associated with the burst and subsequent remedial operational activities. | Belfast City Council |
| 07/09/2024 -05/03/2025 | Caugh Hill WTW | Orthophosphoric acid (OP) is dosed at Caugh Hill WTW for plumbosolvency control.Loss of Orthophosphate (OP) dosing at Caugh Hill WTW following operational work on site. Samples taken at customer properties for lead during this period were satisfactory. OP dosing was restored on 05.03.2025. | Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council<br><br>Derry City and Strabane District Council |
| 03/03/2025 -31/03/2025 | Ballydugan Road, Downpatrick | Samples taken in response to a consumer taste and odour complaint also contravened the standard for hydrogen ion (pH). The investigation found that the main's material, size and low turnover were contributing factors. The main was flushed and added to a routine flushing programme. | Newry, Mourne and Down District Council |
| 01/01/2025 -03/04/2025 | Moyola WTW | Investigations following contraventions of the turbidity parameter at Moyola WTW in 2025 were determined to be unrepresentative of the final water going into supply due to a series of sampling issues. | Mid Ulster District Council |
| 06/05/2025 -07/05/2025 | Carran Hill WTW | A contravention of the standard for the turbidity parameter occurred in the works final water. Following an investigation, NI Water was unable to identify the cause of the contravention. | Newry, Mourne and Down District Council |
| 29/04/2025 -29/05/2025 | Seagahan WTW | Contraventions of the standard for the individual pesticide MCPA (2-methyl-4-chlorophenoxyacetic acid) occurred in the works final water on three occasions . MCPA is present in the raw water due to use of pesticide products containing MCPA for weed control within the Seagahan catchment.<br><br>GAC filters are in place at Seagahan WTW for the treatment and removal of pesticides in the raw water, At the time of the MCPA exceedances NI Water was undertaking a programme of work to regenerate the GAC media in one of the filters. This resulted in reduced treatment for MCPA removal.  Seagahan 'Farming for Water' Scheme commenced in 2026 and aims to reduce MCPA levels in the raw water through catchment management and engagement. | Armagh Craigavon & Banbridge District Council |

# Appendix 4

## Significant Drinking Water Quality Events in 2025

| Date of Event | Area Affected | Nature and Cause of Serious Event | Associated Council Area(s) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 18/05/2025 -19/05/2025 | Carran Hill WTW | A contravention of the standard for the aluminium parameter occurred in the works final water. Following an investigation, NI Water identified the cause as a chemical batch issue which subsequently caused treatment difficulties. | Newry, Mourne and Down District Council |
| 13/06/2025 -07/07/2025 | Castor Bay Road, Lurgan (one property) | Recurring contraventions of the standard for coliform bacteria led to "Boil Water before Use until Further Notice" advice being issued to one property. A Water Fittings inspection was carried out at the property and identified internal issues at the property which, together with low chlorine residuals, were the most likely cause of the contraventions. The mains water supply was tested as part of the investigation and confirmed to be satisfactory. | Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council |
| 24/06/2025 -09/12/2025 | Altnahinch WTW supply area | Contraventions of the standard for the Total Trihalomethanes (THMs) parameter occurred in the works final water and supply area due to insufficient organics removal. DWI conducted a technical audit of the works in November 2025. Improvement work in relation to THMs at Altnahinch WTW is ongoing under the PC21 work plan. Further capital investment is planned at the site in PC28. | Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council |
| 07/07/2025 -30/07/2025 | Caugh Hill WTW supply area | A contravention of the standard for the Total Trihalomethanes (THMs) parameter occurred in the works supply area due to insufficient organics removal. Improvement work at Caugh Hill WTW is ongoing under the PC21 work plan. Further capital investment is planned at the site in PC28. | Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Counci<br><br>Derry City and Strabane District Council l |
| 21/08/2025 -23/09/2025 | Killyhevlin WTW supply area | A contravention of the standard for the Total Trihalomethanes (THMs) parameter occurred in the works supply area due to insufficient organics removal. Further optimisation of the works to improve organics removal was undertaken in 2025 and is ongoing. DWI conducted a technical audit of the works in January 2026. | Fermanagh and Omagh District Council |
| 16/11/2025 -17/11/2025 | Killylane WTW | Treatment difficulties relating to a sample pump malfunction at Killylane WTW caused elevated aluminium in the works final water. Resultant issues with telemetry communications and shutdown alarms were identified. All samples taken were satisfactory. | Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council<br><br>Mid and East Antrim Borough Council |
| 06/11/2025 -10/11/2025 | Waterside Area, Londonderry | Discoloured water complaints were received following a flushing exercise undertaken during the commissioning of a section of new trunk main. Additional targeted flushing was undertaken in response to consumer complaints. The discoloured water was limited to specific areas within the distribution network and was not reflective of the overall water quality in supply. | Derry City and Strabane District Council |

After investigations during the reporting period, there were also nine events categorised by DWI as "Minor", and 22 events categorised as "Not Significant".

# Appendix 5

## The Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations (NI) 2009 Compliance Policy

### Number of staff involved in compliance & enforcement of Water Regulations

NI Water employs a Regulations Team Manager, supported by a team of four customer facing Water Regulation Inspectors located across Northern Ireland along with a Senior Support Officer and two Support Water Regulations Inspectors and three Support Officers in an administrative capacity. All under the direction of a Senior Compliance manager and Head of Department.

| Description | Number |
|---|---|
| Spending more than 75% of time | 11 |
| Spending between 25% and 50% of time | 1 |
| Spending between 0% and 5% of time | 1 |

Water Fittings Regulation Inspection staff are required to have passed the City and Guilds (C&G) qualification in Water Fittings Regulations for Compliance staff with any new inductees not already qualified obliged to undertake and pass same.

Additional specialist training to meet NI Water operational requirements may also be provided. This may comprise:

- Reduced Pressure Zone devices (RPZ) - essential to maintain valid oversight of the RPZ approval process and permit sufficient coverage by NI Water in face of increased installation rates
- Criminal investigation procedures course - essential to ensure safeguard enforcement in cases of non-compliance

### Inspections & Infringements (Other than those arising from Notification)

| | Number (by calendar year) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Description | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| Total number of Domestic and Non-Domestic Inspections | 709 | 569 | 410 | 926 | 1,305 | 1,096 |
| Total number of active Contraventions recorded in reporting year | 510 | 446 | 948 | 2,723* | 3,787 | 3,140 |
| Total number of closed Contraventions in reporting year | 381 | 286 | 1,102 | 1,573* | 3,496 | 3,082 |
| Total Number of outstanding contraventions in reporting year | 129 | 160 | 469 | 1,065* | 1,333 | 1,106 |

* Differential in total due to allowed rectification period overlapping reporting year.

# Appendix 5

Contraventions found on all property types can vary greatly. Typical examples are listed below:

- Water fittings non-compliant with Regulation 4,
- Cross connections between public and private water supplies e.g. borewells,
- Uncertified Reduced Pressure Zone (RPZ) installations,
- Non-compliant outlets & appliances e.g. taps & agricultural troughs,
- Inadequate safeguards on alternative supplies e.g. rainwater harvesting systems
- Incorrect air gaps, or absence thereof,
- Inadequate frost protection i.e. no insulation or insufficient depth,
- Poor pipe spacing,
- Overflows running to waste,
- Redundant pipework,
- Lack of service fittings e.g. valves or drainage points
- Unidentified pipework & fittings,
- Poor workmanship e.g. unsupported pipework

## Enforcement

As a result of voluntary compliance, no enforcement action was taken by NIW during 2025.

## Notifications

Where the owner or occupier of any premises intends to make changes to their plumbing system, there are certain circumstances where prior permission from NI Water is required. This permission can be requested by submitting an Advance Notification Form, which is available on the NI Water website: www.niwater.com/water-fittings-regulations/ A list outlining the types of work that require advance notification is also provided on this webpage. When notification is submitted, NI Water will not unreasonably withhold consent for the proposed work. If no response is received within 10 working days from the date the notification is received, consent is automatically granted.

A total of 6 notifications relating to aspects of water fittings were received during the 2025 calendar year, all of which were approved.

## Disputes

No formal disputes were referred to arbitration in the reporting year.

## Relaxations

No relaxations were applied for in the reporting year.

# Appendix 5

## Attributed to water quality incidents and NI Water observations

In addition to proactive inspections, NI Water's Water Fittings Regulation team also undertook reactive inspections because of water quality concerns following sample failures requests for assistance from NI Water staff and customers.

| Month | Property Address |
|---|---|
| Jan 25 | LURGAN ROAD, BANBRIDGE, BT32 4NG |
| Jan 25 | SPELGA PLACE, KILKEEL, BT34 4BX |
| Feb 25 | MOURNEVIEW AVENUE, LURGAN, BT66 8EW |
| Feb 25 | ARGYLE STREET, BELFAST, BT13 2LE |
| Feb 25 | CARNREAGH BEND, NEWTOWNABBEY, BT37 9EQ |
| Feb 25 | MOYCRAIG ROAD, BUSHMILLS, BT57 8YB |
| Mar 25 | ROSNEATH GARDENS, DUNDONALD, BT16 1UN |
| Mar 25 | SALTERS GRANGE ROAD, ARMAGH, BT61 8EX |
| Apr 25 | CASTLE HILL, RATHFRILAND, BT34 5NH |
| May 25 | WOODLAND GRANGE, BELFAST, BT11 9QT |
| Jun 25 | MONEYRANNEL ROAD, BALLYKELLY, BT49 9DN |
| Jun 25 | CASTOR BAY ROAD, LURGAN, BT67 9LF |
| Jun 25 | GORTNAGEERAGH ROAD, MARTINSTOWN, BT43 7NA |
| Jul 25 | LEAFAIR GARDENS, LONDONDERRY, BT48 8LH |
| Jul 25 | BALLYNAMONEY VIEW, LURGAN, BT66 8GA |
| Aug 25 | FINEGANS ROAD, NEWRY, BT35 8SR |
| Sep 25 | RACEVIEW DRIVE, BALLYMONEY, BT53 7UE |
| Sep 25 | LADYMAR WALK, BELFAST, BT12 4NU |
| Sep 25 | BLACKWATER ROAD, DROMORE, BT78 3DG |
| Sep 25 | GLEN ROAD, GARVAGH, BT51 5DD |
| Sep 25 | GORTGARN ROAD, DUNGIVEN, BT47 4QT |
| Sep 25 | COOLYVENNY ROAD, COLERAINE, BT51 3SE |
| Oct 25 | WHITEHALL GATE, LURGAN, BT67 0GQ |
| Dec 25 | CORMORE ROAD, OMAGH, BT78 2RZ |

The resultant action taken by NI Water includes the preparation of a report, which is submitted to NI Water's scientific and operational teams. Copies of this report are also provided to the Regulator. Customers are required to undertake remedial actions in accordance with the established compliance process.

# Appendix 6

## Glossary of Technical Terms

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|---|---|
| **Abstraction Point** | The point at which water is abstracted from a lake, reservoir, river of ground water source for the purposes of drinking water production |
| **Aesthetic** | Associated with the senses of taste, smell, and sight |
| **Authorised Supply Point** | A sampling point within the distribution system authorised by the DWI for certain parameters, because the results of the analysis of such samples are unlikely to differ in any material respect from the results of the analysis of samples taken from customer taps |
| **Catchment** | The area of land that drains into a watercourse |
| **Coliform bacteria** | A group of bacteria that may be faecal or environmental in origin |
| **Compliance assessment** | A comparison made by the DWI of data (gathered by NI Water) against standards and other regulatory requirements |
| **Contravention** | A breach of the regulatory requirement |
| **Cryptosporidiosis** | The illness produced by infection with *Cryptosporidium* |
| **Cryptosporidium** | A protozoan parasite |
| **Determination** | A single analytical result for a specific parameter |
| **Distribution systems** | NI Water's network of mains, pipes, pumping stations and service reservoirs through which treated water is conveyed to customers |
| **DWI** | Northern Ireland Drinking Water Inspectorate - has an independent responsibility to audit drinking water quality compliance against the standards set in the Regulations |
| **DWSP** | 'Drinking Water Safety Plan' Based on a comprehensive risk assessment and risk management approach to all the steps in a water supply chain |
| **EO** | 'Enforcement Order' – third stage in DWI enforcement process |
| **Event** | A situation affecting or the potential to affect drinking water quality |
| **Exceedance** | Synonym for contravention (see above) |
| **E. Coli** | A sub-group of coliforms, almost exclusively faecal in origin |
| **Filtration** | The separation of suspended particulate matter from a fluid |
| **GPS** | Global Positioning System – a satellite-based location system that gives an accurate record of position |
| **Groundwater** | Water from aquifers or other underground sources |
| **Hydrogen ion** | A measure of the acidity or basicity related to the concentration of the hydrogen ion (also referred to as pH) |
| **Incident** | An event where there has been a demonstrable deterioration in the quality of drinking water |
| **Investment programme** | Investment in improvement works to water treatment works and distribution systems |
| **LIMS** | Laboratory Information Management System – the computer system used by NI Water to record and audit the results of the hundreds of thousands ofparameters analysed each year |
| **Mains rehabilitation** | Restoration or replacement of water mains pipework to a proper condition |
| **MCPA** | MCPA is a selective hormone-type herbicide, which is absorbed by the leaves and to some degree the roots |

# Appendix 6

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| **Mean Zonal Compliance** | The former assessment of water quality at a parameter level based on water supply zones |
| **Microbiological** | Associated with the study of microbes |
| **m3/d** | Cubic metres per day |
| **mg/l** | Milligrams per litre |
| **µg/l** | Micrograms per litre |
| **ml** | Millilitre |
| **Ml/d** | Megalitres per day (one Ml/d is equivalent to 1,000 m3/d or 220,000 gallon/d) |
| **NTU** | Nephelometric Turbidity Unit, a measure of water turbidity |
| **Oocyst** | The resistant form in which *Cryptosporidium* occurs in the environment, and which is capable of causing infection |
| **Orthophosphoric acid** | A chemical dosed in low concentrations at water treatment works to minimise the uptake of lead from old pipework into customer water |
| **PAHs** | A group of organic compounds known as polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, comprising, for the purposes of the Regulations, four substances: benzo(b) fluoranthene, benzo(k)fluoranthene benzo(ghi)perylene, and indeno (1,2,3-cd) pyrene |
| **Parameter** | A parameter is any substance, organism, or property listed in the regulations |
| **Pathogen** | An organism that causes disease |
| **PCV** | See 'Prescribed concentration or value' |
| **PEO** | 'Provisional Enforcement Order' – second stage in DWI enforcement process |
| **Pesticides** | Any fungicide, herbicide or insecticide or related product (excluding medicines) used for the control of pests or diseases |
| **PHA** | The Public Health Agency works to initiate, stimulate, develop, and support health promotion |
| **Plumbosolvency** | The tendency for lead to dissolve in water |
| **Prescribed Concentration or Value** | The numerical value assigned to water quality standards (PCV), defining the maximum or minimum legal concentration or value of a parameter |
| **Protozoan parasites** | A single celled organism that can only survive by infecting a host |
| **Public register** | The information made available by NI Water to the public as required by regulation 38 in the Regulations |
| **Regulations** | The Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017 |
| **Remedial action** | Action taken to improve a situation |
| **RPZs** | Reduced Pressurised Zone Valve – a type of back flow prevention device |
| **SCaMPNI** | Sustainable Catchment Management Planning Northern Ireland |
| **Service reservoir (SR)** | A water tower, tank, or other reservoir used for the storage of treated water within the distribution system |
| **SIC Code** | Standard Industrial Classification Code – used for Water Fittings Regulations |
| **Surface water** | Water from rivers, impounding reservoirs, or other surface water sources |
| **Technical audit** | The means of checking by the DWI that NI Water is complying with its statutory obligations |

# Appendix 6

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| **Toxicology** | The study of the health effects of substances |
| **Treated water** | Water treated for use for domestic purposes as defined in the Regulations |
| **Trihalomethanes (THMs)** | AA group of organic substances comprising, for the purposes of the Regulations, four substances: trichloromethane (also known as chloroform), dichlorobromomethane, dibromochloromethane, and tribromomethane |
| **United Kingdom Accreditation Service** | The sole national accreditation body recognized by the UK government to assess, against internationally agreed standards, organisations that provide certification, testing, inspection, and calibration services |
| **Utility Regulator** | The Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation (NIAUR) |
| **WDPD** | DfI Water and Drainage Policy Division. Deemed to be the Regulator for all activities associated with the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations (NI) 2009 |
| **WRAS** | The Water Regulation Advisory Scheme. A list of Standard Industrial Classification codes with related fluid categories used to define categories of non-domestic properties |
| **Water Regulations** | The Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations (NI) 2009 |
| **Water Safety Plan** | A means of ensuring that a water supply is safe for human consumption based on a comprehensive risk assessment and risk management approach to all the steps in a water supply chain from catchment to tap |
| **Water supply zone (Zone)** | The basic unit of supply for establishing sampling frequencies, compliance with standards and information to be made publicly available |
| **Website** | Location of information on the Internet. NI Water's website is: **www.niwater.com** |
| **Weed-wiping** | Weed treatment method wiping the top of weeds using a roller or wicks infused with pesticide |
| **Wholesomeness** | A concept of water quality that is defined by reference to standards and other requirements set out in the Regulations |

niwater

Delivering what matters

**Northern Ireland Water**
PO Box 1026
Belfast
BT1 9DJ

**Email: waterline@niwater.com**
**Waterline: 0345 7440088**
**Text Relay: 0345 7440088**
Calls cost 5p per minute plus your phone Company's network access charge. Call charges for mobiles may vary.
www.niwater.com/annual-report/

Northern Ireland Water

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Northern Ireland Water

Unclassified

**ITEM 17**

## Ards and North Down Borough Council

| | |
|---|---|
| Report Classification | Unclassified |
| Exemption Reason | Not Applicable |
| | If multiple: |
| Meeting | Active and Healthy Communities Committee |
| Date of Meeting | 09 September 2026 |
| Responsible Director | Director of Active and Healthy Communities |
| Responsible Head of Service | Head of Environmental Health and Regulatory Services |
| Report title | Response to Notice of Motion 685 – Ruby's Law Correspondence |
| Attachments | Appendix 1 - Response from Minister of Justice<br>Appendix 2 - Response from Minister for Communities<br>Appendix 3 - Response from the Office of the Minister of Finance<br>Appendix 4 - Response from Minister of Health |
| File Reference (if applicable) | NoM 685 |
| Legislation | Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 |
| Resource Implications | None<br>Narrative: |
| Screening Requirements | *The Council will commit to consider the implication of all reports under the categories of Section 75, Rural Needs, Data Protection, Climate and Sustainability:*<br><br>Screening of report not required |
| Link to Corporate Plan Priority and Outcome | Priority 3: Social |

If multiple:

| | |
|---|---|
| | 5. Safe, welcoming and inclusive communities that are flourishing<br>If multiple: |

**Background**

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

The Notice of Motion read as follows:

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

1. Write to the Ministers for Justice, Communities, Finance, DAERA, and Health, calling for:

    1. The introduction of Ruby's Law in Northern Ireland; and
    2. Them to work in partnership to deliver a cross-departmental collaboration with Causeway Coast Dog Rescue charity, and other animal welfare and domestic abuse organisations as required, to ensure the development of robust and enforceable provisions, taking a multidisciplinary approach to identify key stakeholders and government agencies to support victims and survivors of domestic abuse and coercive relationships and the protection of their pets.

2. Promote public awareness of the connection between domestic abuse, coercive control and animal abuse, in collaboration with statutory agencies and animal welfare organisations.

3. Encourage engagement and collaboration within all Councils and other key stakeholders to support the implementation of Ruby's Law in the community to protect animals and people."

A draft letter to the Ministers was approved by Council in March, and responses from the relevant departments have now been received. The correspondence is attached as Appendices 1-4. No response has been received from the DAERA Minister to date.

**Key Issues/Summary**

Correspondence received in response to the proposed introduction of Ruby's Law in Northern Ireland indicates broad support for recognising the role that threats of harm, or actual harm, to pets and animals can play within domestic abuse, coercive control and intimidation. The Justice Minister confirmed support for amendments to the Justice Bill which would strengthen consideration of animals within domestic abuse-related protections, including non-molestation and occupation orders, and future Domestic Abuse Protection Notices and Orders. The Health Minister also expressed support, noting the Department's joint leadership with the Department of Justice of the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy and recent engagement with Causeway Coast Dog Rescue on the proposals.

The responses also recognise that responsibility for relevant protections cuts across a number of Departments, particularly Justice, Health and Finance. While existing legislation may already allow courts to take pets and companion animals into account where relevant, there is acknowledgement that making such protections more explicit could assist both courts and victims, and that additional legislation which removes barriers preventing victims from leaving dangerous situations is to be welcomed. Overall, the responses demonstrate support for further consideration of additional safeguards, with ongoing engagement anticipated as Justice Bill amendments, family law reform work and wider domestic and sexual abuse policy progress.

## RECOMMENDATION

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

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE JUSTICE MINISTER

Department of Justice
An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
Männystrie O tha Laa
www.justice-ni.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Minister's Office Block C,
Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
Ballymiscaw
Belfast
BT4 3SG
Tel: 028 9076 5723
DOJ.MinistersOffice@justice-ni.gov.uk

Our Ref: COR-0423-2026

Susie McCullough
Chief Executive

Via email: susie.mccullough@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

17 June 2026

Dear Ms McCullough,

Thank you for your email dated 12 May 2026 regarding the proposed introduction of Ruby's Law in Northern Ireland.

There is no doubt that threats against animals, harm to animals and using animals as a means of intimidation can form a part of domestic abuse and I condemn such behaviour unequivocally. I am well aware of the distress caused by patterns of behaviour seeking to exploit the human-animal bond to devastating effect and I am pleased to advise that the proposed amendments to the Justice Bill reflecting Ruby's Law were passed at Consideration Stage with my support

The role of animals in the context of domestic abuse has been on my radar for some time and in July of 2025 I met with the Dogs Trust, Cats Protection and the Links Group, to discuss the link between domestic abuse, child abuse and animal abuse and I am familiar with the campaign led by Causeway Coast Dog Rescue to raise awareness of the role of animals within patterns of abusive behaviour. You may be aware the Department of Agriculture, Environmental and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has recently published a 10-point plan to improve animal welfare in Northern Ireland, and this will include the development of accredited specialist domestic abuse animal fostering services in Northern Ireland.

The Prevention Pillar of the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy (2024 -2031), which my Department leads in partnership with the Department of Health, recognises the importance of pets and this is reflected, for example, in training provided to social workers including guidance on best practices when dealing with cases of domestic and sexual abuse of children and adults, with the scope extended to include protecting animals.

In addition, the link between animal cruelty and domestic abuse was raised during a recent review of Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) arrangements, which will shortly be replaced by Domestic Violence and Abuse Risk Responses (D-VARR) and it was agreed that it would be valuable if animal welfare groups could share information with relevant agencies when investigating injury to animals.

*Amendments to the Justice Bill*

The two amendments to the Justice Bill, tabled by DUP MLAs Paul Frew, Maurice Bradley, Brian Kingston and Dianne Forsythe seek to amend the Family Homes and Domestic Proceedings Order (Northern Ireland) 1998 (the 1998 Order) and the Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act 2021 (DACPA).

- *Proposed amendment to the 1998 Order*

The 1998 Order sits within the remit of the Finance Minister, nonetheless, I wrote to the Finance Minister in advance of the debate to seek his views on the proposed amendment to this Order which, in summary, would have the effect of <u>requiring</u> a court to have regard to any animal owned or cared for by the applicant or by a relevant child when deciding whether to exercise its powers under the relevant Articles in respect of non-molestation orders and occupancy orders.

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE JUSTICE MINISTER

Department of Justice
An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
Männystrie O tha Laa
www.justice-ni.gov.uk

Minister O'Dowd advised that while it is already implicit within the 1998 Order that a Court must have regard to all circumstances when determining whether to issue an Occupation Order or an NMO, which allows for animals to be referenced in such orders. However, the proposed amendment to make an explicit requirement within the 1998 Order could serve to reinforce the legislation and assist both courts and victims alike, and in the circumstances, I was happy to support these amendments.

- *Proposed amendment to DACPA*

The second proposed amendment, would amend DACPA to make two separate key provisions:

i. It would amend section 2 of DACPA to explicitly recognise harm, or the threat of harm, to an animal as behaviour that constitutes domestic abuse.
ii. Secondly, it would amend section 27 to enable future regulations governing Domestic Abuse Protection Notices and Orders (DAPNs and DAPOs) to include provision allowing courts to make requirements relating to pets and animals when making a DAPO.

In relation to the proposed amendment to Section 2, I absolutely recognise that threats of harm and harm to pets and animals can be used to perpetuate domestic abuse and coercive control and I wholly condemn that, however the DACPA was originally intentionally broadly drafted to capture a wide range of behaviour constituting domestic abuse, which includes behaviours involving animals, as set out on page 4 of the Explanatory Notes (which provide insight into policy intent) issued alongside that legislation. Further consideration is required in relation to the effect of explicitly referencing threats or harm to animals in this context as we do not wish to inadvertently place more focus and emphasis on one form of abuse than others. At Consideration Stage, Paul Frew MLA acknowledged my concerns in relation to this amendment and committed to working with the Department to further review this proposed amendment, and on that basis, I was happy to indicate my support.

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE JUSTICE MINISTER

Department of Justice
An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
Männystrie O tha Laa
www.justice-ni.gov.uk

In relation to the proposed amendment to Section 27 of the 2021 Act, this section provides an enabling power for my Department to make regulations to give effect to protective measures for victims of domestic abuse, commonly referred to as Domestic Abuse Protection Notices and Orders, or DAPNs and DAPOs.

You may be aware that DAPNs and DAPOs have not yet been introduced in Northern Ireland. My Department is continuing to work with partners to develop a model that will be appropriate and effective within this jurisdiction, having first been informed by early lessons from pilots in England and Wales. I hope to introduce regulations and launch a pilot DAPN and DAPO scheme for Northern Ireland towards the end of this financial year.

The effect of this aspect of the second amendment would be to allow any regulations made under section 27 of the 2021 Act (to commence DAPNs and DAPOs) to provide powers for the court to include such requirements in relation to pets as it considers relevant in a DAPO.

I share your view that this provision could help to prevent the use of harm or threat of harm to pets to perpetuate abuse and/or coercive control over a victim and I am very supportive of these measures. I am also of the view that there should be consistency and alignment of approach with NMOs and Occupation Orders under the 1998 Order. For these reasons, I supported the amendment and I am pleased to advise that both amendments were passed by the Assembly, and my Department is to liaise with Paul Frew MLA in advance of Further Consideration Stage to further review the proposed amendment to Section 2 of the DACPA.

I remain committed to doing all in my power to tackle domestic abuse and to ensuring that the legislative framework is as effective and robust as possible to support this end.

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE JUSTICE MINISTER

Department of
Justice
An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
Männystrie O tha Laa
www.justice-ni.gov.uk

I hope the information provided is helpful

Yours sincerely

Naomi R Long.

**NAOMI LONG MLA**
**Minister of Justice**

*Please ensure that you quote our reference number in any future related correspondence.*

Department for Communities
www.communities-ni.gov.uk

**Level 9**
**Causeway Exchange**
**1-7 Bedford Street**
**Belfast**
**BT2 7EG**

Telephone: (028) 9051 2692
e-mail: private.office@communities-ni.gov.uk

Appendix 2

Our ref: CORR 0330-2026
Date: 8 June 2026

**From: The Minister**

Susie McCullough
Chief Executive
Ards & North Down Borough Council
City Hall
The Castle
Bangor
BT20 4BT

Via email: Susie.McCullough@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

Dear Susie,

**SUPPORT FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF RUBY'S LAW IN NORTHERN IRELAND**

Thank you for your correspondence of 12 May 2026 about the possible introduction of Ruby's Law in Northern Ireland.

It is incumbent on us all to do all we can to tackle the scourge of domestic violence and sexual abuse in our society, and within my Department a number of business areas actively contribute to the work of both the Executive's Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy and the Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls. This has included engaging with Causeway Coast Dog Rescue on the proposals for Ruby's Law in Northern Ireland.

Additional legislation that could remove barriers that prevent victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse leaving dangerous situations is to be welcomed.

Yours sincerely,

**Gordon Lyons MLA**
**Minister for Communities**

Department of Finance
An Roinn Airgeadais
www.finance-ni.gov.uk

**From the Office of the Minister of Finance**

Private Office
2nd Floor
Clare House
303 Airport Road West
BELFAST
BT3 9ED

**Tel**: 028 9081 6116
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*Susie McCullough*
*Chief Executive*
*Ards and North Down Borough Council*
*City Hall*
*The Castle*
*Bangor, BT20 4BT*

enquiries@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

**Our reference:** *COR-0273-2026*
**Date:** *22 May 2026*

Dear Ms McCullough

**SUPPORT FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF RUBY'S LAW IN NORTHERN IRELAND**

Thank you for your letter of 12 May 2026 to the Minister of Finance, in which you write on behalf of the Active and Healthy Communities Committee, in relation to consideration of the introduction of Ruby's Law in this jurisdiction. The Minister has read your correspondence and has asked me to respond on his behalf.

The Minister and his Department are familiar with Ruby's Law and the work around this campaign. Further to an invite, Departmental officials attended the Causeway Coast Dog Rescue October 2025 annual conference in which Ruby's Law was discussed. We have also responded to correspondence from the Rescue in relation to its campaign for the introduction of Ruby's Law here.

Responsibility for the some of the issues which you raise cuts across different Government Departments. This Department's remit in relation to domestic abuse and coercive control relationships extends to the substantive civil law provisions on non-molestation orders and occupation orders under the Family Homes and Domestic Violence (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (the 1998 Order). The Department of Justice leads on domestic abuse policy more broadly, including the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy, working in partnership with the Department of Health. Working collaboratively across all government Departments to ensure that victims receive appropriate protection and support is a key priority of the Strategy.

With regards to the 1998 Order, when a Court is deciding whether to make a non-molestation order or occupation order, it is required "to have regard to all the circumstances". While there is no explicit statutory requirement for the Court to take companion animals into consideration, relevant factors, including the role of pets in coercive or controlling behaviour, can be examined where they are brought before the Court.

That said, it is recognised there is merit in considering additional safeguards and protections of the nature that you and others have suggested. The Minister is presently considering and liaising with the Justice Minister on a potential amendment tabled by MLAs to the Justice Bill which would impact the civil law protections within the 1998 Order.

If this amendment is selected for debate, these matters will be considered by the Assembly. In any case, relevant officials in my Department are currently examining a number of family law related matters that could be potentially suitable for reform. The Minister has indicated that he is happy that this issue can form part of that work, and his officials will engage with interested parties as this thinking develops.

Thank you for raising this important matter.

Yours sincerely,

**PAULA DAWSON**
**Private Secretary to John O'Dowd MLA**

**FROM THE MINISTER OF HEALTH**

Appendix 4

Department of Health
An Roinn Sláinte
Männystrie O Poustie
www.health-ni.gov.uk

Susie McCullough
Chief Executive
Susie.McCullough@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
BELFAST, BT4 3SQ
Tel: 028 9052 2556
Email: private.office@health-ni.gov.uk

Our Ref: COR-0869-2026

Date: 21 May 2026

Dear Susie

Thank you for your letter dated 12 May regarding Ruby's Law.

As joint lead with the Department of Justice on the Domestic and Sexual Abuse (DSA) Strategy, my Department is firmly committed to tackling domestic and sexual abuse.

Through the Strategy, we aim to build a Northern Ireland where domestic and sexual abuse is not tolerated, where all victims receive the support they need, and where perpetrators are held fully accountable. We are taking a whole-society approach, working across government departments and with statutory, voluntary and community partners to tackle abuse at its root.

The principles underpinning Ruby's Law are closely aligned with the objectives of the DSA Strategy. I recognise the significant impact that the abuse or threatened harm of pets can have on victims of domestic abuse, and I share concern about the current gap in Northern Ireland legislation, which leaves pets outside the scope of existing protective measures.

Officials from my Department have already engaged with Causeway Coast Dog Rescue, including participation in roundtable events hosted by the organisation. These provided a valuable opportunity to hear directly from campaigners and better understand the issues involved. I am grateful for the important work being led by those advocating for change in this area.

However, legislative change of the kind proposed under Ruby's Law falls within the remit of the Department of Justice. While my Department will continue to support cross-departmental collaboration, including through our co-leadership of the DSA Strategy, any decision to progress such legislation would need to be taken forward by the Department of Justice.

My Department remains committed to ongoing engagement with stakeholders and will continue to work collaboratively across government to improve protections for victims of domestic abuse.

Yours sincerely

**Mike Nesbitt MLA**
**Minister of Health**