



**Ards and  
North Down**  
Borough Council

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# **PROPOSED PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES 2024/25**

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<b>Improvement Objective 1:</b>	<b>We will increase economic growth by attracting more business and creating jobs</b>
<b>Associated Programme for Government Outcome(s)</b>	<p><b>Outcome 1   We prosper through a strong, competitive, regionally balanced economy</b></p> <p><b>Outcome 6   We have more people working in better jobs</b></p> <p><b>Outcome 10   We have created a place where people want to live and work, to visit and invest.</b></p>
<b>Associated Community Plan Objective   Outcome 4</b>	<b>All people in Ards and North Down benefit from a prosperous economy</b>
<b>Draft Corporate Plan Priority</b>	<b>Economic</b>
<b>Why are we focussing on this priority?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the most recent Resident Survey completed late 2023, residents identified the top two Council priorities as: attracting jobs and investment into the local economy (1st) and ensuring annual rate increases are kept at or below inflation (2nd).</li> <li>• The Council receives over 80% of its funding through the local property tax. Rates are paid by householders (domestic rate) and businesses (non-domestic rate). The more ratepayers there are, the less each will have to pay, and the more money is available to invest in our communities.</li> <li>• Economic growth is important because it can lead to higher living standards, better employment opportunities and greater economic security for all.</li> <li>• Economic growth can help create jobs and reduce poverty, which is essential for ensuring that everyone benefits from the transition to a sustainable future.</li> <li>• The non-domestic (business) rate base has decreased year-on-year since 2015.</li> <li>• There are 4,815 VAT/PAYE registered businesses in AND (2023) with 63% of these businesses with turnover over £100k and 19% with turnover over £500k.</li> <li>• The GVA per head at current basic price was £13,327 in AND, continuing to be lowest among all NI Local Government Districts (2021).</li> <li>• 23.6% of AND working age population (16-64 years) were economically inactive (2021).</li> <li>• The median gross weekly earnings for AND residents working outside the Borough was £464 and only £394 for those working within the Borough, both below the NI average of £498 (2022).</li> </ul>
<b>What we hope to achieve</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support more local businesses to start-up, develop and grow by focusing on employability opportunities, business support, employability skills and required infrastructure.</li> <li>• Greater prosperity through a strong, competitive, regionally balanced economy.</li> <li>• Help people maximise their lifelong potential by increasing their skills, knowledge and employability.</li> <li>• Create a place where people want to live and work, to visit and invest.</li> <li>• Participation in partnerships to improve connectivity (e.g. digital) across the borough.</li> <li>• Develop the cultural and heritage assets of the borough.</li> <li>• Manage, promote and enhance the borough to make it a sustainable visitor destination of choice.</li> </ul>
<b>How are we going to do it and how will we measure progress?</b>	<p>Council plans to.....</p> <p><b>Manage and deliver programmes to enhance physical and digital infrastructure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversee the development works to Marine Gardens and the McKee Clock Arena in keeping with the agreed Quality Specification as part of the Queen's Parade redevelopment scheme – anticipated 50% completed by March 2025.</li> <li>• Approval of Outline Business Case (OBC) and creation of action plan by 31st March 2025 to progress Innovation Hub concept to support the growth of the Creative and Digital Tech sectors in Film and TV production.</li> <li>• Develop a master plan and OBC by 31st March 2025 for the delivery of a business park at the former NIE site on Balloo Road, Bangor.</li> <li>• Development of Greenway - Floodgates to Green Road Project to be onsite 2024/25.</li> <li>• Development of Greenway - Comber to Newtownards Project to achieve planning permission and contractor procurement to commence by 31st March 2025.</li> <li>• Planning application to be submitted by 31st March 2025 for Whitespots redevelopment project.</li> <li>• Design teams appointed and planning application progressed by 31st March 2025 for Newtownards Citizen Hub.</li> <li>• Construction contractor appointed 2024/25 for the Ward Park redevelopment project.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business case completed by 31st March 2025 to increase cemetery provision within the borough.</li> <li>• Design teams appointed by 31st March 2025 to take forward a number of the Bangor Waterfront redevelopment projects.</li> <li>• Implement Social Value in Council Procurement Policy by 31st March 2025.</li> </ul> <p><b>Develop regeneration improvements in conjunction with City and Town Advisory Groups</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create five new Town/ City Advisory Groups following review that was undertaken.</li> <li>• Create two additional village partnership groups by 31st March 2025 - North Down and Strangford (equivalent to the Ards Peninsula Partnership Group).</li> <li>• Undertake a review of the existing village plans by 31st March 2025 and agree with the partnership groups key priority projects.</li> <li>• Develop Urban/Rural projects to procurement stage to access funding streams.</li> </ul> <p><b>Deliver capital projects using funding from Covid Recovery Small Settlements Programme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete delivery of the Portaferry Public Realm by 31st March 2025 using funding secured from the Small Settlements Grant.</li> <li>• Develop and deliver four capital projects using the Covid Recovery Small Settlements Grant.</li> </ul> <p><b>Work to optimise funding and collaborate with key partners to create and deliver innovative transformation support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support 17 businesses through the Digital Transformation Flexible Fund programme.</li> </ul> <p><b>Deliver NI Enterprise Support Service ‘Go Succeed’ and other general business support programmes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create 164 new jobs through “Go Succeed” (Statutory Indicator).</li> <li>• Deliver 12 projects through Labour Market Partnership Action Plan.</li> </ul> <p><b>Manage, promote and enhance the borough to make it a sustainable visitor destination of choice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainability Checklist for events to be developed and applied to Council’s tourism events and grant aided events by 31st March 2025.</li> <li>• Increase % of Out of Borough ticket sales – experiences and walks and tours to 50%.</li> <li>• Increase % of Out of Borough ticket sales – food and drink experiences to 33%.</li> <li>• Deliver 3no. training seminars to the tourism/food and drink sectors.</li> <li>• Deliver 4no. training/capacity building sessions via the Festival Forum.</li> </ul> <p><b>Meet the Schedule 3 Planning Indicators of the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major Planning applications processed within an average of 30 weeks (Statutory Indicator)*</li> <li>• Local Planning applications processed within an average of 15 weeks (Statutory Indicator)*</li> <li>• 70% of planning enforcement cases concluded within 39 weeks (Statutory Indicator)*.</li> </ul> <p>*Statutory Planning targets being met are reliant on receipt of timely input from various external statutory bodies</p>						
Senior Responsible Owner(s)	Director of Place Director of Prosperity Director of Corporate Services						
7 aspects of Improvement	Service Effectiveness ✓	Service Quality ✓	Service Availability ✓	Fairness	Sustainability ✓	Efficiency	Innovation ✓

Improvement Objective 2:		<b>We will improve the cleanliness and attractiveness of our borough</b>					
Associated Programme for Government Outcome(s)		Outcome 2   We live and work sustainably – protecting the environment					
Associated Community Plan Objective   Outcome 5		All people in Ards and North Down feel pride from having access to a well-managed sustainable environment.					
Draft Corporate Plan Priority		Environment					
Why are we focussing on this priority?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The most common suggestions for Council improvement in the most recent Resident Survey completed late 2023 included: keeping areas clean and tidy, reducing litter, reducing fly tipping, street cleaning and keeping grassed areas weed free.</li> <li>81% of households in the borough are concerned for the environment (71% across NI, NISRA CHS, 2019).</li> </ul>						
What we hope to achieve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve the standard of cleanliness of our borough.</li> <li>Support residents to live and work sustainably by protecting the environment.</li> <li>AND residents feeling pride from having access to a well-managed sustainable environment.</li> <li>Grow a clean, attractive, environmentally responsible place, including our city, towns, villages, countryside and coast.</li> </ul>						
How are we going to do it and how will be measure progress?	<p>Council plans to.....</p> <p><b>Target identified problem areas for enhanced enforcement and street cleansing activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieve or exceed the NI average Cleanliness Index score of 75</li> <li>Improve (increase) total number of Fixed Penalty Notices issued to 375.</li> </ul> <p><b>Monitor and improve the cleanliness of our public toilets across the borough</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieve 100% success in 'Loo of the Year' Awards.</li> </ul> <p><b>Invest in 'In Bloom' Projects</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>£21,000 to be invested in 'In Bloom' Projects.</li> <li>4no. 'In Bloom' / Best Kept Awards retained.</li> </ul>						
Senior Responsible Owner(s)	<p>Director of Environment</p> <p>Director of Community, Health and Wellbeing</p>						
7 aspects of Improvement	Service Effectiveness ✓	Service Quality ✓	Service Availability ✓	Fairness	Sustainability ✓	Efficiency	Innovation ✓

Improvement Objective 3:		<b>We will improve the borough's recycling rates</b>					
Associated Programme for Government Outcome(s)		Outcome 2   We live and work sustainably – protecting the environment					
Associated Community Plan Objective   Outcome 5		All people in Ards and North Down feel pride from having access to a well-managed sustainable environment.					
Corporate Plan Priority		Environment					
Why are we focussing on this priority?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents being fully committed to recycling is key to the Council delivering on its waste management strategy. The most recent Resident survey completed late 2023 found that most residents stated their commitment to recycling is high (58%), however this level of commitment has fallen significantly from the figure of 67% recorded in 2021.</li> <li>81% of households in the borough are concerned for the environment (71% across NI, NISRA CHS, 2019).</li> <li>The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 sets a target of an at least 100% reduction in net zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050 for Northern Ireland, along with interim targets including at least 48% reduction in net emissions by 2030.</li> <li>AND Municipal Recycling Rate - 51.7% (2020/21).</li> <li>£4.1 million paid in landfill costs in 2023/24.</li> </ul>						
What we hope to achieve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work towards an environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and borough.</li> <li>Increase the Council's recycling rate across the borough and reduce landfill costs.</li> <li>Support residents to live and work sustainably by protecting the environment.</li> <li>AND residents feel pride from having access to a well-managed sustainable environment.</li> <li>Grow a clean, attractive, environmentally responsible place, including our city, towns, villages, countryside and coast.</li> </ul>						
How are we going to do it and how will be measure progress?	<p>Council plans to....</p> <p>Encourage householders to recycle more to reduce the tonnage of household waste being sent to landfill through:</p> <p><b>Improve the Council's overall re-use, recycling and recovery rates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce the tonnage of municipal solid waste sent to landfill from 35,000 tonnes to 31,500 tonnes (Statutory Indicator).</li> <li>Increase % of household waste recycled, reused and composted to 60% (Statutory Indicator).</li> <li>Reduce biodegradable waste that is diverted from landfill to 19,017 tonnes (Statutory Indicator).</li> <li>Improve recycling rates at Council's Household Recycling Centres to 70%.</li> </ul> <p><b>Improve kerbside collection service</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver a new kerbside collection model by 31st March 2025.</li> <li>Commence new kerbside textiles collection service to increase tonnage of textiles diverted from landfill (2024/25 Target is 250 tonnes).</li> </ul> <p><b>Improve recycling rates at Council delivered events</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Embed and expand the recycling model at Council delivered events by 31st March 2025.</li> </ul>						
Senior Responsible Owner(s)	Director of Environment						
7 aspects of Improvement	Service Effectiveness	Service Quality	Service Availability	Fairness	Sustainability	Efficiency	Innovation
	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓

<b>Improvement Objective 4:</b>		<b>We will support our businesses and residents to protect and improve their health and wellbeing</b>					
<b>Associated Programme for Government Outcome(s)</b>		Outcome 4   We enjoy long, healthy, active lives.					
<b>Associated Community Plan Objective   Outcome 2</b>		All people in Ards and North Down enjoy good health and wellbeing.					
<b>Corporate Plan Priority</b>		Social					
<b>Why are we focussing on this priority?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In the most recent Resident Survey completed late 2023, residents identified supporting businesses and residents' health and wellbeing as a top priority for Council (top 3).</li> <li>Living in greener areas is associated with less income-related health inequality, weakening the effect of deprivation on health. Access to outdoor spaces and leisure activities has been linked to improved mental health and wellbeing.</li> <li>3.6 (male) and 2.5 years (female) - the gap in life expectancy between AND residents living in deprived areas (2019-21).</li> </ul>						
<b>What we hope to achieve</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greater awareness of health in the business community.</li> <li>Improved use of parks and outdoor spaces.</li> <li>Provide safe and accessible public spaces.</li> <li>Enjoying long, healthy, active lives.</li> <li>All residents to enjoy good health and wellbeing.</li> <li>Enhanced physical and emotional wellbeing of residents through provision of services, facilities and partnerships.</li> </ul>						
<b>How are we going to do it and how will we measure progress?</b>	<p>Council plans to....</p> <p><b>Provide additional resources for community health and wellbeing and support utilising existing budgets</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the number of businesses registering for Health and Wellbeing initiatives to 24.</li> <li>Continue to develop as a Dementia Friendly Council and borough by 31st March 2025.</li> <li>Move to stage 3 and 4 of the Whole Systems Approach to Obesity Plan by 31st March 2025.</li> <li>Develop a Leisure Strategy for the Borough 2025-2035 by 31st March 2025.</li> <li>Deliver 220 Fitness Classes per week by Leisure Ards and NCLT/Serco.</li> <li>Increase Active Ageing Memberships across Leisure Ards from 400 to 450.</li> <li>Increase numbers enrolled in Swim programmes delivered by Leisure Ards and NCLT/Serco from 3,500 to 4,250.</li> <li>Review of Council's grants policy by 31st March 2025.</li> <li>Produce and implement a final PEACEPLUS Local Authority Action Plan in 2024/25.</li> </ul> <p><b>Provide open spaces and parks that are well maintained, managed in an environmentally sustainable manner, accessible to all and to improve biodiversity in the Borough</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plant 15,000 trees across the Borough.</li> <li>Retain the borough's 7no. Green Flag awards.</li> <li>Increase the m2 of rewilded Council maintained ground to 120,000.</li> <li>40no. Community Gardening projects organised.</li> </ul>						
<b>Senior Responsible Owner(s)</b>	<p>Director of Community, Health and Wellbeing</p> <p>Director of Environment</p>						
<b>7 aspects of Improvement</b>	Service Effectiveness	Service Quality	Service Availability	Fairness	Sustainability	Efficiency	Innovation
	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓

