

March 13th, 2026

**Notice Of Meeting**

You are requested to attend the meeting to be held on **Wednesday, 18th March 2026 at 6:00 pm** in **Boardroom, Warrenpoint Town Hall.**

**Committee Membership 2025-26**

Councillor O Magennis **Chairperson**

Councillor M Hearty **Deputy Chairperson**

Councillor T Andrews

Councillor W Clarke

Councillor C Enright

Councillor K Feehan

Councillor D Finn

Councillor J Jackson

Councillor M Larkin

Councillor K Murphy

Councillor S O'Hare

Councillor H Reilly

Councillor M Ruane

Councillor D Taylor

Councillor H Young

# Agenda

## 1.0 Apologies and Chairperson's Remarks

## 2.0 Declarations of Interest

## 3.0 Action Sheet of Sustainability & Environment Committee Meeting held 18 February 2026

 *Action Sheet - 18.02.2026 inc. historic actions updated.pdf*

*Page 1*

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### *For Discussion/Decision*

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## 4.0 Draft Nature Recovery Strategy NI – Consultation Response

*For Decision*

 *SE Committee Report - Nature Recovery Strategy NI consultation response.pdf*

*Page 11*

 *Appendix 1 - Draft Nature Recovery Strategy response.pdf*

*Page 14*

## 5.0 Sustainability Charges for Financial Year 2026/27

*For Decision*

 *SE Committee Report - Sustainability Charges 2026-27.pdf*

*Page 18*

 *Appendix 1 - Cemetery Charges 26-27.pdf*

*Page 21*

 *Appendix 2 - Market Charges 26-27.pdf*

*Page 22*

 *Appendix 3 - Newcastle Harbour Mooring Fees 2026-27.pdf*

*Page 23*

## 6.0 Home to Hospital

*For Decision*

 *Home to hospital report for March 2026.pdf*

*Page 25*

## 7.0 Houses in Multiple Occupation – licence fee

*For Decision*

 *SE Committee Report - Houses in Multiple Occupancy.pdf*

*Page 28*

## 8.0 Refuse Collection/HRC arrangements for Public Holidays 2026/27

## 9.0 Environment charges for for financial year 2026/2027

For Decision

Report to follow

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**Items deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014**

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## 10.0 Waste Management Contracts

For Decision

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

SE Committee Report - Waste Contracts March 25.pdf

Not included

### 10.1 Mixed Dry Recyclables Contract

SE Committee - Extension of Mixed Dry Recyclables Contracts.pdf

Not included

### 10.2 Direct Award Contracts

Report to follow

## 11.0 Business Case – Vehicle Tyres

For Decision

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

SE Committee Report - Business Case for the Provision of Tyres.pdf

Not included

Appendix 1 - Business Case Tyres.pdf

Not included

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**FOR NOTING Items deemed to be exempt under Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local**

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## 12.0 Arc21 Joint Committee Meeting In-Committee Minutes of Thursday 29 January 2026 & Joint Committee Members' Monthly Bulletin held on 26 February 2026

*For Information*

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

📄 *ARC21 - JC102-29Jan26-InCommMinutes-e-signed.pdf* **Not included**

📄 *ARC21 - JC103-26Feb26-JC MembersBulletin.pdf* **Not included**

## 13.0 Action Sheet from the S&E Working Group Meeting of 18 February 2026

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

📄 *Action Sheet from S&E Working group 18 February 2026.pdf* **Not included**

### *For Noting*

## 14.0 Arc21 Joint Committee meeting held on Thursday 29 January 2026

*For Information*

📄 *ARC21 - JC102-29Jan26-Minutes-e-signed.pdf* **Page 36**

## 15.0 Biodiversity Strategy – Action Plan Review

*For Information*

Report to follow

📄 *SE Committee Report - Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan Review.pdf* **Page 43**

📄 *Appendix 1 - NMDDC Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan Review March 2026.pdf* **Page 46**

# Invitees

Cllr Terry Andrews  
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Cllr Callum Bowsie  
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Cllr Jim Brennan  
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Lorraine/Emma Burns/McParland  
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Cllr Pete Byrne  
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Cllr Philip Campbell  
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Cllr William Clarke  
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Cllr Laura Devlin  
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Cllr Cadogan Enright  
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Cllr Killian Feehan  
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Cllr Doire Finn  
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Cllr Conor Galbraith  
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Cllr Mark Gibbons  
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Cllr Oonagh Hanlon  
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Cllr Glyn Hanna  
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Cllr Valerie Harte  
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Cllr Martin Hearty  
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Cllr Roisin Howell  
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Cllr Tierna Howie  
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Cllr Jonathan Jackson  
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Joanne/Noelle Johnston  
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Cllr Geraldine Kearns  
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Miss Veronica Keegan  
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Mrs Sheila Kieran  
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Cllr Aurla King  
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Cllr Cathal King  
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Ms Elaine Kirk  
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Cllr Mickey Larkin  
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Cllr Niall Lawlor  
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Cllr David Lee-Surginor  
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Cllr Alan Lewis  
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Cllr Oonagh Magennis  
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Mr Conor Mallon  
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Cllr Aidan Mathers  
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Cllr Declan McAteer  
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Mr Martin McKibbin  
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Cllr Declan Murphy  
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Cllr Kate Murphy  
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Cllr Selina Murphy  
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Sinead Murphy  
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Cllr Siobhan O'Hare  
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Mr Andy Patterson  
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Cllr Áine Quinn  
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Cllr Henry Reilly  
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Cllr Michael Rice  
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Cllr Michael Ruane  
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Mr Conor Sage  
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Conor Smyth  
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Cllr David Taylor  
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Cllr Jarlath Tinnelly  
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Ms Sinead Trainor  
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Cllr Jill Truesdale  
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Mrs Marie Ward  
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Cllr Helena Young  
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**SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE****HISTORIC ACTIONS TRACKING SHEET**

<b>NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING 21 APRIL 2022</b>					
<b>Minute Ref</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Actions taken/ Progress to date</b>	<b>Remove from Action Sheet Y/N</b>
NS/052/2022	Compost Week 2022	<p>Note and approve the additional activities in 2.2 to highlight and promote the importance of recycling food waste.</p> <p>Note and approve the launch of an application process, with set criteria, to establish demand for deploying brown bins to residents of high rise buildings who were not previously provided with these.</p>	S Trainor	<b>In progress</b>	<b>N</b>
NS/057/2022	Various issues concerning the Events Space Kilkeel	Approve the Officers recommendation that the legal position of the Council regarding its maintenance of the events space, Kilkeel, is reviewed with a separate report to be provided to the Council once this has been considered further.	C Sage	<b>Legal position and maintenance of the events space being confirmed. Report to be brought back to S&amp;E Committee.</b>	<b>N</b>

<b>SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING</b>					
<b>17 OCTOBER 2023</b>					
SE/107/2023	Notice of Motion – Animal Welfare	It was agreed to remove the final sentence of the notice of motion. It was agreed to defer a decision on the Notice of Motion until the outcome of the legal process was known.	S Trainor	<b>On hold pending legal process</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING</b>					
<b>22 NOVEMBER 2023</b>					
SE/125/2023	Report on Notice of Motion in relation to Livestock worrying	It was agreed that a meeting be organised with relevant partners to discuss a way forward to produce a publicity campaign highlighting the importance of ensuring dogs are kept under control in the Mourne Mountains.	S Trainor	<b>In Progress</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING</b>					
<b>24 JANUARY 2024</b>					
SE/004/2024	Report on Notice of Motion – Flood Defences	The following was agreed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Further investigate the possibility of a Shared Island application to assist with flood defences</li> <li>- Write to DFI Rivers and request a river maintenance schedule.</li> </ul>	S Murphy	<b>In Progress</b>	<b>N</b>
SE/005/2024	Report on Notice of Motion – Flood Preparedness	The following was agreed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Look into sharing information the website from the Regional Community Resilience Group</li> </ul>	S Murphy	<b>In Progress</b>	<b>N</b>

<b>SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING</b> <b>21 FEBRUARY 2024</b>					
018/2024	Report on Notice of Motion – Climate Change	<p>It was agreed that this Council acknowledges the work done to date to help address the climate emergency; reaffirms previous motions regarding the degenerating global situation; and again, reiterates that the crisis is the biggest threat posed to our constituents, our district, and our planet.</p> <p>Further acknowledges, however, that recent data collated by Climate Emergency UK ranks NMDDC 8th out of the 11 Councils within NI; and thus, pledges to include ambitious targets in the forthcoming Sustainability and Climate Strategies and Action Plans to expedite implementation.</p> <p>It was also agreed that a benchmark report would be brought back to Committee regarding Council actions and progress to mitigating climate change impact.</p>	C Sage	<p><b>Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy was presented at S&amp;E Working Group – September 25. Draft Strategy Is currently out for Public Consultation, closing in March 26.</b></p> <p><b>Climate mitigation report completed and submitted on 31<sup>st</sup> October 25 in accordance with Climate Change Act (NI) 2022. This includes carbon copying baseline reporting.</b></p> <p><b>Climate Adaptation report to be submitted by 31/03/2026</b></p>	<p><b>N</b></p> <p><b>N</b></p>

<b>SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING</b>					
<b>20 MARCH 2024</b>					
SE/036/2024	Former landfill site review – Aughnagun and Drumanakelly	It was agreed that officers develop a Business Case for the installation of Solar Panels at the former landfill site Aughnagun for further consideration.	S Murphy	<b>In Progress</b>	<b>N</b>
		It was agreed that Council further explore the benefits of installing reed beds at both sites in order to make the sites self-sustaining in terms of the management of the leachate generated on site.	S Murphy	<b>In Progress</b>	
<b>SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING</b>					
<b>23 APRIL 2024</b>					
SE/046/2024	Notice of Motion – Newry Market	Officers continue their commitment to revitalise the market through engagement with traders, the business community and other potential stakeholders.	C Sage	<b>A focussed social media campaign has been completed.</b>	<b>N</b>
		It was also agreed that Officers reach out to other local councils with successful markets and explore additional uses to encourage footfall, including with arts and community groups	C Sage	<b>Council Officers met with Belfast City Council colleagues to review St George’s market.</b>	
		It was further agreed that a report be brought back to committee in 6 months to provide detail of any progress made.	C Sage	<b>An update on Newry Market was provided at S&amp;E Working Group in February 2026.</b>	
<b>SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING</b>					
<b>21 AUGUST 2024</b>					

SE/091/2024	Notice of Motion – Dog Fouling	it was agreed that a mapping exercise to be undertaken by Officers of identified hotspots or problem areas against litter bin provision data to determine if additional litter bins can be provided to assist with the disposal of dog fouling.	S Trainor	<b>Enforcement officer patrols within hotspots are ongoing and once further data is obtained from the above a mapping exercise will be undertaken.</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING 18 DECEMBER 2024</b>					
SE/150/2024	NOM – Vaping	it was agreed that the Council recognised the 2024 Northern Ireland Audit Office report on tackling the public health impacts of smoking and vaping that showed an increase in 11-16 year olds vaping; that Council is concerned that children vaping in schools is detrimental to a child's health and educational outcomes; agrees that greater awareness must be raised with children in schools about the risks of vaping; acknowledges that teachers and school staff must have the support and resources they require to raise awareness and inform children on the risks of vaping; agree to write to both the Minister of Education and Health urging them to bring forward a plan to end vaping in school grounds, to reduce the number of young people vaping and to eradicate the sale of vapes to children. It was also agreed to write to all Councils in the North asking them for support in tackling this issue.	S Murphy	<b>In progress</b>	<b>N</b>

SE/151/2024	NOM – Newry Canal	it was agreed to request support from support from Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council to write to the Minister for Infrastructure and the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for the urgent establishment of a multi- agency Newry Canal regeneration taskforce to work in partnership to deliver on the potential of inland waterways across both Council areas.	S Murphy	<b>In progress</b>  Newry Canal Regeneration Working Group has been established with ABC and meetings have taken place in September & November 25 with representatives from ABC Council. A further meeting has been arranged for March 26.	<b>N</b>
<b>SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING 19 FEBRUARY 2025</b>					
SE/018/2025	NOM – Vital Role of trees	Council will also write to other Councils request support of this motion	C Sage	<b>In Progress</b>	<b>N</b>
SE/020/2025	Application for bus shelter at Hilltown Road, Newry	It was agreed to the installation of a new bus shelter at Hilltown Road, Newry as per the recommendations stated in Appendix 1 of the officer's Report	G Kane	<b>In progress</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING 19 MARCH 2025</b>					
SE/034/2025	Officer Report on NOM – Street Lighting	It was agreed to write to DFI Roads to advise of concerns in relation to areas that have little of no street lighting and request that a scoping exercise is undertaken to identify areas that could avail of additional street lighting across the district.	C Sage	<b>In progress</b>	<b>N</b>

		It was also agreed that Council owned green spaces would be reviewed to identify any areas that could avail of additional lighting across the District	C Sage	<b>In Progress</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING 29 APRIL 2025</b>					
SE/045/2025	Notice of Motion re Memorial Garden, Newcastle	It was agreed to approve the proposal to create a memorial garden to acknowledge the 180 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Newcastle Fishing Disaster	C Sage	<b>Works on site and nearing completion</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING 21 MAY 2025</b>					
SE/056/2025	Officer Report on Notice of Motion – Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty & Air Quality Management Areas	the following was agreed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Members considered and approved the endorsement of the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and agree to write to the Northern Ireland Executive urging them to support this initiative.</li> <li>•Members noted the current on-going review process on the effectiveness of the Council's Air Quality Management Areas in liaison with DAERA and the potential expansion of the number of air quality monitor stations throughout the District, subject to funding.</li> </ul>	C Sage	<b>In Progress</b>	<b>N</b>
			S Trainor	<b>In Progress</b>	<b>N</b>
SE/060/2025	Request to approach DFI about transfer of ownership of Carparks	it was agreed to approve the request for Council Officers to formally approach DFI and research the feasibility of a land transfer of their portion of the site into Council ownership	C Sage	<b>In Progress</b>	<b>N</b>

<b>SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING</b>					
<b>19 AUGUST 2025</b>					
<b>SE/088/2025</b>	Cycle To Work Scheme	<p>The following was agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To proceed with the appointment of a new Provider for the Council's Cycle to Work Scheme as detailed in section 2.2 of the report.</li> <li>To increase the upper limit for purchases via the Cycle to Work scheme and that the scheme remains open for applications all year round as detailed in section 2.3 of the report.</li> </ul>	C Sage	<b>Contract awarded</b>	<b>Y</b>
<b>SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING</b>					
<b>18 FEBRUARY 2026</b>					
SE/012/2026	Action Sheet: Sustainability And Environment Committee Meeting Held On 28 January 2026	It was agreed to note the Action Sheet	S Murphy	<b>Noted</b>	<b>Y</b>
SE/013/2026	Officer Report on NOM – Solar Powered CCTV Cameras	it was agreed to consider the Notice of Motion and note the proposed actions by the Environment Department of Council and to write to the DAERA Minister requesting information on the available support and funding for tackling illegal dumping effectively across the District.	S Trainor	<b>In progress</b>	<b>N</b>
SE/014/2026	Consultation on a Single Construction Regulator Prospectus	it was agreed to approve the submission of the Environmental Health Department's consultation response to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local	S Trainor	<b>Complete</b>	<b>Y</b>

		Government on Government proposals for regulatory reform and the development of a single construction regulator as detailed in Appendix 1 of the officers report.			
SE/015/2026	DFC Consultation on Notice to Quit Periods	it was agreed to note the proposed changes to notice to quit legislation and guidance to be enforced by Councils in relation to the private rented sector and to approve the return of the consultation response to DfC.	S Trainor	<b>Complete</b>	<b>Y</b>
SE/016/2026	Rethinking Resources	it was agreed to note the content of the report and agree that Council write to DAERA requesting an extension to the consultation deadline in line with other Councils.	S Trainor	<b>In progress</b>	<b>N</b>
SE/017/2026	Health Working Groups	It was agreed that the proposed terms of reference as outlined in appendix 1 of the officer's report is put forward for discussion and agreement at the planned working group meetings and that officers review and seek attendees for the Health Working Groups from established groups within the District with an interest in the health sector.	S Trainor	<b>Complete</b>	<b>Y</b>
SE/018/2026	Driver Training Contract	It was agreed to approve the contract modification as detailed in section 2 of the officers' report.	C Sage	<b>Complete</b>	<b>Y</b>
SE/019/2026	The Path to Net Zero – Fleet Fuel Options	It was agreed to approve the transition from diesel to HVO in line with Council's transition towards a Net Zero Council and to achieve targets set by the Draft	C Sage	<b>In Progress</b>	<b>N</b>

		Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy.			
SE/020/2026	Supply and Delivery of BEV Forklift	It was agreed to approve the additional expenditure as outlined in the officers' report to allow the purchase of a forklift truck and the associated maintenance and repair package.	C Sage	<b>Complete</b>	<b>Y</b>
SE/021/2026	Waste Contracts	It was agreed to approve the contract extensions as outlined in the officers' report.	S Trainor	<b>Complete</b>	<b>Y</b>
SE/022/2026	Arc21 Joint Committee Meeting In-Committee Minutes Of Tuesday 2nd December 2025	It was agreed to note the document	S Murphy	<b>Noted</b>	<b>Y</b>
SE/023/2026	Arc21 Joint Committee Meeting Held On Tuesday 2nd December 2025	It was agreed to note the document	S Murphy	<b>Noted</b>	<b>Y</b>
SE/024/2026	Provisional Northern Ireland Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Management Statistics - July To September 2025	It was agreed to note the document	S Murphy	<b>Noted</b>	<b>Y</b>

<b>Report to:</b>	Sustainability and Environment Committee
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> March 2026
<b>Subject:</b>	Draft NI Nature Recovery Strategy Consultation response
<b>Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):</b>	Conor Sage, Assistant Director Sustainability and Environment
<b>Contact Officer (Including Job Title):</b>	Danielle Begley, Biodiversity Officer

Confirm how this Report should be treated by placing an x in either:-

<b>For decision</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>For noting only</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose and Background</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to seek Committee approval on a response to the Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)'s consultation on the Draft Nature Recovery Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2032 on behalf of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Key issues</b>
2.1	The draft Nature Recovery Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2032 (which is the Biodiversity Strategy required by legislation) sets out how DAERA intend to meet international and national ambitions. Details of the consultation are detailed at <a href="https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/draft-nature-recovery-strategy">https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/draft-nature-recovery-strategy</a>
2.2	<p>Nature is in decline across the world. Extinction and threatened extinction rates are higher than ever before. Biodiversity is in crisis, and with it the essential services and benefits it provides.</p> <p>In Northern Ireland, around 40% of the flora and fauna within our most protected sites falls short of the defined standard for 'favourable condition', while only one of 49 priority habitat types in Northern Ireland was considered to be at favourable conservation status.</p>
2.3	Northern Ireland, as part of the UK, has committed to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) which was agreed by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) at the Conference of the Parties (COP)15 in December 2022. The GBF sets out, in 23 targets and 4 goals, the urgent actions required to "bend the curve" of biodiversity loss by 2030 and move towards the 2050 vision. That is, by 2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people.
2.4	DAERA is required to publish a Biodiversity Strategy to further the conservation of biodiversity in Northern Ireland. The consultation period is only opened for 8 weeks (closes on 18 <sup>th</sup> March 2026), which does not give officers a long enough timeframe to process the response through committee and full council.
2.5	<p>To meet the deadline a Response to the Consultation was provided subject to Committee and Council approval.</p> <p>Any suggested changes or comments from Council can be incorporated and sent to DAERA.</p>

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
3.1	Members are asked to approve the response to DAERA’s Draft Nature Recovery Strategy consultation as attached at Appendix 1 of the report.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Resource implications</b>
4.1	N/A
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)</b>
5.1	<p><b><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></b></p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
5.2	<p><b><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></b></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/></p>
5.3	<p><b><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></b></p> <p>Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Rationale:</i></p>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)</b>
6.1	<p>Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>

	<p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If no, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy / strategy / plan / public service is not influenced by rural needs <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Appendices</b>
	Nature Recovery Strategy for NI consultation response
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Background Documents</b>
	<a href="https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/draft-nature-recovery-strategy">https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/draft-nature-recovery-strategy</a>

## Response ID ANON-RNF7-AM85-R

Submitted to Nature Recovery Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2032: A Proposed Strategy for Halting and Reversing the Loss of Biodiversity  
Submitted on 2026-03-10 15:09:04

## Basis of responding

1 What is your name?

Please enter comments in box below:

Danielle Begley

2 What is your email address?

Please enter comments in box below:

danielle.begley@nmandd.org

3 What County do you live in?

Drop down menu:

Down

4 Are you responding on behalf of an organisation?

Drop down menu:

Yes

If yes, please provide the name of your organisation?:

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council (subject to committee approval)

5 Which background category best represents you from the list below?

Drop down menu:

Environmental Interest

Other, please specify::

## Nature Recovery Strategy - Five Strategic Objectives

6 Do you agree with the five strategic objectives in the draft Nature Recovery Strategy?

Drop down menu:

Yes

If no, please provide your comments about alternative or additional Strategic Objectives::

Yes, I agree with the five strategic objectives in principle. However, it may have been better to follow the Global Framework Convention on Biological Diversity 4 overarching goals;

- Maintaining, enhancing, or restoring the integrity, resilience, and connectivity of ecosystems.
- Halting human-induced extinction of threatened species.
- Reducing the risk of extinction and increasing the abundance of native wild species.
- Maintaining and safeguarding genetic diversity within populations of wild and domesticated species.

## Strategic Objective 1: Well Protected Nature and Accelerated Restoration

7 Do you believe that the proposed new actions for Strategic Objective 1, when considered with existing targets, will deliver Well Protected Nature and Accelerated Restoration?

Drop down menu:

No

Please provide further detail to support your answer::

The majority of the actions listed under Strategic Objective 1 all include the production or development of further plans and/or strategies.

We need SMART targets and KPIs.

8 Are there any additional actions that you would like to be included with Strategic Objective 1?

Drop down menu:

Yes

Please provide further detail to support your answer::

We need ring-fenced funding.

We need robust baseline data.

We need delivery mechanisms.

9 Do you have any other comments about Strategic Objective 1?

Drop down menu:

No

Please provide further detail to support your answer::

Strategic Objective 2: Reduction of the Pressures on Biodiversity

10 Do you believe that the proposed new actions for Strategic Objective 2, when considered with existing targets, will deliver Reduction of the Pressures on Biodiversity?

Drop down menu:

No

Please provide further detail to support your answer::

Again, the majority of actions involve the development of a plan or a strategy. These have their place but we also need SMART targets and real action.

11 Are there any additional actions that you would like to be included with Strategic Objective 2?

Drop down menu:

Yes

Please provide further detail to support your answer::

We need ring-fenced funding.

We need robust baseline data.

We need delivery mechanisms.

12 Do you have any other comments about Strategic Objective 2?

Drop down menu:

Yes

Please provide further detail to support your answer::

Invasive alien species cost approx. £4 Billion to the UK economy annually. We need investment in our natural environment.

Strategic Objective 3: Sustainable Use of Biodiversity through Nature-friendly Policies and Practice

13 Do you believe that the proposed new actions for Strategic Objective 3, when considered with existing targets, will deliver Sustainable Use of Biodiversity through Nature-friendly Policies and Practice?

Drop down menu:

No

Please provide further detail to support your answer::

We need robust legislation and policies in terms of protection of priority habitats and species.

14 Are there any additional actions that you would like to be included with Strategic Objective 3?

Drop down menu:

Yes

Please provide further detail to support your answer::

We need ring-fenced funding.

We need robust baseline data.

We need delivery mechanisms.

15 Do you have any other comments about Strategic Objective 3?

Drop down menu:

No

Please provide further detail to support your answer::

#### Strategic Objective 4: Nature Valued and Mainstreamed Across All of Government and Society

16 Do you believe that the proposed new actions for Strategic Objective 4, when considered with existing targets, will deliver Nature Valued and Mainstreamed Across All of Government and Society?

Drop down menu:

No

Please provide further detail to support your answer::

We need robust legislation and policies in terms of protection of priority habitats and species. How will this be different from the previous Biodiversity Strategies? How will this deliver where others have failed?

17 Are there any additional actions that you would like to be included with Strategic Objective 4?

Drop down menu:

Yes

Please provide further detail to support your answer::

We need ring-fenced funding.

We need robust baseline data.

We need delivery mechanisms.

18 Do you have any other comments about Strategic Objective 4?

Drop down menu:

No

Please provide further detail to support your answer::

#### Strategic Objective 5: Building Strong, Integrated Evidence and Knowledge to Enable Action and Reporting for Nature

19 Do you believe that the proposed new actions for Strategic Objective 5, when considered with existing targets, will deliver in Building Strong, Integrated Evidence and Knowledge to Enable Action and Reporting for Nature?

Drop down menu:

No

Please provide further detail to support your answer::

We need robust baseline data to inform actions going forward. There needs to be better collaboration across all sectors - Central and local government, Environmental NGOs, Public bodies, Health and Education sectors.

20 Are there any additional actions that you would like to be included with Strategic Objective 5?

Drop down menu:

Yes

Please provide further detail to support your answer::

We need ring-fenced funding.

We need robust baseline data.

We need delivery mechanisms.

21 Do you have any other comments about Strategic Objective 5?

Drop down menu:

No

Please provide further detail to support your answer::

### Existing Targets

22 Are you aware of any other existing targets for nature recovery that may help deliver for SO1 – SO5 that you feel have been omitted from this draft strategy?

Drop down menu:

No

Please provide further detail to support your answer::

No, however we are falling way short on the 30 by 30 target currently, so how will this be met in just 4 years time?

### Supporting Documentation

23 Do you agree with the conclusions of the Equality and Disability Screening Assessment of the draft Nature Recovery Strategy?

Drop down menu:

Yes

Please provide further detail to support your answer::

24 Do you agree with the conclusions of the Rural Needs Impact Assessment of the draft Nature Recovery Strategy?

Drop down menu:

Yes

Please provide further detail to support your answer::

<b>Report to:</b>	Sustainability & Environment Committee
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> March 2026
<b>Subject:</b>	Sustainability – Facility Charges 2026/27
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Conor Sage, Assistant Director Sustainability
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Gail Kane, Head of Facilities Management

Confirm how this Report should be treated by placing an x in either: -

<b>For decision</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>For noting only</b>	
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<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose and Background</b>
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to update S&amp;E Committee in relation to the charges applied by the Sustainability section for services within their remit.</p> <p>This report presents the annual review of the scale of charges for 2026/27. This charging structure will take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026 until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2027.</p> <p>It should be noted that Facility charges within Sustainability section were not increased in 2025/26 financial year.</p>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Key issues</b>
2.1	<p><b>Burial Charges</b></p> <p>The Facilities Management section currently manages five Municipal Cemeteries within the District. They are: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monkshill, Newry</li> <li>• Warrenpoint</li> <li>• Kilbroney, Rostrevor</li> <li>• Struell, Downpatrick</li> <li>• Lough Inch, Ballynahinch</li> </ul> <p>Council is obliged to apply charges for burials, purchase of graves, and erection of headstones within these five cemeteries. Charges for these services are reviewed annually, and it is proposed to increase the current charges by 5% for the 2026/27 financial year.</p> <p>The full details of the pricing structure for 2026/27 is detailed in Appendix 1.</p>
2.2	<p><b>Market Charges</b></p> <p>There are currently five markets managed by the Council within the District. They are: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newry</li> <li>• Kilkeel</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crossmaglen</li> <li>• Castlewellan</li> <li>• Downpatrick</li> </ul> <p>The charges for these markets are reviewed on an annual basis. It is proposed to increase market charges by 5% for 2025/26.</p> <p>The full details of the proposed pricing structure for 2026/27 is detailed within Appendix 2.</p>
2.3	<p><b>Newcastle Harbour Mooring Fees</b></p> <p>The mooring fees for Newcastle Harbour are reviewed on an annual basis. It is proposed to increase the mooring fees by 5% for 2026/27.</p> <p>The full details of the proposed pricing structure for 2026/27 is detailed within Appendix 3.</p>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
3.1	<p>Members are asked to consider the report and approve the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Councils pricing structure for 2026/27 for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ burial charges</li> <li>○ market charges</li> <li>○ Newcastle Harbour mooring fees</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Resource implications</b>
4.1	Officer time to ensure all relevant stakeholders are advised of charges.
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)</b>
5.1	<p><b><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></b></p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
5.2	<p><b><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></b></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input type="checkbox"/></p>

	The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)</b>
6.1	Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service  Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  If yes, please complete the following:  Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Appendices</b>
	Appendix 1: Burial/Cemetery Charges 2026/27 Appendix 2: Market Charges 2026/27 Appendix 3: Newcastle Harbour Mooring Fees 2026/27
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Background Documents</b>
8.1	None

## **Appendix 1 - CEMETERY CHARGES 2026/2027**

Type of Facility/Activity	Details	Charges (£)	
		2025/26	2026/27
Private Grave	Resident	£319	£335
	Non-Resident	£633	£665
First Opening	Resident	£264	£277
	Non-Resident	£756	£794
Second Opening	Resident	£264	£277
	Non-Resident	£759	£797
Burial of Cremated Remains/Burials	Resident	£66	£69
Under Headstones	Non-Resident	£127	£133
Transfer Burial Rights	Resident	£50	£53
	Non-Resident	£121	£127
Duplicate Grant Per Plot	Resident	£50	£53
	Non-Resident	£121	£127
Exhumations	Resident	£506	£531
	Non-Resident	£506	£531
Additional charge for burials after 3.00pm	Resident	£66	£69
	Non-Resident	£66	£69
Search fees (Deeds not produced)	Resident	£0	£0
	Non-Resident	£0	£0
Approval for Erection of Headstone	Resident	£66	£69
	Non-Resident	£66	£69
Burials of Under 18's		£0	£0

**Appendix 2 - Market Services**

Type of Facility/Activity	Charges £ or €	
	2025/26	2026/27
Newry Market Stall	£29.00	£30
Newry Market outside Pitch	£25.00	£26
Crossmaglen Market Stall	£18.00	£19
Crossmaglen Market Stall	€24.00	€25.00
Kilkeel Market Stall	£22.00	£23
Castlewellan monthly Market Stall	£20.00 per day (pay on day) £12.00 per day if pay yearly in advance	£21.00 per day (pay on day) £13.00 per day if pay yearly in advance
Castlewellan Fair Market Stall – 6.5m x 6m	£20.00	£21.00
Castlewellan Fair Market Stall – 9m x 6m	£30.00	£32.00
Downpatrick Market	£20.00 per day (pay on day) £12.00 per day if pay yearly in advance	£21.00 per day (pay on day) £13.00 per day if pay yearly in advance

**Appendix 3 -  
2026/27  
NEWCASTLE**



Comhairle Ceantair  
**an Iúir, Mhúrn  
agus an Dúin**  
Newry, Mourne  
and Down  
District Council

**HARBOUR MOORING PRICES**

**Non – Commercial Boats**

<b>Feet</b>	<b>Metres</b>		<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>
5 feet	1.524		£19	£20
6 feet	1.8288		£23	£24
7 feet	2.1336		£25	£26
8 feet	2.4384		£28	£29
9 feet	2.7432		£30	£32
10 feet	3.048		£36	£38
11 feet	3.3528		£38	£40
12 feet	3.6576		£44	£46
13 feet	3.9624		£46	£48
14 feet	4.2672		£49	£51
15 feet	4.572		£52	£55
16 feet	4.8768		£56	£59
17 feet	5.1816		£60	£63
18 feet	5.4864		£64	£67
19 feet	5.7912		£66	£69
20 feet	6.096		£73	£77
21 feet	6.4008		£75	£79
22 feet	6.7056		£78	£82
23 feet	7.0104		£82	£86
24 feet	7.3152		£85	£89
25 feet	7.62		£87	£91
26 feet	7.9248		£90	£95
27 feet	8.2296		£95	£100
28 feet	8.5344		£100	£105
29 feet	8.8392		£101	£106
30 feet	9.144		£105	£110
31 feet	9.4488		£110	£116
32 feet	9.7536		£114	£120
33 feet	10.058		£117	£123
34 feet	10.363		£120	£126
35 feet	10.668		£123	£129

**Commercial Boats**

<b>Feet</b>	<b>Metres</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>
16 feet	4.8768	£76	£80
30 feet	9.144	£76	£80
31 feet	9.4488	£76	£80
32 feet	9.7536	£76	£80
33 feet	10.058	£87	£91
34 feet	10.363	£87	£91
35 feet	10.668	£87	£91
36 feet	10.973	£87	£91
37 feet	11.278	£99	£104
38 feet	11.582	£99	£104
39 feet	11.887	£99	£104
40 feet	12.192	£110	£116

<b>Report to:</b>	Sustainability & Environment Committee
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	18 March 2026
<b>Subject:</b>	Home to Hospital Scheme
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Sinead Trainor, Assistant Director, Environment
<b>Contact Officer</b>	James Campbell Head of Environmental Health (Residential)

<b>For decision</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>For noting only</b>	
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<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose and Background</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to seek member approval to provide continued funding from 01 April 2026 to 31 March 2027 to support the Home to Hospital Volunteer Driver Schemes in Slieve Gullion and The Mourne District Electorate Area's (DEA's) and that Expressions of Interest are sought from suitable Community and Voluntary sector organisations to administer the scheme from 01 April 2026.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Key issues</b>
2.1	<p>It is acknowledged that there is a major difficulty for people from the more rural areas to access hospital appointments in Craigavon, Belfast and beyond. This causes problems for our increasingly older population. The Council has facilitated a Volunteer Driver Home to Hospital scheme for the last number of years within the Slieve Gullion and Mourne District Electorate Area's (DEA's), which are most affected by their rural nature and distance from necessary Health Services. This has proved to be successful from the point of view of the local people who receive the help with the transport and from those volunteers who provide the transport.</p> <p>Officers see the great benefit in continuing to provide funding for this scheme, so that the needs of the population in South Armagh and the Mourne are met.</p>
2.2	<p>Between April 2025 and January 2026, for the 359 active service users the home to hospital service has provided 539 total return journeys. Of these, 368 trips were for residents of the Mourne area and 171 trips for residents of Slieve Gullion.</p> <p>There are 13 volunteer drivers deliver this service.</p> <p>The service has provided transport to 21 different healthcare settings, including South Tyrone, Belfast and Downpatrick. The busiest destinations during the above period were:                  Craigavon Area Hospital – 92 journeys                  The City Hospital, Belfast– 55 journeys                  The Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast – 48 journeys                  Musgrave Park Hospital, Belfast – 22 journeys</p> <p>There are 13 volunteer drivers deliver this service. Drivers operate extended hours from 06:30am to 10pm, ensuring appointments are accessible throughout the day.</p>

2.3	Another welcome outcome from the hospital to home scheme is the added benefit this service has in not only taking residents to hospital appointments but linking them with additional supports, such as Home Safety, Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service and into social groups and activities.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
3.1	That Committee agree to provide continued funding for The Mournes and Slieve Gullion DEA's Home to Hospital Volunteer driver schemes from 01 April 2026 to 31 March 2027 and seek Expressions of Interest from suitable Community/Voluntary sector organisations to administer the Schemes subject to funding being identified.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Resource implications</b>
4.1	The scheme's potential cost to Council to deliver the home to hospital scheme in two DEA's is in the region of £35,000 for 2026/27.
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)</b>
5.1	<p><b><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></b></p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
5.2	<p><b><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></b></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/></p>
5.3	<p><b><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></b></p> <p>Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Rationale:</i></p>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)</b>

6.1	Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service  Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  If yes, please complete the following:  Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Appendices</b>
7.1	None
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Background Documents</b>
8.1	None

<b>Report to:</b>	Sustainability & Environment Committee
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	18 March 2026
<b>Subject:</b>	Houses in Multiple Occupancy
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Sinead Trainor, Assistant Director, Environment
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Kevin Bloomfield – NIHMO Manager, Belfast City Council James Campbell, Head of Environmental Health (Residential)

For decision	x	For noting only	
<b>1.0</b>			<b>Purpose and Background</b>
1.1			The purpose of this report is to consider a request to increase the fee charged to licence a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) and the fee to vary a HMO licence in accordance with the Houses in Multiple Occupation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016.
1.2			The Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 "2016 Act" received Royal Assent on 12 May 2016 and took effect from the 1 April 2019. The Department for Communities ("DfC") laid the subordinate Regulations, The Houses of Multiple Occupation (Fees) Regulations (NI) 2019 "2019 Regulations". These Regulations set the maximum level of fee for an application for a HMO licence at £45 per person, per annum.
1.3			Following the submission of financial information by Belfast City Council to the Department for Communities ("DfC") in December 2024, the Department in exercise of the powers conferred by Section 84 of the Houses in Multiple Occupation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 ("2016 Act") enacted the Houses in Multiple Occupation (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2025 ("2025 Regulations"). Those regulations came into operation on the 1 August 2025.
1.4			The 2025 Regulations changed the maximum permissible fee from £45 per person, per annum to £75 per person, per annum.
1.5			The policy objective of the 2025 Regulations was to allow the HMO Licensing Scheme to continue to operate on a cost neutral basis for councils. This reiterated the policy objective at the time of the introduction of the 2016 Act, which was to ensure that the transfer of the administration of HMOs to councils would be cost neutral and not at the expense of rate payers.
1.6			However, there is a conflict between the <a href="#">Houses in Multiple Occupation (Fees) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019</a> and the <a href="#">Provision of Services Regulations 2009</a> . Legal advice, on this conflict, was sought from external counsel. Belfast City Council Legal Services subsequently confirmed that in setting the fee payable when applying for an HMO licence, the Council is restricted to ONLY recovering the cost of processing the application. This amounts to 86% of the full cost of providing the HMO Service
1.7			A review of the HMO charging model has forecasted that for the current 5-year term 2024/25 – 2028/29 the licence application fee needs to increase to £62 per person, per annum.

1.8	A paper was presented to the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives ("SOLACE") on 6 February 2026 to inform them of the need to increase the HMO licence fee. SOLACE agreed to the proposed fee increase and confirmed that each Council requires approval from their respective Council Committee in March 2026 to agree the uplift.								
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Key issues</b>								
2.1	As part of the Belfast City Council's submission to DfC, in December 2024, officers proposed an increase to the maximum fee to future proof the fee structure and to ensure no burden to rate payers as a consequence of the delivery of this function.								
2.2	The DfC Review was completed in 2025, and it accepted the Council's recommendation to increase the maximum HMO licence fee and brought and enacted the Houses in Multiple Occupation (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2025 ("2025 Regulations"). Those regulations came into operation on the 1 August 2025. The maximum fee was increased from £45 per person, per annum to £75 per person, per annum.								
2.3	In December 2025, the NIHMO team engaged with Belfast City Council Finance colleagues and ran financial models to calculate the current operating costs of the HMO Service.								
2.4	The total gross cost of the service for the 5-year period from 2024/25 to 2028/29 is estimated to be £5.74M, of which £4.9M is eligible to be covered by the license fee. To cover the £4.9M over the 5-year cycle, a charge of £62 per occupant per year is required.								
2.5	It is proposed that the HMO licence application fee is increased to <b>£62</b> per occupant per year for the remainder of the current 5-year cycle, with effect from 1 April 2026.								
2.6	This would still leave the council with £804k of unfunded activities outside of the application process. This is forecast to be met in part from enforcement fees and miscellaneous income.								
2.7	It is proposed to increase the costs of varying a HMO licence for the remainder of the current 5-year cycle, with effect from 1 April 2026 as follows: <table border="1" data-bbox="236 1323 1169 1507"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2"><b>Licence Variations</b></th> </tr> <tr> <th>Item</th> <th>Cost</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Addition of a new managing agent.</td> <td>£250</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Addition of a new occupant</td> <td>£310 for each new occupant + £125 inspection fee (per visit)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<b>Licence Variations</b>		Item	Cost	Addition of a new managing agent.	£250	Addition of a new occupant	£310 for each new occupant + £125 inspection fee (per visit)
<b>Licence Variations</b>									
Item	Cost								
Addition of a new managing agent.	£250								
Addition of a new occupant	£310 for each new occupant + £125 inspection fee (per visit)								
2.8	However, this still leaves an estimated budgetary gap of £521k over the course of the 5-year cycle. <table border="1" data-bbox="245 1653 1430 1836"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2"><b>5 year cycle 24/25 to 28/29</b></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Total cost of HMO activities outside of license application</td> <td>£ 804,083</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Less other expected incomes (enforcement fees and miscellaneous income)</td> <td>- 282,690</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Unfunded activities</b></td> <td><b>£ 521,393</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<b>5 year cycle 24/25 to 28/29</b>		Total cost of HMO activities outside of license application	£ 804,083	Less other expected incomes (enforcement fees and miscellaneous income)	- 282,690	<b>Unfunded activities</b>	<b>£ 521,393</b>
<b>5 year cycle 24/25 to 28/29</b>									
Total cost of HMO activities outside of license application	£ 804,083								
Less other expected incomes (enforcement fees and miscellaneous income)	- 282,690								
<b>Unfunded activities</b>	<b>£ 521,393</b>								
2.9	Furthermore, as we did not increase the fee at the beginning of this 5-year cycle, we will also have a gap as a result of 24/25 and 25/26 licenses being charged at the lower rate of £45.								

2.10	<p><b>5 year cycle 24/25 to 28/29</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="233 264 1433 378"> <tr> <td>License income expected in Y1 and Y2 at breakeven rate</td> <td>£2,323,741</td> </tr> <tr> <td>License income expected to 31/03/26 at lower charge</td> <td>£1,694,312</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Income lost due to delay in increasing license fee</b></td> <td><b>-£ 629,429</b></td> </tr> </table> <p>There is currently a deferred income balance relating to HMOs of approx. £900k that can offset the majority of the gap, but we need the legislative conflict with the <a href="#">Provision of Services Regulations 2009</a> to be resolved the HMO function will begin to operate at a deficit from the second half of the financial year 2027/28.</p>	License income expected in Y1 and Y2 at breakeven rate	£2,323,741	License income expected to 31/03/26 at lower charge	£1,694,312	<b>Income lost due to delay in increasing license fee</b>	<b>-£ 629,429</b>		
License income expected in Y1 and Y2 at breakeven rate	£2,323,741								
License income expected to 31/03/26 at lower charge	£1,694,312								
<b>Income lost due to delay in increasing license fee</b>	<b>-£ 629,429</b>								
3.0	<p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <p>(i) Approve the increase of the HMO licence application fee to £62 per person per year, from the 1 April 2026.</p> <p>(ii) Approve the costs of varying a HMO licence as follows –</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="304 913 1289 1131"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2"><b>Licence variations</b></th> </tr> <tr> <th><b>Item</b></th> <th><b>Cost</b></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Addition of a new managing agent.</td> <td>£250</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Addition of a new occupant</td> <td>£310 for each new occupant + £125 inspection fee (per visit)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>(iii) Note that the Chair of SOLACE will write to the DfC Permanent Secretary regarding the risk being carried by Councils and the need to bring forward legislation on this matter within the current mandate.</p>	<b>Licence variations</b>		<b>Item</b>	<b>Cost</b>	Addition of a new managing agent.	£250	Addition of a new occupant	£310 for each new occupant + £125 inspection fee (per visit)
<b>Licence variations</b>									
<b>Item</b>	<b>Cost</b>								
Addition of a new managing agent.	£250								
Addition of a new occupant	£310 for each new occupant + £125 inspection fee (per visit)								
4.0	<p><b>Resource implications</b></p>								
4.1	<p>The continued support will be required from a number of different Belfast City Council services including, Financial Services, Legal Services and Central Procurement.</p>								
5.0	<p><b>Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)</b></p>								
5.1	<p><b><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></b></p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>								
5.2	<p><b><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></b></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>								

	<p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/></p>
5.3	<p><b><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></b></p> <p>Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Rationale:</i></p>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)</b>
6.1	<p>Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Appendices</b>
7.1	None
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Background Documents</b>
8.1	<p><a href="#">The Houses in Multiple Occupation (Fees) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019</a>  <a href="#">Provision of Services Regulations 2009</a></p>

<b>Report to:</b>	Sustainability and Environment Committee
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	18 March 2026
<b>Subject:</b>	Refuse Collection and HRC arrangements for Public Holidays 2026/27
<b>Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):</b>	Sinead Trainor, Assistant Director: Environment
<b>Contact Officer (Including Job Title):</b>	Therese Siddall, Head of Refuse and Cleansing

<table border="1"> <tr> <td><b>For decision</b></td> <td><b>X</b></td> <td><b>For noting only</b></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		<b>For decision</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>For noting only</b>						
<b>For decision</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>For noting only</b>								
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose and Background</b>									
1.1	The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Sustainability and Environment Committee for service provisions on Public Holidays applying to the 2026/27 financial year.									
1.2	Public Holidays applying to the 2026/27 financial year have been reviewed alongside operational provision for Refuse Collection services and Household Recycling Centres. Revised operational arrangements are agreed with staff and waste receipting centres to ensure operational arrangements are coordinated. These revised arrangements are communicated to Householders through their individual household Bin Collection Calendars and on print and social media.									
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>									
2.1	<p><u>Public Holiday Arrangements 2026/27</u></p> <p>Proposed operational arrangements and schedule for 2026/27 Public Holiday Arrangements in relation to Refuse Collection Services and the opening of Household Recycling Centres are detailed in Appendix 1.</p> <p>Alternative arrangements for refuse collections at Christmas 2026 and New Year’s Day 2027, reflect the legacy operating arrangements and are as follows:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Public Holiday</th> <th>Date of Public Holiday</th> <th>Alternative Refuse Collection Day</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Christmas Day</td> <td>Friday 25/12/2026</td> <td>Alternative collection: Newry – Saturday 19 December 2026 Downpatrick – Monday 28 December 2026</td> </tr> <tr> <td>St Stephens Day</td> <td>Saturday 26/12/2026</td> <td>Non-collection day</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Public Holiday	Date of Public Holiday	Alternative Refuse Collection Day	Christmas Day	Friday 25/12/2026	Alternative collection: Newry – Saturday 19 December 2026 Downpatrick – Monday 28 December 2026	St Stephens Day	Saturday 26/12/2026	Non-collection day
Public Holiday	Date of Public Holiday	Alternative Refuse Collection Day								
Christmas Day	Friday 25/12/2026	Alternative collection: Newry – Saturday 19 December 2026 Downpatrick – Monday 28 December 2026								
St Stephens Day	Saturday 26/12/2026	Non-collection day								

	New Years Day	Friday 01/01/2027	Alternative collection: Newry – Saturday 02 January 2027 Downpatrick – Monday 04 January 2027
2.2	<p><u>Bin Collection Calendars</u></p> <p>A PR campaign will be rolled out to highlight to residents that the Bin Collection Calendars are available to easily access and download and the importance of recycling right.</p> <p>Residents who wish to have a paper copy will be able to print their Bin Collection Calendar from the Council's website or request a copy to be emailed or printed and posted.</p>		
2.3	<p><u>Alternative Collection Day – Bin Stickers</u></p> <p>Stickers will be applied to refuse bins in advance of the Christmas 2026 collection period to inform affected residents of their alternative collection date. On review of the application of stickers for Christmas 2026, to ensure clarity for residents separate stickers for bins according to their geographical areas will be applied and a social and print media campaign will communicate changes to residents.</p>		
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>		
	<p>Members are asked to approve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The alternative Refuse Collection Services and opening arrangements for Household Recycling Centres on Public Holidays applying to the 2026/27 financial year.</li> </ul>		
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Resource implications</b>		
4.1	No additional resource implications associated with this report.		
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)</b>		
5.1	<p><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></p> <p>n/a <span style="float: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></span></p>		
5.2	<p><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <span style="float: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></span></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <span style="float: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></span></p>		

5.3	<p><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></p> <p>Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><i>Rationale:</i> n/a</p>	
<p><b>6.0 Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)</b></p>	
6.1	<p>Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following: Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>7.0 Appendices</b></p>	
<p>Appendix 1 – Schedule of Public Holiday Arrangements</p>	
<p><b>8.0 Background Documents</b></p>	
<p>None</p>	

**Appendix 1 - Schedule of Public Holiday Arrangements**

<b>Public Holiday</b>	<b>Date of Public Holiday</b>	<b>Alternative Refuse Collection Day</b>	<b>Household Recycling Centre Arrangements</b>
Easter Monday	Monday 06/04/2026	*No Collection in Down Normal Collection in Newry	Open 09:30 – 16:30
Easter Tuesday	Tuesday 07/04/2026	Normal Collection	Open 09:30 – 16:30
May Day	Monday 04/05/2026	*No Collection in Down Normal Collection in Newry	Open 09:30 – 16:30
Late May Bank Holiday	Monday 25/05/2026	*No Collection in Down Normal Collection in Newry	Open 09:30 – 16:30
12 July	Monday 13/07/2026	*No Collection in Down Normal Collection in Newry	Open 09:30 – 16:30
13 July	Tuesday 14/07/2026	Normal Collection	Open 09:30 – 16:30
August Bank Holiday	Monday 31/08/2026	*No Collection in Down Normal Collection in Newry	Open 09:30 – 16:30
Christmas Eve	Thursday 24/12/2026	Normal Collection	Open 09:30 – 15:00
Christmas Day	Friday 25/12/2026	Newry – Saturday 19 December 2026 Downpatrick – Monday 28 December 2026	CLOSED
St Stephens Day	Saturday 26/12/2026	*Newry – No Collections *Downpatrick - No Collections	CLOSED
Statutory Day	Monday 28/12/2026	*No Collection in Down Normal Collection in Newry	Open 09:30 – 16:30
New Years Day	Friday 01/01/2027	Newry – Saturday 02 January 2027 Downpatrick – Monday 04 January 2027	CLOSED
St Patricks Day	Wednesday 17/03/2027	Normal Collection	CLOSED

\* Mondays are a normal nonservice day in Down. Saturdays are a normal nonservice day in Down and Newry

**ARC21 JOINT COMMITTEE****Meeting No 102****MINUTES****Thursday 29 January 2026****Using MS Teams****Members Present:**

Councillor A Bennington ( <i>Chair</i> )	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council
Councillor E Thompson	Ards & North Down Borough Council
Councillor J Cochrane	Ards & North Down Borough Council
Councillor C Blaney	Ards & North Down Borough Council
Alderman O Gawith	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Councillor A Givan	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Alderman M Morrow	Mid & East Antrim Borough Council

**Members' Apologies:**

Councillor M Goodman	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council
Councillor H Cushinan	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council
Councillor M Collins	Belfast City Council
Councillor A Groogan	Belfast City Council
Councillor E McDonough-Brown	Belfast City Council
Alderman S Skillen	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Councillor G McKeen ( <i>Deputy Chair</i> )	Mid & East Antrim Borough Council
Councillor R Quigley	Mid & East Antrim Borough Council
Councillor T Andrews	Newry, Mourne & Down District Council
Councillor D Lee-Surginor	Newry, Mourne & Down District Council
Councillor J Brennan	Newry, Mourne & Down District Council

**Officers Present:**

T Walker	arc21
H Campbell ( <i>Secretary</i> )	arc21
K Boal	arc21
J Green	arc21
M Laverty	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council
G Bannister	Ards & North Down Borough Council
K Patterson	Ards & North Down Borough Council
S Leonard	Belfast City Council
G Richardson	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
D Carey	Mid & East Antrim Borough Council
S Murphy	Newry, Mourne & Down District Council

**Officers' Apologies:**

A McCann	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
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**Item 1 - Conflicts of Interest Statement**

The Chair read out the Conflicts of Interest Statement, and none were noted.

**Action: Noted**

**Item 2 - Apologies**

Apologies were noted.

**Action: Noted**

**Item 3 - Minutes of Joint Committee Meeting 101 held on 2 December 2025**

The Joint Committee approved the minutes. Proposed by Cllr Givan, seconded by Ald Gawith, and agreed by all.

**Action: Agreed**

**Item 4 - Matters Arising**

Supplies – a question was posed at the last meeting regarding which officer within the NIEA might be responsible for authorising the movement of wastes into / out of Northern Ireland.

Ms Boal reported that in terms of the general movements between NI and GB, when the waste is non-hazardous material, there is no authorisation required and it is transported with an accompanying exchange of waste transfer notes / paperwork. The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) would become aware of such movements through the quarterly returns that contractors must submit, which would indicate the geographical location from which the waste materials were being transferred. However, this information will not go into details such as specifying which customers produced the waste. The returns provide details about the areas of origin, including an appropriate European Waste Catalogue (EWC) code.

She mentioned that the Digital Waste Tracking (DWT) system, the first phase of which is scheduled to be introduced in October 2026 followed by full implementation the following year, is intended to monitor all waste movements comprehensively. Once operational, it should provide a complete picture of all waste movements, including hazardous waste and transfers between NI and the Republic of Ireland, as well as with other regions which are subject to the Trans-Frontier Shipment notification process. At present, there is no system in place that records these movements in real time.

**Action: Noted**

**IN COMMITTEE**

The Chair recommended that the meeting would now move "*In Committee*" which was agreed. Proposed by Ald Gawith and seconded by Cllr Thompson.

Matters of a confidential and commercially sensitive nature were discussed under these agenda items.

Following discussion on the commercially sensitive matters, the Chair recommended that the meeting would now return to the main agenda, which was approved, but whilst "*In Committee*" during this section of the meeting, there were four matters discussed.

**Item 5 - Minutes of Joint Committee Meeting 101 held on 2 December 2025 'in committee' - approved**

**Item 6 - Matters Arising - noted**

**Item 7 - Residual Waste Treatment Project - noted**

**Item 8 - Commercially Sensitive Contract & Procurement Issues – approved**

## OUT OF COMMITTEE

Proposed by Cllr Givan and seconded by Ald Morrow.

### Item 9 - Outreach Report

Mr Walker presented a report to provide details of recent outreach requests, and to provide an update on an arc21-supported project from 2021.

He highlighted a live call from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council in the UK (EPSRC) inviting submissions concerning various initiatives associated with resources and waste management. Consequently, several universities had approached arc21 to inquire if we would partner or be a supporting partner in the development of the initial application.

The first approach was from Queens University, Belfast seeks to focus on circular metrics which involves data collection and analysis for measuring the circular economy and aims to create a collaborative consortium of councils, colleges, and universities in England. He noted that arc21 has been invited to participate as a partner in this initiative and in order to meet the tight timescale for submissions a supporting letter had already been agreed with the Chair and had been submitted.

The second approach was from Leeds University, which arc21 had previously partnered with on a project on the recovery of wind turbine blades. In this case, their project proposal focused on enhancing circularity in the built environment with the objective of exploring how to integrate circularity into the sourcing, recording, and management of building materials. Again, he noted that arc21 had been invited to participate as a partner and as the same timescale applied to that mentioned above, a supporting letter had already been agreed with the Chair and had been submitted.

He noted that both proposals were preliminary bids which would need to be accepted, at which point more comprehensive bids would be developed. He advised that the applications would be scrutinised by EPSRC and, as this is a competitive process, a funding award would not be guaranteed. Should these proposals be successful in gaining financial backing, they are scheduled to launch in 2027.

A question was posed regarding the degree of support required for these two proposals, and Mr Walker indicated that it would be minimal, with previous projects having been satisfactorily supported through online meetings or telephone conversations, usually on a quarterly basis or more infrequently.

He went on to report that arc21 had received notification of the conclusion of a previously supported project from Queen's University which focused on the industrial symbiosis opportunities and prospects for Northern Ireland related to the dairy industry and served as input to an academic publication [a Springer Book]. A summary of study was appended to the report.

It was recommended that Members retrospectively approve arc21's support to the following projects:

- (i) EPSRC CircularMetrics+: Integrating Data, Metrics and Policy Across the UK;
- (ii) EPSRC Call on Reimagining Circularity for Circularity in the Built Environment NetworkPlus (CUBE N+); and

to note the conclusion of the QUB Springer Book project.

Following discussion, the Joint Committee agreed to approve the recommendations. Proposed by Cllr Givan, seconded by Ald Gawith and agreed by all.

**Action: Noted**

## **Item 10 - Contracts & Operations Briefing Report**

Ms Boal presented a report to provide the Joint Committee with an update in relation to contracts and operations.

### Service Status

She reported that all services were operational and had run well during November and December. Arrangements for access to all sites to facilitate the holiday collections had been put in place, and additional site opening was also requested at some sites for those councils which had to pull-back services due to the adverse weather in January 2026.

### Performance

Ms Boal provided an update on contractor performance across all the contracts in November and December and highlighted where some service credits had been applied for turnaround times, the number of overweight vehicles, reporting issues by contractors, and the bring contracts rectification requests issued and serviced.

### Health & Safety

She reported that during November and December, three health and safety incidents or near misses were reported which could all have been fire related. Plans to engage with councils' recycling officers to discuss these incidents and improve public communication regarding disposal and fire prevention were covered. Additionally, a meeting focused on health and safety is being planned, inviting council operational staff, supervisory staff, and health and safety staff to review trends, and discuss best practices and potential improvements. She noted that efforts are being made to be proactive in these areas.

Ms Boal reported that the external health and safety audit programme continues with a recent visit to McQuillan's Environmental, which provides services to the councils' paper banks, and larger audits had been undertaken of the RiverRidge facilities at Craigmore and Mallusk, and Cookstown Textile Recyclers (CTR) at Randalstown, and the RiverRidge facility at Portadown.

She noted that all reports had been shared with the contractors with some actions identified and arc21 was working closely with all parties to complete these as soon as possible.

### Rejected Loads

She reported that in November, one rejected load had been delivered to Bryson Recycling (Mixed Dry) and one in both November and December to the NWP Glenside (Organics) facility, again due to vehicles not being fully emptied before commencing the collection of other materials. arc21 continues to highlight this with the councils' officers at the monthly Steering Group meetings.

### arc21 Contract Tonnages

Details of the tonnages delivered in November and December for the main contracts were provided, along with a comparison against the same period last year.

### Supplies

A summary of the orders and deliveries of supplies for November and December 2025 was included in Ms Boal's report and she noted that there had been two non-compliances.

Following discussion, the Joint Committee noted the report. Proposed by Cllr Givan and seconded by Cllr Thompson.

**Action: Noted**

### **Item 11 - Waste Tonnage Trends**

Ms Boal presented a report showing the tonnage comparisons for material received through the arc21 contracts over the last four years, and she discussed the increases and decreases in the tonnage trends.

She noted that in terms of the textiles, November and December saw increased tonnages than at the comparative time in previous years, noting that it was possibly down to charity shops etc restricting intake due to the markets.

She advised that she would be meeting with the service provider, Cookstown Textile Recyclers, ahead of the next Joint Committee meeting after which she would draft a recommendation on future revenue share arrangements. She noted that the market had not picked up and arc21 is expecting some further easement in terms of the revenue shares to the councils from this contractor.

She also presented an analysis of the councils' performance against the waste diverted from a 10% landfill target, and their performance against a recycling target of 70% using information from WasteDataFlow from April to September.

Ms Boal noted that all councils were sitting below the 10% landfill target as their residual waste contracts had all been successfully migrated away from landfill and were now fully operational. In terms of the household waste recycled, the councils were averaging between 40% and 60% which was to be anticipated with the increase in organics during the summer months.

She noted that the DAERA waste strategy consultation on *Rethinking our Resources* would set the direction of travel of what arc21 and the councils need to achieve over the coming years.

Following discussion, the Joint Committee noted the report. Proposed by the Chair and seconded by Cllr Givan.

**Action: Noted**

### **Item 12 - Rethinking Our Resources: Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy Consultation**

Ms Boal provided a report on the *Rethinking our Resources* consultation which had recently been launched and was overdue.

She discussed the aims of the new Strategy, the targets and actions proposed over a number of waste streams, and an overview of the consultation questions that DAERA is seeking addressed.

She mentioned that some of the actions were similar to those consulted on in a previous consultation exercise (2024), and there did not appear to have been much advance on the thinking presented at that time. She also highlighted that some of the target appeared to be set for delivery in the near future (2027) which appears to be overly imminent and may need to be explored further with the Department.

She noted that the consultation period closes on 8 April 2026 and arc21 will be working with the councils' officers to prepare a draft response which represents a consensus view and that the aim would be to have this ready to present to the Joint Committee in February.

Following a brief discussion, the Joint Committee noted the report. Proposed by the Chair and seconded by Cllr Thompson.

**Action: Noted**

### **Item 13 - Outcome from Consultation on Landfill Tax Reform**

Ms Boal presented a report to update members on the outcome of the consultation on the reform of landfill tax in England and Northern Ireland which closed in July 2025.

She mentioned that Government's response had recently been published, and the outcomes were briefly summarised. It was noted that many of the actions initially proposed were not being progressed at this time.

She noted that whilst it did not overly affect arc21, aspects of the consultation could have had a bearing upon one or more of arc21's contracts. However, the conclusion was that nothing is currently being advanced which would have an effect on the arc21 contracts.

Following a brief discussion, the Joint Committee noted the report. Proposed by Cllr Givan and seconded by Cllr Ald Morrow.

**Action: Noted**

### **Item 14 - arc21 Annual Webinar, Tuesday 31 March 2026**

Mr Walker informed the meeting of the next arc21 annual webinar, scheduled for 31 March 2026.

He reported that he had pulled together speakers who will cover items such as an update on Extended Producer Responsibility, Circular Economy, and managing particular waste streams or planning for future infrastructural requirements.

He noted that further details would be circulated shortly and asked all Members to note their diaries accordingly.

The Joint Committee noted the report. Proposed by the Chair and seconded by Ald Gawith.

**Action: Noted**

### **Item 15 - AOB**

There was no business raised.

### **Item 16 - Next Meeting Thursday 26 February using MS Teams**

The Chair advised that the next meeting was scheduled for Thursday 26 February 2026 using MS teams and all were encouraged to confirm their attendance with Ms Campbell in advance of the meeting.

**Action: ALL**

**All officers were asked to leave the meeting for this matter, with the exception of Ms Campbell who remained to take minutes.**

#### **IN COMMITTEE**

The Chair recommended that the meeting would now move "*In Committee*" in order to consider one item which was agreed. Proposed by the Chair and seconded by Cllr Givan.

**Item 17 - Appointment of Chief Executive 2026-Recruitment Exercise - approved**

#### **OUT OF COMMITTEE**

The Chair recommended that the meeting would now move out of "*In Committee*" which was agreed. Proposed by the Chair and seconded by Cllr Givan.

**Action: Agreed**

**Date: 26 February 2026**

**Chair:** *A Bennington*

<b>Report to:</b>	Sustainability and Environment Committee
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> March 2026
<b>Subject:</b>	Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan Review
<b>Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):</b>	Conor Sage, Assistant Director Sustainability
<b>Contact Officer (Including Job Title):</b>	Danielle Begley, Biodiversity Officer

Confirm how this Report should be treated by placing an x in either:-

<b>For decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>For noting only</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose and Background</b>
1.1	To provide an update to Committee on the implementation of the NMDDC Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan (2024-2030).
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Key issues</b>
2.1	The Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan has undergone a full year of implementation. The plan focusses conservation action mainly on our own estate, with opportunities for partnership working when funding and resources allow.
2.2	There have been several successful projects and actions achieved which have benefited biodiversity within the past year including the Castlewellan HLF project, the Geopark and AONB projects, as well as significant funding successfully secured through PEACEPLUS for Coastal Monitoring and Adaptation Planning (CMAP), Peat+ and Bloom and Branch.
2.3	Internally, Council continues to improve how we manage our own green spaces for biodiversity through tree planting, changing our mowing regimes and managing invasive species. We continue to work with local community groups to support their efforts and raise awareness among schools and the public of the importance of protecting our environment.
2.4	The Biodiversity Action Plan Review Document attached at Appendix 1, provides details of progress against Actions.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
3.1	To note the many achievements for biodiversity across the district this year as recorded in the Biodiversity Action Plan Review Document, attached at Appendix 1.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Resource implications</b>
4.1	Any future resource requests will be considered annually when required. External funding will also be applied for when available.
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)</b>
5.1	<i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i>

	<p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>5.2</p>	<p><b><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></b></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>5.3</p>	<p><b><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></b></p> <p>Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Rationale:</i></p>
<p><b>6.0</b></p>	<p><b>Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)</b></p>
<p>6.1</p>	<p>Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If no, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy / strategy / plan / public service is not influenced by rural needs <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>7.0</b></p>	<p><b>Appendices</b></p>

	Appendix 1 - NMDDC Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan Review March 2026
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Background Documents</b>
	None

# NMDDC Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan 2024-2030

## Review (March 2026)



Comhairle Ceantair  
**an Iúir, Mhúrn  
agus an Dúin**  
**Newry, Mourne  
and Down**  
District Council

Protecting our priority habitats and species					
Ref Number	Action/Target	Who	When	Performance Measure	Review March 2026
1.1	Continue to deliver the Ring of Gullion and Strangford and Lecale AONB Management Plans	AONB/ Geopark staff, Grounds Maintenance staff	Ongoing	Number of actions/projects successfully delivered	Ongoing delivery of the NIEA EF funded project <b>Provision of Management for: The Ring of Gullion and Strangford &amp; Lecale AONBs; and the Strangford Lough, Murlough and Carlingford Lough MPAs.</b> Delivering biodiversity (habitat and species) conservation and protection across the areas. See EF reporting doc for further details.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Source external project funding where required</li> </ul>	AONB/ Geopark staff	Ongoing	External funding secured to continue implementation	
1.2	Continue to work in partnership with stakeholders to deliver the Mourne Gullion Strangford (MGS) UNESCO	Geopark Staff and relevant stakeholders (listed in MGS Action Plan)	Ongoing	Programme milestones achieved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing – established Geopark Management group working to deliver the actions.</li> <li>Re-evaluation dossier submitted to UNESCO with a re-evaluation visit by assessors being planned for summer 2026</li> </ul>

Protecting our priority habitats and species					
Ref Number	Action/Target	Who	When	Performance Measure	Review March 2026
	Global Geopark Masterplan				
	Maintain an updated management plan for the Geopark, reviewed annually.	Geopark Manager	Annually	Completed annual reviews	Completed annual reviews
<b>1.3</b>	Access funding streams such as PEACEPLUS to deliver biodiversity and conservation action across the district.	Programmes unit staff, Biodiversity Officer, AONB/Geopark staff	Ongoing	Funding received and conservation/biodiversity projects successfully completed	<p>Funding received for several large, funded projects;</p> <p>1. PEACEPLUS funded Coastal Monitoring and Adaptation Planning project (CMAP) will allow better understanding of climate change impacts on the Irish coast - <a href="https://mournegullionstrangfordgeopark.com/projects/coastal-monitoring-and-adaptation-planning-cmap-project/">https://mournegullionstrangfordgeopark.com/projects/coastal-monitoring-and-adaptation-planning-cmap-project/</a></p> <p>2. PEACEPLUS funded Peat+, a 4 year cross border peatland restoration project - <a href="https://mournegullionstrangfordgeopark.com/projects/peatplus/">https://mournegullionstrangfordgeopark.com/projects/peatplus/</a></p> <p>3. Strangford and Lecale LC application to be submitted - Lottery investment will enable us to create a connected, climate-resilient landscape across Strangford &amp; Lecale AONB: a "wholescape" approach where there are more, bigger, better and</p>

Protecting our priority habitats and species					
Ref Number	Action/Target	Who	When	Performance Measure	Review March 2026
					<p>more joined-up habitats for nature and people water quality has been improved, and the recovery of priority species is well on the way.</p> <p>4. PEACEPLUS funded Bloom and Branch – a greening project for people and wildlife - Focusing on enhancing pollinator-friendly native habitats and promoting awareness of pollinators’ vital role in biodiversity, ecosystem health and food production across the district. The project will also increase tree cover, enhance biodiversity, and support climate change mitigation.</p>
<b>1.4</b>	Ensure all capital projects taking place on/near protected habitats or species are appropriately assessed.	Capital Projects staff/Biodiversity Officer	ongoing	Assessments and relevant surveys completed and considered prior to projects taking place.	<p>Biodiversity Checklists carried out for the following planning applications;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tyrella disabled access pathway</li> <li>• DDA ramp at Dunleath playing fields</li> <li>• Dundrum FC pitches drainage</li> </ul> <p>Habitat Regulations Assessments (HRA) Screening carried out for the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skiffe Festival</li> <li>• Warrenpoint beach containers</li> <li>• Cranfield Sea defence repairs</li> <li>• Newcastle Sandbar maintenance</li> </ul> <p>The Guillemot nest boxes were successfully installed at Annalong and Newcastle harbours ahead of the 2025 breeding season.</p>
	Carry out mitigation when	Maintenance		Boxes successfully	

Protecting our priority habitats and species					
Ref Number	Action/Target	Who	When	Performance Measure	Review March 2026
	required e.g. Black Guillemot nest boxes erected at Annalong Harbour after works to repair the wall filled in nesting holes.	staff, Biodiversity Officer		placed on harbour walls for returning Guillemots	Some boxes were damaged recently during the last storm and are currently being replaced.

Trees and Woodland					
Ref Number	Action/Target	Who	When	Performance Measure	Review March 2026
2.1	Finalise Tree Action Plan, which includes increasing tree cover across the district in line with the 13% by 2030 target	Grounds Maintenance Manager	September 2023	Final Tree Action Plan ratified by Council	The Tree Action Plan sits within the Biodiversity Strategy.
	Implement actions in Tree Action Plan, including; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Replacement of old, diseased trees, and sustainable tree planting projects, ensuring a minimum of 90% native species are used.</li> <li>Work with local community groups, businesses and other stakeholders on creation of new woodlands across the district.</li> </ul>	Grounds Maintenance Staff  Grounds Maintenance staff, AONB/Geopark staff, DEA Coordinators, Biodiversity Officer, MHT and others.	Ongoing	# of trees planted (including % native and biodiversity friendly).  # of trees planted on community and public land with support from NMDDC.	1250 trees replaced/planted since January 2025.  2000 trees given to community groups and private landowners in winter 25/26.

Trees and Woodland					
Ref Number	Action/Target	Who	When	Performance Measure	Review March 2026
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue with annual public tree giveaway coordinated by the AONBs and Geopark staff.</li> </ul>		Applications open Nov 2024, planting in Feb/Mar 2025		10x seed collection events throughout district to continue growing native trees for future giveaways.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of a tree nursery in Castlewellan Forest Park, growing local provenance species.</li> </ul>	Grounds Maintenance staff, Castlewellan staff	2023	# of local provenance trees grown in the tree nursery and used for planting schemes across the district.	Part of the tree nursery is used by GM staff for tree production and propagation, including native oak seeds – 2 bays. The remaining is being used by the Geopark/AONB Volunteers – who produce circa 2000 native trees annually. 10x seed collection events throughout district to continue growing native trees for future giveaways.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue working on a heritage tree project with partners across Ireland.</li> </ul>	Grounds maintenance staff	Ongoing	# of heritage trees planted	This project has been delayed across Ireland. Internally, Council has been growing on native Oak from Rostrevor to retain the genetic stock.
<b>2.2</b>	Manage existing Council woodland sites for biodiversity.	Maintenance staff, Biodiversity	Ongoing		900m of native hedgerow mulched and pruned at Delamont country park.

Trees and Woodland					
Ref Number	Action/Target	Who	When	Performance Measure	Review March 2026
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Before carrying out any ground works or tree felling, make sure to survey the area for protected species e.g. badgers, bats etc</li> <li>Erect and maintain bat boxes in suitable woodland/parkland sites, near rivers, canals and other water bodies.</li> <li>Extend the 'rewilding initiative' into suitable parkland/woodland sites to improve the habitat for pollinators and other invertebrates.</li> </ul>	Officer, AONB/Geopark Staff		<p>Record of survey/checks completed.</p> <p># of bat boxes erected.</p> <p># and area of meadows created and managed.</p>	<p>Areas surveyed before any major felling/works take place e.g. surveys undertaken at Castlewellan ahead of the HLF project.</p> <p>Not progressed yet.</p> <p>Rewilding areas to be created in Islands Park, Newcastle foreshore and Castlewellan Forest Park.</p>

<b>Trees and Woodland</b>					
<b>Ref Number</b>	<b>Action/Target</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Performance Measure</b>	<b>Review March 2026</b>
<b>2.3</b>	Continue with removal of invasive species from Council owned/managed woodlands to allow regeneration of native woodland flora.	Grounds Maintenance Staff	Annually	Annual management programme completed	Over 6 volunteer days focussing on invasive scrub removal. Cutting by hand and treated with pesticide to stop regrowth. Species targeted were sea buckthorn and laurel.  One member of geopark team trained in pesticide application for invasive species control.
<b>2.4</b>	Finalise Local Climate Adaptation Plan, which will include targets to increase woodland cover across the district.	Sustainability Officer	March 2025	Published Climate Adaptation Plan.	Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy currently out for public consultation. The strategy includes actions to increase native tree cover across the district.
<b>2.5</b>	Develop a native planting leaflet, to be included into the receipt at application stage of new builds to encourage residents to plant native trees and hedges	Biodiversity Officer, Planning staff	Ongoing	# of leaflets posted out to applicants.	The old native planting leaflet is currently being re-designed.

<b>Pollinators</b>					
<b>Ref Number</b>	<b>Action/Target</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Performance Measure</b>	<b>Review March 2026</b>
<b>3.1</b>	Continue as an official partner of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan (AIPP) by promoting their messages and improving Council owned greenspace for pollinators.	Biodiversity Officer, Grounds Maintenance Staff, AONB/Geopark staff	Yearly	Actions reported annually to AIPP.	Yearly report sent to the AIPP in November 2025.  Distribution of AIPP materials at all talks/workshops and events attended, as well as to AONB/Geopark ambassadors and groups.
<b>3.2</b>	Continue to roll out the 'rewilding initiative' across the district with the aim of increasing species-rich meadow habitat (ensuring seeds used are native and of local provenance).	Grounds Maintenance Staff, Biodiversity Officer, AONB/Geopark Staff	Ongoing	# and area of rewilding sites created and managed for pollinators.	Rewilding areas to be created in Islands Park, Newcastle foreshore and Castlewellan Forest Park this year.  Council working with local groups such as 'Beautiful Warrenpoint' to support development of a pollinator corridor through Warrenpoint.

<b>Pollinators</b>					
<b>Ref Number</b>	<b>Action/Target</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Performance Measure</b>	<b>Review March 2026</b>
<b>3.3</b>	Reduce the frequency of amenity grassland cutting per year at selected sites, particularly during No Mow May (Use signage to raise awareness that area is being managed for pollinators).	Grounds Maintenance Staff, MHT	2024	# and area of sites where reduced mowing has been implemented.	<p>Bridge centre Killyleagh, trial species rich grassland area managed with local community. Area left to grow and scythe workshop completed at the end of Summer. Additional scythes have been purchased and training offered for future projects.</p> <p>New 'no mow' sites have been identified across the district, including along the tow path at Carnbane, Victoria Lock and at Lough Park in Ballynahinch. Signage has been procured to highlight that these areas are being managed for pollinators.</p>
<b>3.4</b>	Work in partnership with DfI to manage key roadside verges for pollinators	Grounds Maintenance Staff, Biodiversity Officer, DfI	Ongoing	# and area of roadside verges managed.	No current projects with DfI. Council continues to manage the roundabouts for both safety and visual appeal.

Pollinators					
Ref Number	Action/Target	Who	When	Performance Measure	Review March 2026
3.5	Reduce and phase out the use of Peat on Council owned land by 2025 in line with the NI Peatland Strategy.	Grounds Maintenance Staff	Annually	Peat usage phased out by 2025.	Not achieved. Council needs to find an alternative to peat for bedding plants in seasonal displays.
3.6	Reduce the quantity of pesticides and herbicides used on Council managed land. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and declare pesticide free zones (protected and natural</li> </ul>	Grounds Maintenance Staff	Ongoing	% reduction from baseline taken in 2019.  # and area of sites that are pesticide free.	The amount of herbicide used by Council remains at the 2023 agreed limit of 25%. This does not cover invasive species control.  No sites are currently pesticide/herbicide free.

Pollinators					
Ref Number	Action/Target	Who	When	Performance Measure	Review March 2026
	habitat sites etc.)				
<b>3.7</b>	Participate in and promote citizen science pollinator recording schemes e.g., Big Butterfly Count, Flower-Insect Timed Count, Bumblebee recording scheme.	Biodiversity Officer, AONB/Geopark Staff	Annually	# of schemes participated in and promoted annually.	<p>Citizen science recording opportunities promoted through Council social media, AONB socials, online newsletters and the AONB Calendar.</p> <p>Events held throughout 2025 focussing on pollinators included the Big Butterfly Count, the Bumblebee recording scheme and Flower-Insect Timed Counts.</p> <p>A Bioblitz was held at Delamont Country Park in June 2025. Over 300 species were recorded, and training was given in citizen science.</p>

Invasive Species						
Ref Number	Action/Target	Who	When	Status	Performance Measure	Review March 2026
4.1	Continue with removal of known invasive plant species from Council owned/managed sites.	Grounds Maintenance Staff, AONB/Geopark staff, Biodiversity Officer	Annually	Ongoing	Control programme completed annually.	<p>Grounds maintenance staff continue with their programme of spaying known invasive species across our owned/managed sites.</p> <p>Over 6 volunteer days were held, focussing on invasive scrub removal. Cutting by hand and treated with pesticide to stop regrowth. Species targeted were sea buckthorn and laurel.</p>
4.2	<p>Provide invasive species identification, control, and management training to relevant Council staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to record/map invasives on Council owned land</li> </ul>	Biodiversity Officer, NIEA, Grounds Maintenance Staff, Capital projects staff, GIS Officer	Biennially	Ongoing	# of staff trained.	<p>Ground maintenance staff and Biodiversity Officer continue to map invasives on Council owned/managed sites.</p> <p>Geopark/AONB staff purchased new Trimble mapping equipment which requires approval from management/I.T. to use.</p>

Invasive Species						
Ref Number	Action/Target	Who	When	Status	Performance Measure	Review March 2026
4.3	Ensure Council fulfil their requirements under the Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order NI 2019 e.g. control of grey squirrels and reporting to NIEA.	Grounds Maintenance Staff, Biodiversity Officer, Local red squirrel groups.	2024 onwards	Ongoing	# of culled greys recorded.	2 Grey squirrels culled in Castlewellan Forest Park, by approved dispatch by trained member of staff.  Biodiversity Officer liaising with local red squirrel groups, Ulster Wildlife and other partners to assist with control/eradication of grey squirrel populations across the district.
4.4	Highlight invasive species week in May every year, focussing on the themes chosen for that year.	Biodiversity Officer, Marketing	Annually	Ongoing	# Social media posts and PR.	Invasive Species week promoted through AONB socials and ezine. A focus on marine invasives on Strangford Lough- Facebook May 25.
4.5	Continue to provide advice to members of the public on non-native invasive species (NNIS) and their control.	Biodiversity Officer	Ongoing	Ongoing	# Requests for information on Tascomi.	Biodiversity Officer regularly provides advice to members of the public on invasives (reported on Tascomi system).  AONB & Geopark MPA officer working with Strangford Lough Yacht Club to improve washdown policies and procedures within the club to reduce the risk of NNIS spread.

<b>Raising Awareness and Education</b>						
<b>Ref. Number</b>	<b>Action/Target</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Performance Measure</b>	<b>Review March 2026</b>
<b>5.1</b>	Organise an annual programme of Council led Biodiversity related events.	Biodiversity Officer, AONB and Geopark staff, Tourism staff	Yearly	Ongoing	# of biodiversity related events held annually.	Wide range of biodiversity related events held throughout the year including big garden birdwatch, national nest box week, big butterfly Count, red squirrel day, national tree week and many more.
<b>5.2</b>	Encourage participation in nationwide citizen science wildlife projects and engage the public in biodiversity recording and awareness e.g. Big garden birdwatch, Big butterfly count etc.	Biodiversity Officer, AONB/Geopark Staff	Annually	Ongoing	# of citizen science schemes promoted through events and social media.	<p>Citizen science recording opportunities promoted through Council social media, AONB socials, online newsletters and the AONB Calendar.</p> <p>Events held throughout 2025 included the big garden birdwatch, big butterfly count, the Bumblebee recording scheme and Flower-Insect Timed Counts.</p> <p>A Bioblitz was held at Delamont Country Park in June 2025. Over 300 species were recorded, and training was given in citizen science.</p>
<b>5.3</b>	Educate the public and relevant stakeholders about wildlife disturbance through use of interpretation panels, leaflets and training workshops e.g. WiSe scheme	AONB/Geopark staff, Biodiversity Officer	Annually	Ongoing	# attending training workshops	Regular engagement with communities and groups by the AONB & Coastal engagement officer. Wise 'Train the Trainer' event 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sep 25
<b>5.4</b>	Continue to provide biodiversity	Biodiversity Officer	Ongoing	Ongoing	# of school site visits and	School talks/workshops continue to be carried out upon request.

	educational visits/workshops to schools on request as part of their Eco-schools programme.				workshops carried out.	5 school workshops completed in 2025.
<b>5.5</b>	Continue to inform the public where land is being managed for biodiversity using interpretive signs, social media, and press releases.	Biodiversity Officer, Grounds Maintenance Staff, Marketing	Ongoing	Ongoing	# of signs and PR.	10 new metal signs procured – 5 with a 'Managed for Wildlife' message and 5 with a 'Managed for pollinators' message.
<b>5.6</b>	Raise awareness of biodiversity and relevant priority habitats and species both internally among staff and externally through newsletters, social media, PR and events e.g. Red squirrel conservation, bats and development, red kites, peatlands etc	Biodiversity Officer, AONB/Geopark staff	Ongoing	Ongoing	# of social media posts, PR and newsletter articles.	Ongoing through social media, online newsletter, websites etc.
<b>5.7</b>	Encourage the public to get involved in	Biodiversity Officer, AONB/Geopark	Ongoing	Ongoing	# of volunteers annually.	Volunteer and Outreach officer recruited and delivering a programme of events.

	<p>practical activities and habitat restoration projects to increase the numbers of our priority species.</p> <p>Recruit a Volunteer and Outreach Officer as part of the Geopark to coordinate a conservation volunteer programme.</p>	<p>staff, Tourism staff</p>	<p>2024</p>	<p>Completed</p>		<p>Over 8000 volunteer hours so far for nature conservation in financial year 2025/2026.</p>
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