



December 16th, 2024

Notice Of Meeting

You are requested to attend the Sustainability & Environment Committee meeting to be held on Wednesday, 18th December 2024 at 6:15 pm in Council Chamber, O'Hagan House, Monaghan Row.

Committee Membership 2024-2025

Councillor G Kearns **Chairperson**

Councillor C Enright **Deputy Chairperson**

Councillor T Andrews

Councillor J Brennan

Councillor P Campbell

Councillor K Feehan

Councillor D Finn

Councillor V Harte

Councillor J Jackson

Councillor M Larkin

Councillor O Magennis

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 the Sustainability and Environment Committee meeting held on 20 November 2024

 *Action Sheet - 20.11.24 inc. historic actions updated.pdf*

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Notices of Motion

4.0 Notice of Motion - Vaping

For Decision

 *SE Committee Report - Notice of Motion - Vaping.pdf*

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5.0 Notice of Motion - Newry Canal

For Decision

 *SE Committee Report - Notice of Motion - Newry Canal.pdf*

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For Consideration and/or Decision

6.0 Biodiversity Strategy

For Decision

 *SE Committee Report Biodiversity Strategy Dec 24.pdf*


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 *Appendix 1 Biodiversity Strategy.pdf*

Page 25

 *Appendix 2 NMDDC Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan Draft Final.pdf*

Page 69

 *Appendix 3 Biodiversity Strategy 2024-2030 Public Consultation Report.pdf*

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7.0 Amended Warrenpoint and Newcastle Public Convenience Opening times

For Decision

 *SE Committee Report Amendment to Opening times of W'point N'castle toilets.pdf*

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Items deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local

8.0 Business Cases

This item is deemed to be restricted by virtue of Paragraphs 3 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.

8.1 Arboricultural Assessment and Tree Surgery

For Decision

This item is deemed to be restricted by virtue of Paragraphs 3 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 - Arboricultural Assesment Tree Surgery.pdf** **Not included**

 **Appendix 1 - Arboriculture Business Case Nov 24.pdf** **Not included**

8.2 Mechanical Building Services Contract

For Decision

This item is deemed to be restricted by virtue of Paragraphs 3 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 - Mechanical Building Services Contractor.pdf** **Not included**

 **Appendix 1 - Business Case Mechanical Building Services Contractor.pdf** **Not included**

8.3 Personal Protective Equipment

For Decision

This item is deemed to be restricted by virtue of Paragraphs 3 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 Economic Appraisal for PPE Contract.pdf** **Not included**

 **Appendix 1 - Economic Appraisal for PPE.pdf** **Not included**

8.4 Lantra Training

For Decision

This item is deemed to be restricted by virtue of Paragraphs 3 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.

 **Committee Report - Dec 2024 - LANTRA training for staff.pdf** **Not included**

 **Business Case - LANTRA training for staff.pdf** **Not included**

8.5 Replacement of Skips and Containers at HRCs

This item is deemed to be restricted by virtue of Paragraphs 3 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 replacement of skips and containers at HRCs .pdf** **Not included**

 **Business Case 1 - Skip Compactor Replacement at HRC's.pdf** **Not included**

9.0 Economic Appraisal - Liquid Fuel Requirements

For Decision

This item is deemed to be restricted by virtue of Paragraphs 3 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 - Economic Appraisal for Liquid Fuel.pdf** **Not included**

 **Appendix 1 - Economic Appraisal - Liquid Fuel.pdf** **Not included**

10.0 Harbour Surveys

For Decision

This item is deemed to be restricted by virtue of Paragraphs 3 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 Committe Report Harbour Structural Surveys.pdf** **Not included**

11.0 Waste Contracts

For Decision

This item is deemed to be restricted by virtue of Paragraphs 3 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 - DAC Extensions - Waste Management.pdf**

Not included

FOR NOTING Items deemed to be exempt under Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014

12.0 Report from Cleansing and Refuse Task Group on 20 November 2024.

For Information

This item is deemed to be restricted by virtue of Paragraphs 3 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 arising from the Cleansing and Refuse Task Group held on Wednesday 20 November 2024.pdf**

Not included


13.0 Arc21 Joint Committee Meeting in Committee Minutes of Thursday 31 October 2024 & Arc21 Joint Committee Members' Monthly Bulletin held on 3 December 2024

For Information

This item is deemed to be restricted by virtue of Paragraphs 3 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 - JC092-3Dec24-Item5-JCInCommMinutes-31Oct24.F.pdf**

Not included

 **ARC21 - JC092-3Dec24-JC MembersBulletin.F.pdf**

Not included

For Noting

14.0 Arc21 Joint Committee meeting held on Thursday 31 October 2024

For Information

 **ARC21 - JC092-3Dec24-Item3-JC Minutes-31Oct24.F.pdf**

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15.0 Letter from the Department of Health re. Policy Proposals Public Health Bill


For Information

 *Letter 211124 from Dept of Health re Policy Proposals Public Health Bill.pdf*

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16.0 NI Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Management Statistics Annual Report 2023/24

For Information

 *lac-municipal-waste-2023-24-annual report.pdf*

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Invitees

Cllr Terry Andrews
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Cllr Callum Bowsie
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Fionnuala Branagh
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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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Mr Gerard 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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Ms Louise Dillon
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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 Aoife Finnegan
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Ms Joanne Fleming
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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 Roisin Howell
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Cllr Tierna Howie
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Ms Catherine Hughes
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Cllr Jonathan Jackson
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Cllr Geraldine Kearns
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Miss Veronica Keegan
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Mrs Josephine Kelly
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Mrs Sheila Kieran
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Cllr Cathal King
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Cllr Mickey Larkin
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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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Cllr Leeanne McEvoy
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Cllr Andrew McMurray
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Maureen/Joanne Morgan/Johnston
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Cllr Declan Murphy
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Sinead Murphy
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Cllr Kate Murphy
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Cllr Selina 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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Cllr Gareth Sharvin
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Donna Starkey
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Nicola Stranney
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Sarah Taggart
.....
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**

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING 26 JANUARY 2022					
Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
NS/004/2022	Trade Waste and Caravan Refuse Collection Services	<p>Agreed to approve the report and recommendations:-</p> <p>1. Alternate Weekly Commercial Waste Collection Service</p> <p>Commercial refuse customers (shops and businesses) to be contacted and advised of the proposed move to an alternate weekly collection cycle of residual and dry recyclable waste, where this is achievable.</p> <p>Commercial customers, (not including Caravan Operators) to be provided with appropriate bins to facilitate this change, so there is no cost burden to customers as a result of this change.</p>	S Trainor	In progress	N

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING 21 APRIL 2022					
Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
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	In progress	N
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	In progress	N

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING 22 JUNE 2022					
Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
NS/091/2022	Enforcement Improvement Plan Update	Agreed to note the content of this update report and to agree review of key actions from the Enforcement Improvement Plan to be incorporated into a timebound programme of work for 2022/23 and annually thereafter. Test case footpaths – small footpath leading to WIN – officers to examine this area for dog fouling.	S Trainor	In progress	N

SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING 18 OCTOBER 2022					
Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
SE/143/2022	Notice of Motion – revenue from EV Charging Infrastructure	Agreed to endorse the recommendation made at the Strategic Finance Working Group Meeting of 16 June 2022 as set out in Section 2.2 of the report and that officers consider the most appropriate way forward in relation to identifying appropriate spaces that may be suitable for the proposal as outlined in the Notice of Motion	C Sage	In progress	N

SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING 17 OCTOBER 2023					
Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
SE/105/2023	Notice of Motion – Clean Indoor Air	It was agreed to adopt the Notice of Motion subject to including that before proceeding with any works, that officers obtain costings for air filtration systems in Downshire Civic Centre and the new civic centre in Newry and report same back to the Sustainable and Environment Committee for consideration in due course.	C Sage	Downshire Civic centre is supplied via centralised air handling units, which are fitted with filtration. Current Stage 3 designs for Newry Civic Centre include centralised ventilation systems which include air filtration.	Y
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	On hold pending legal process	N

SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING 22 NOVEMBER 2023					
Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
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	In Progress	N
SE/128/2023	Upgrade to Town Centre CCTV and Council Facilities CCTV	It was agreed that members note the content of the report, and a business case be developed and brought to the committee with a number of options for a way forward for the proposed development of a new suite of digital CCTV systems for the Council's facilities.	C Sage	Update provided on Town Centre CCTV at September S&E Committee Work in progress	N
SE/141/2023	Sustainable Food Places Bridging the Gap Funding Application	It was agreed to note the recent support for the "Bridging the Gap" funding application. Committee would be advised on the outcome of the application at the earliest opportunity.	C Sage	Council was successful in being awarded bridging the gap funding in May 24, however it was subsequently withdrawn for a number of reasons.	Y

SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING 24 JANUARY 2024					
Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
SE/004/2024	Report on Notice of Motion – Flood Defences	<p>The following was agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Further investigate the possibility of a Shared Island application to assist with flood defences - Write to DFI Rivers and request a river maintenance schedule. 	S Murphy	In Progress	N
SE/005/2024	Report on Notice of Motion – Flood Preparedness	<p>The following was agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Liaise with local DEA forums to discuss and plan the set-up of Community Resilience Groups - Investigate the facilitation of sandbag availability and management through these Community Resilience Groups - Look into sharing information the website from the Regional Community Resilience Group 	S Murphy	<p>Complete</p> <p>In Progress</p> <p>In Progress</p>	N

SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING 21 FEBRUARY 2024					
Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
SE/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	In progress	<p>N</p> <p>N</p>

SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING 20 MARCH 2024					
Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
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	In Progress	N
		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		

SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING 23 APRIL 2024					
Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
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	A focussed social media campaign has been completed.	N
		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	Council Officers met with Belfast City Council colleagues to review St George's market.	
			C Sage		

		It was further agreed that a report be brought back to committee in 6 months to provide detail of any progress made.			
SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING 22 MAY 2024					
Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
SE/058/2024	Report on Treatment of Invasive Species on Council Estate	it was agreed to note the content of the report and approve the use of herbicides containing glyphosate for controlling invasive species at Albert Basin outside of the current allocation for normal weed control and the development of an Invasive Species Management Plan for the Council Estate.	C Sage	In Progress	N

SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING 19 JUNE 2024					
Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
SE/079/2024	Business case for EV Charging infrastructure	It was agreed to approve the business case recommendation for the installation of 2 double electric chargers at each site as detailed within the officer's report.	C Sage	Procurement exercise underway	N

SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING 21 AUGUST 2024					
Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
SE/091/2024	Notice of Motion – Dog Fouling	<p>it was agreed to note the report and approve the following: The development of an online reporting form for Residents and Elected Members to report dog fouling issues to the Council while exploring alternative digital options for reporting dog fouling and other complaints to the department; and</p> <p>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.</p>	S Trainor	In progress	N
SE/093/2024	Proposed Installation of Height Restricting Barriers at Council Car Parks	it was agreed to approve the proposal to reinstate height restricting barriers at the Square, Warrenpoint and installation of temporary height restricting barriers at Castle Park, Newcastle for the duration of the Amgen Irish Open.	C Sage	Installation of barriers completed at Newcastle. Design completed for barrier at Warrenpoint.	N

SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING 23 OCTOBER 2024					
Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
SE/124/2024	Public Convenience Project – Dundrum Toilets	<p>it was agreed to approve the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council proceeds with the refurbishment of the Dundrum Public Conveniences using the funding available through UKSPF • The contract variation to include the refurbishment of the Dundrum Public Conveniences • The procurement of the refurbishment of the Dundrum Public Conveniences in line with recommendations of the Business Case in Appendix 1 • Any additional costs required beyond the allocated funding for the project should be sourced from the Newcastle Public Convenience Capital budget 	C Sage	Contract variations completed and instructions issued for the new facility at Dundrum	N

SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING 20 NOVEMBER 2024					
Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
SE/133/2024	Action Sheet item: NS/091/2022	it was agreed to submit a league table of other Councils' enforcement practices to the Strategic Finance Working Group	S Murphy	To refer through SFWG	N
		it was agreed to note the action sheet	S Murphy	Noted	Y
SE/134/2024	Mid-Year Assessment of S&E Directorate Business Plan	it was agreed to approve the Mid-Year Assessment of the Sustainability and Environment Directorate Business Plan 2024-25	S Murphy	Approved	Y
SE/135/2024	Powers Under Article 4 & 5 of the Waste and Contaminated Land Order (Ni) Order 1997	<p>the following was agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approve Fixed Penalty Notices for the offence of illegally depositing waste contrary to Article 4 of the Order is set at the maximum of £400, with an early payment option of £300 if paid within 14 days from receipt of the Notice An early payment option for the £300 Fixed Penalty Notice for the duty of care offence, contrary to Article 5 of the Order, is set to £200 if paid within 14 days from receipt of the Notice The Director of Sustainability and Environment and the Assistant Director of Environment be authorised to take 	S Trainor	Approved	Y

		decisions on behalf of Council as to when it is appropriate to use council's discretionary powers under the Order			
SE/136/2024	Update on The Review of Caravan Site License Conditions	<p>the following was agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The amendment of condition 2 of the Static Holiday and Touring Caravan Site License conditions for the five sites that have requested the amendment and should further amendments be requested that should be actioned accordingly That the Council's recycling officers focus resource to educate the caravan site owners and caravan owners on the importance of waste segregation and recycling 	S Trainor	Approved	Y
SE/137/2024	Business Case for the Removal of Newcastle Sandbar	it was agreed to note the contents of the report and associated business case and to approve the preferred option of the business case, to progress a tender for the sand bar removal at Newcastle Harbour for a 3-year period from 2025 – 2027 in accordance with the Marine Construction License	C Sage	Marine License application in progress. Procurement for new contract in progress	N
SE/138/2024	Repair of Corry's Corner, Drumaness Bus Shelter and Adoption by Translink	it was agreed to adopt the bus shelter at Corry's Corner, and to consider future proposals from Translink regarding the adoption of bus shelters	C Sage	In progress	N
SE/139/2024	Business Case for Deep Cleaning Services	it was agreed to commence the procurement of contract for the provision of deep cleaning of public realm and other	S Trainor	In progress	N

		areas within the district for a period of up to three years			
SE/140/2024	Direct Award Contract Approvals and Extensions	it was agreed to approve the four Direct Award Contracts as detailed in the officer's report	S Trainor	Approved	Y
SE/141/2024	Peaceplus Funding Call for Clean Air	it was agreed to approve the development of a proposal to submit a multi-agency application for PeacePlus funding under Theme 6, Investment Area from Council as outlined in the officer's report.	S Trainor	Approved	Y
SE/142/2024	Arc21 Joint Committee Members' Monthly Bulletin from 31 st October 2024 and Arc21 Joint Committee Meeting In Committee Minutes of 26 th September 2024	it was agreed to note the documents	S Murphy	Noted	Y
SE/143/2024	Arc21 Joint Committee Meeting Minutes of 26 September 2024	to note the minutes of the Arc21 Joint Committee meeting of 26 September 2024	S Murphy	Noted	Y
SE/144/2024	NI Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Management Statistics - Quarterly Provision Estimates for April to June 2024	to note the content of the document	S Murphy	Noted	Y
SE/145/2024	Christmas and New Year Arrangements - Refuse Collections	It was agreed to note the content of the report	S Trainor	Noted	Y

	and HRC Arrangements				
SE/146/2024	2024 Christmas Illuminations Update	It was agreed to note the content of the report	C Sage	Noted	Y

Report to:	Sustainability and Environment Committee
Date of Meeting:	18 December 2024
Subject:	Notice of motion - Vaping in young people
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Sinead Murphy, Director: Sustainability and Environment
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Sinead Trainor, Assistant Director: Environment

For decision		X	For noting only
1.0	Purpose and Background		
1.1	The purpose of this report is to facilitate discussion on the Notice of Motion received from Councillor Kearns as deferred from the Council Meeting of 4 November 2024, in accordance with standing order 16.1.16, concerning vaping.		
1.2	<p>The following Notice of Motion (C/176/2024) was received from Councillor Kearns</p> <p>"That this Council recognises that the 2024 Northern Ireland Audit Office report on tackling the public health impacts of smoking and vaping, shows an increase in 11–16-year-olds vaping;</p> <p>This Council is concerned that children vaping in schools is detrimental to a child's health and educational outcomes;</p> <p>Agrees that greater awareness must be raised with children in schools about the risks of vaping;</p> <p>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;</p> <p>We agreed to write to the Minister of Education and Minister for Health urging them to bring forward a plan to end vaping in school grounds and to reduce the number of young people vaping;</p> <p>We will also write to all other Councils in the North asking for their support in tackling this issue."</p> <p>The motion was seconded by Cllr Campbell.</p>		
2.0	Key Issues		
2.1	<p>Since 2021 it has been illegal to sell vapes to anyone under the age of 18 in Northern Ireland. In addition, all the provisions of the 2016 European Tobacco Products Directive apply.</p> <p>Northern Ireland is set to ban the sale and supply of single use vapes by April 2025, in a bid to stop five million single use vapes being thrown away or littered every week across the UK.</p>		
2.2	<p>Northern Ireland is likely to progress broader regulation on vapes through the UK Tobacco and Vapes Bill. This Bill is expected to provide powers for Northern Ireland to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Restrict the flavours and contents of nicotine and non-nicotine vapes and other nicotine products.		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Regulate point of sale displays for nicotine and non-nicotine vapes and other nicotine products.Regulate the packaging and product presentation of nicotine and non-nicotine vapes and other nicotine products.Introduce age of sale requirements for non-nicotine vapes and banning the free distribution of vapes.																																																																	
2.3	<p>The Tobacco Control Officers (TCO's) within the Environmental Health Department carried out test purchasing (TP) exercises to check compliance with Age of Sale Legislation in relation to the sale of tobacco and nicotine inhaling products.</p> <p>The following table shows the test purchasing exercises carried out in 2023 and 2024 in relation to e-cigarettes/vapes only:</p> <table><tr><th>Date</th><th>No. of TP exercises undertaken</th><th>No. Sold</th><th>Outcome</th><th>Comments</th></tr><tr><td>20/07/2023</td><td>16</td><td>2</td><td>2 x FPN issued</td><td>2 x FPN's Paid</td></tr><tr><td>16/08/2023</td><td>18</td><td>0</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>27/11/2023</td><td>10</td><td>2</td><td>2 x FPN issued</td><td>2 x FPN's Paid</td></tr><tr><td>Sub Total</td><td>44</td><td>4</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>08/08/2024</td><td>24</td><td>2</td><td>2 x FPN issued</td><td>2 x FPN's Paid</td></tr><tr><td>15/08/2024</td><td>18</td><td>0</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>05/10/2024</td><td>20</td><td>4</td><td>3 x FPN to be issued 1 x Warning Letter</td><td>This work is ongoing</td></tr><tr><td>30/10/2024</td><td>11</td><td>0</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Sub Total</td><td>73</td><td>6</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Total</td><td>117</td><td>10</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <p>TCO's have and will continue to undertake investigations into complaints received regarding the sale of tobacco and nicotine inhaling products to anyone under the age of 18. Enforcement action in line with the departments enforcement policy will be taken.</p>	Date	No. of TP exercises undertaken	No. Sold	Outcome	Comments	20/07/2023	16	2	2 x FPN issued	2 x FPN's Paid	16/08/2023	18	0			27/11/2023	10	2	2 x FPN issued	2 x FPN's Paid	Sub Total	44	4								08/08/2024	24	2	2 x FPN issued	2 x FPN's Paid	15/08/2024	18	0			05/10/2024	20	4	3 x FPN to be issued 1 x Warning Letter	This work is ongoing	30/10/2024	11	0			Sub Total	73	6								Total	117	10		
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Total	117	10																																																																
3.0	Recommendations																																																																	
3.1	<p>Members are asked to note the report and approve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">The Minister of Education and Minister for Health urging them to bring forward a plan to end vaping in school grounds and to reduce the number of young people vaping.All other Councils in the North asking for their support in tackling this issue.																																																																	
4.0	Resource implications																																																																	
4.1	No additional resources associated with this report.																																																																	
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)																																																																	
5.1	<p><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></p> <p><i>n/a</i></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 <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><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>
6.0	Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)
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>
7.0	Appendices
	None
8.0	Background Documents
	<p>European Tobacco Products Directive – https://health.ec.europa.eu/tobacco/product-regulation_en</p> <p>Broader regulation - https://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/committees/2022-2027/health/reports/report-on-the-legislative-consent-memorandum-on-the-uk-government-tobacco-and-vapes-bill/</p> <p>UK Tobacco and Vapes Bill - https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3879</p>

Report to:	Sustainability and Environment Committee
Date of Meeting:	18 December 2024
Subject:	Notice of motion – Establishment of a Newry Canal Regeneration Taskforce
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Sinead Murphy, Director: Sustainability and Environment
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	

<table><tr><td>For decision</td><td>X</td><td>For noting only</td><td></td></tr></table>		For decision	X	For noting only	
For decision	X	For noting only			
1.0	Purpose and Background				
1.1	The purpose of this report is to facilitate discussion on the Notice of Motion received from Councillor Feehan as deferred from the Council Meeting of 4 November 2024, in accordance with standing order 16.1.16, concerning establishment of a Newry Canal Regeneration Taskforce.				
1.2	<p>The following Notice of Motion (C/174/2024) was received from Councillor Feehan:</p> <p>"Council recognises the poor condition of Newry Canal and the significant untapped potential of our inland waterways as tourism, heritage and ecological assets, calls for a multi-agency response to lead the regeneration of Newry Canal, and will request the support of ABC Council in writing to both the Minister for Infrastructure and the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to request the urgent establishment of a Newry Canal regeneration taskforce that will work in partnership to deliver on the potential of our inland waterways"</p> <p>The motion was seconded by Cllr Finn.</p>				
2.0	Key Issues				
2.1	Currently there is no formal partnership in place between Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council (ABC) and Newry Mourne and Down District Council (NMD). However, pre-reorganisation of local government, Newry and Mourne District Council were part of the Newry Canal Joint Committee which is no longer in existence. The two councils continue to liaise and engage on technical matters relating to Newry canal and locks.				
2.2	<p>A number of successful projects have been undertaken to maintain and upgrade Newry Canal and associated Canal Towpath and to engage users, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Removal of Barriers and installation of bollards to facilitate active travel along sections of Canal Towpath owned by NMDDC.• Improved Entrance Signage at the Towpath Entrance in Newry has been completed.• Lock No 5 repaired in 2019/20 at a cost of £150,000.				

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lock No 6. Detailed assessment has been undertaken and engagement with HED, Council is currently finalising a repair method and costing which will be considered by Council early in the New Year. • Repairs to Lock gate 2 following recent storm. • Victoria Lock hydraulic rams and sluice gates repaired November 2024 • Works to Camlough lake and Bessbrook pond walls completed in October 2024 • Continual daily monitoring of canal levels and balancing. • New benches have been installed along the towpath. • Weed cutting carried out throughout the summer period along with litter removal. • Assistance to boats entering/leaving the canal.
3.0	Recommendations
	<p>Members are asked to note the report and approve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers to request the 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.
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	Resource implications associated with this report are for officer time.
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1	<p><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i> <i>n/a</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
5.2	<p><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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><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 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>
6.0	Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)
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 type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input type="checkbox"/></p>
7.0	Appendices
	Appendix 1 –
8.0	Background Documents
	None

Report to:	Sustainability and Environment Committee
Date of Meeting:	18 th December 2024
Subject:	Draft Biodiversity Strategy and associated Action Plan following Public Consultation
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Conor Sage, Assistant Director Sustainability
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Eamonn Keaveney, Head of Sustainability

<div> <div>For decision</div> <div>x</div> <div>For noting only</div> </div>	
1.0	Purpose and Background
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to seek Member approval of the final draft copy of the new Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for Newry, Mourne and Down District Council (NMDDC).</p> <p>The draft Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan has been updated following Public Consultation and is presented for final approval from elected representatives.</p>
2.0	Key issues
2.1	<p>The protection of the environment remains high on Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's agenda and we are committed to fulfilling our Statutory duty for biodiversity.</p> <p>The Active and Healthy Communities Committee previously agreed to the drafting of a new Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (AHC/194/2022) for the next 5 years.</p> <p>The Sustainability and Environmental Committee on 23 November 2023 approved the Draft Strategy to go out to Public Consultation.</p> <p>The Plan will run from 2024 to 2030. This is in line with the 30 by 30 target agreed at COP15 last year. This global target aims to protect 30% of the planet for nature by 2030. This timeline will also align with our future Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy.</p>
2.2	<p>The final draft of the Biodiversity Strategy (Appendix 1) and Action Plan (Appendix 2) will focus conservation action mainly on our own estate, with opportunities for partnership working when funding and resources allow.</p> <p>The Biodiversity Strategy is a public facing document, which will be launched online and available for all to read. The Action Plan will be an internal, working document, that will ensure we work towards protecting and conserving biodiversity across the Council estate.</p>
2.3	<p>Public consultation took place from 1st December 2023 to 9th February 2024, through the NMD Speak service, where respondents were asked to consider a number of set questions. A report was produced based on responses to the Public consultation (Appendix 3).</p> <p>The main revisions included:</p> <p>The themes; Original draft themes were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trees and woodland • Pollinators and other invertebrates

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invasive Alien Species • Raising awareness and education • Working with partners <p>Final Strategy themes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting our Priority Habitats and Species • Trees and Woodland • Pollinators • Invasive Species • Raising awareness and Education
2.4	Responses indicated that the first draft of the Strategy didn't highlight the important priority habitats and species we have across Newry, Mourne and Down District. This was mainly due to the fact that Council do not own or manage many of these protected sites. To combat this, the 'Working in partnership' theme was changed to 'Protecting our Priority Habitats and Species'. This theme highlights the work done by our AONB and Geopark teams as well as that in partnership with other stakeholders such as the Mourne Heritage Trust.
2.5	The 'Pollinators and other invertebrates' theme was changed to 'Pollinators' as it would be difficult to complete actions for both these groups together. As Council are official partners of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan it is important to focus on this group of species for action.
2.6	The 'Invasive alien species' theme was changed to 'Invasive species' as some respondents rightly pointed out that some native species can become invasive e.g. bracken and gorse, and so must be considered for action.
2.7	The 'Trees and Woodland' and 'Raising awareness and Education' themes have remained the same as they are key priorities for Council moving forward.
2.8	The final version of the Strategy and Action Plan is now being brought back to Committee for review and final approval. The final version of the Strategy and Action Plan which will then be published online. The Action Plan being an internal 'Live' working document will be implemented in house by Council across departments.
3.0	Recommendations
3.1	It is recommended that the Committee approve the final draft of the Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	<p>As the strategy will be a public facing document, there was a financial cost for design works, which at £1990.00 was less than the estimated budget of £2,390. Budget had been secured for this in the estimates for 2024/25.</p> <p>Any future resource requests will be considered annually when required. External funding will also be applied for when available.</p>
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1	<i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i>

	It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input 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><i>Note that Equality screening was carried out on previous Local Biodiversity Action Plans and identified no adverse impact on equality. This will be reviewed following public consultation.</i></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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Rationale: Equality screening was carried out on previous Local Biodiversity Action Plans and identified no adverse impact on equality of opportunity or good relations, therefore these documents were out for public consultation for 10 weeks.</i></p>	
6.0	Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)	
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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input checked="" 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><i>Note that a Rural Needs Impact Assessment was completed for the most recent Local Biodiversity Action Plans. This will be updated as required for the new Biodiversity Strategy.</i></p>	
7.0	Appendices	
	<p>Appendix 1 - Draft Biodiversity Strategy</p> <p>Appendix 2 - Draft Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan</p> <p>Appendix 3 – Biodiversity Strategy Consultation Report</p>	
8.0	Background Documents	
	N/A	

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Straitéis Bhithéagsúlachta 2024–2030

Biodiversity Strategy 2024–2030

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Biodiversity is vital for our survival, and we depend on it for the very basics of life.

Biodiversity is not just in crisis globally, but also on a local level. Species are disappearing faster now than ever before in human history. Urban development, intensive agricultural practices, invasive species and climate change are some of the main drivers of biodiversity loss in Northern Ireland.



Newry, Mourne and Down is a district renowned for its scenic beauty, bounded on the east by Strangford Lough and Carlingford Lough and on the west by Slieve Gullion and Slieve Croob, with the picturesque Mountains of Mourne in the centre.

This Biodiversity Strategy and associated internal Action Plan will guide the protection and enhancement of biodiversity across Newry, Mourne and Down over the next 6 years to 2030. The internal action plan will focus mainly on Council managed estate, but opportunities for partnership working will be explored and developed. This strategy does not sit in isolation. It compliments several other key strategic commitments made by the Council.

The aims of the Biodiversity Strategy are simple:

- To conserve and enhance the rich biodiversity of the district for both current and future generations.
- Educate and raise awareness of the importance and variety of biodiversity found within the Newry, Mourne and Down district area.
- Encourage local ownership of Newry, Mourne and Down district's biodiversity.

Through the delivery of **five thematic action plans**, we aim to improve our environment and work towards fulfilling our duty for biodiversity and take positive action in mitigating against and adapting to climate change.



What is Biodiversity and why is it important?

Biodiversity is the total variety of all living organisms including plants and animals, and the habitats in which they live. Biodiversity is vital for our survival and we depend on it for the very basics of life.

The ecology of planet earth supports all life by providing 'Ecosystem Services'.

These services can be divided into four categories;

Supporting

Supporting services are those which are necessary for the production of all other ecosystem services. They differ from other services as their impacts on humans are indirect or occur over a long period of time. Examples of supporting services include the production of atmospheric oxygen (through photosynthesis), primary production, soil formation and retention, nutrient cycling, water cycling and provisioning of habitat.

Provisioning

Provisioning services are the products that are obtained from ecosystems, such as: genetic resources, food, water, fuel, bio-chemicals, fibre, natural medicines, pharmaceuticals, and building materials.





ABOVE: sustainable-solutions-llc.net - ecosystem-services

Regulating

Regulating services are the benefits obtained from the regulation of ecosystem processes. These include climate regulation, water regulation and purification, air quality maintenance, erosion control, waste treatment, regulation of human diseases, biological control, pollination, and protection from extreme weather and climatic events.

Cultural

Cultural services are nonphysical benefits that humans obtain from ecosystems through spiritual enrichment, recreation, and aesthetic experiences. Cultural services include cultural diversity, spiritual and religious values, educational values, sense of place, cultural heritage values and tourism for example.

Threats to Biodiversity

Biodiversity is in crisis globally, within the Island of Ireland as a whole and locally. Species are disappearing faster now than ever before in human history. How we use the land and sea is one of the main driving forces behind the loss of our biodiversity.





Habitat loss and fragmentation

The loss and fragmentation of natural habitats is one of the greatest threats to biodiversity worldwide. On land, a constant pressure across the whole of the UK and Ireland is that from baseline loss of habitat from conversion of land that was natural or semi-natural – to development, urbanisation, or inappropriate management.



Many species dependant on these habitats have declined as a result. The abundance indicator for farmland bird species shows a decrease in abundance on average of 43% between 1996 and 2021. In particular, woodland birds have declined on average, in the last 10 years (State of Nature Report 2023).

In Newry, Mourne and Down District approximately 720 acres of land within the Mourne Mountains were impacted by a wildfire in 2021. The fire left large areas of burnt and charred plants and grassland including sphagnum mosses and heather. Many animals and invertebrates perished in the smoke and fire, including ground-nesting birds and the common lizard. Fire can significantly increase a landscape's vulnerability to flooding and erosion events. The Forever Mournes Partnership¹ are working to make the landscape more resilient and able to adapt to the changing climate and drier, hotter summers. The work will help burnt areas to recover through careful conservation grazing, re-wetting and heathland restoration and monitoring of wildlife.

TOP LEFT: Grey Squirrel, Breffni Martin
FIREFIGHTER IMAGES: The National Trust

¹The Forever Mournes Partnership established in June 2023 is made up of representatives from National Trust, Mourne Heritage Trust, Woodland Trust, and Northern Ireland Water, with NI Environment Agency, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and Forest Service as Associate members.

Invasive species, pests, and diseases

Non-native invasive species are a major threat to biodiversity. Invasive species continue to be introduced to the UK and Ireland through accidental and deliberate releases, stowaways in imported goods or escapees from gardens and large estates. The number of invasive species has increased in freshwater, terrestrial and marine biomes in the last decade in line with ongoing trends since 1970 (State of Nature Report 2023). Some native invasive species such as bracken and gorse for example, can also cause problems for important habitats. Key invasive plant species already affecting Newry, Mourne and Down District include *Rhododendron ponticum*, Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam, Giant hogweed and Cherry laurel, all surveyed in the Ring of Gullion Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), with potentially many more on the horizon. Alien invasive riparian plants such as Giant hogweed reduce the abundance and diversity of native plant species. They can also exacerbate flooding along watercourses by obstructing waterflow following high rainfall. After winter dieback, they leave riverbanks exposed to erosion.

Several plant and animal diseases also threaten our wildlife, including the ongoing impacts of ash dieback and sudden oak death for example. The lack of a functioning traceability system and local origin policy on the island of Ireland threatens local species and habitats. The recent outbreak of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) is the most serious the UK has ever recorded. The breeding season of 2022 saw a wide number of bird species affected, especially seabirds, and several individuals of various mammal species believed to have eaten infected birds. In total over 70 bird and mammal species have been affected (State of Nature Report 2023).



Pollution

The by-products of our everyday lives often become pollutants in the natural environment. Pollutants can take the form of plastic waste or litter, chemicals in water, soil or air, and even light and noise pollution. One of the most damaging forms of pollution is nutrient enrichment of sensitive habitats. Eutrophication has led to major losses of internationally important inter-drumlin fens and currently no river or freshwater lake in Northern Ireland has 'good' overall ecological and chemical status (State of Nature Report 2023). Fertilizers (chemical and from farm waste) contribute to biodiversity loss by altering soil composition, promoting the growth of invasive species, and contaminating waterways, which can disrupt aquatic ecosystems and harm wildlife.

Northern Ireland produces 12% of the UK's ammonia emissions, mostly from agriculture, while only representing 6% of the land area, resulting in harm to our drinking water costing the taxpayer millions extra each year. Ammonia also poses a serious threat to the heathland vegetation in our upland habitats, particularly sensitive species such as lichens, mosses, and heather. Pollution from domestic sewers is also on the rise and during heavy storms results in extra nutrients and raw sewage being washed into our rivers, seas, and lakes. Persistently high and increasing levels of nitrogenous air pollution are a major pressure on plants and lichens in Northern Ireland. Ammonia levels above the critical ecological threshold for bryophytes and lichens across the entire country and above the critical threshold for vascular plants across over a third of the land area (State of Nature Report 2023). Legislative controls have resulted in some progress towards reducing harmful emissions and there are some signs of recovery in fish stocks for example.

Pesticides and herbicides pose a significant threat to biodiversity by disrupting ecosystems, harming non-target species, and contributing to the decline of pollinators like bees and butterflies.

TOP LEFT: Flytipping
LEFT: Red Kite

⁴Lough Neagh: How do we solve the algae problem? - BBC News
⁴Untreated sewage: Some 20m tonnes spilled every year - BBC News

Climate change

Sometimes people think of climate change as a problem that exists elsewhere in the world. However, the effects of climate change can be seen across the UK and NI. Research indicates that climate change is affecting biodiversity at a faster rate than ever before. Certain habitats and species are more vulnerable than others, for example coastal habitats are showing the effects of sea level rises. Occurrences of extreme weather and flooding are also becoming more common, impacting humans and biodiversity.

In February 2020 a Climate Emergency was declared by the Northern Ireland Assembly. Newry, Mourne and Down District Council had already declared a climate emergency in October 2019 and agreed to develop a Climate Adaptation Plan to cope better with the effects of climate change across the district.

The new Climate Change Act (NI) 2022 sets a target of at least 100% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 (i.e., net zero emissions by 2050). The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) is required to produce 5-year Climate Action Plans (CAPs) to set out policies and proposals on how the emissions targets will be achieved.

CAPs must include annual greenhouse gas emissions targets as well as air quality, soil quality and biodiversity targets. Newry, Mourne and Down District Council will consider these policies and proposals when working towards our net zero target.

DAERA has drafted a Green Growth Strategy, which sets out the vision and framework for tackling the climate crisis.



Overexploitation and Habitat Degradation

Unsustainable use of our landscapes for human consumption depletes wildlife populations and threatens species with extinction, habitats with degradation and soils with erosion and depletion. Human activities such as pollution, deforestation, intensive agriculture, and urbanisation can degrade habitats, reducing their suitability for native species and their resilience to climate change and other external anthropogenic threats. Peat extraction, for example, poses a severe threat to biodiversity due to its destructive impact on fragile ecosystems.

The loss of biodiversity will have huge consequences for the residents of Newry, Mourne and Down, with adverse effects on our food supply, our drinking water and climate stability, impacting our finances and our health and wellbeing.



RIGHT: Agricultural maintenance on farmland, Andrew Mackin

Legislation & policy

Biodiversity: It's Our Duty

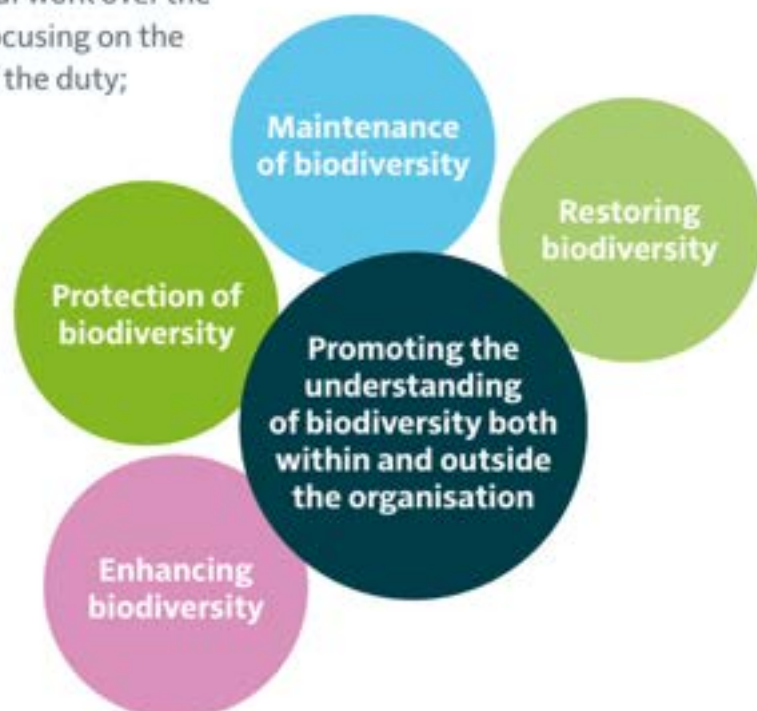
The principle legislation for the conservation and protection of wildlife in Northern Ireland is the Wildlife and Natural Environment (WANE) Act (Northern-Ireland) 2011. The WANE Act replaced the Wildlife Order (NI) 1985 and brought with it a statutory duty for biodiversity for all public bodies.

“It is the duty of every public body, in exercising any functions, to further the conservation of biodiversity so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions.”

Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (Northern-Ireland) 2011

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is working to embed biodiversity across all relevant operations, ensuring that we play our role in enhancing biodiversity through our everyday functions.

With the development of this Biodiversity Strategy, the Council hope to guide our work over the coming years, focusing on the five key areas of the duty;



Links to other Strategies, Policies and Plans

This Biodiversity Strategy considers a range of national, regional, and local policies and plans to ensure it does not sit in isolation.

The key commitments are outlined as follows:

International

COP15 – Governments from around the world met at the 15th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in December 2022 in Montreal, Canada. Here they agreed on a new set of goals to guide action through to 2030 on nature across the world. The Global Biodiversity Framework adopted at COP15 aims to ensure that nature's ecosystem services are valued, maintained, and enhanced. And by 2050, the shared vision of living in harmony with nature is fulfilled. COP16 will take place in Cali, Colombia from 21st October – 1st November 2024 and will review the state of implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework.

COP28 – The COP28 United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Dubai was the biggest of its kind and marked the conclusion of the first 'global stocktake' of the world's efforts to address climate change under the Paris agreement. Results have shown that progress has been too slow across all areas of climate change action – from reducing greenhouse gas emissions, to strengthening resilience to a changing climate and

in getting the financial and technological support to vulnerable nations. Countries responded by calling on governments to speed up the transition away from fossil fuels to renewables such as wind and solar power in their next round of climate commitments. COP29 will be held in Azerbaijan in November 2024 and will build momentum on the progress made at COP28.

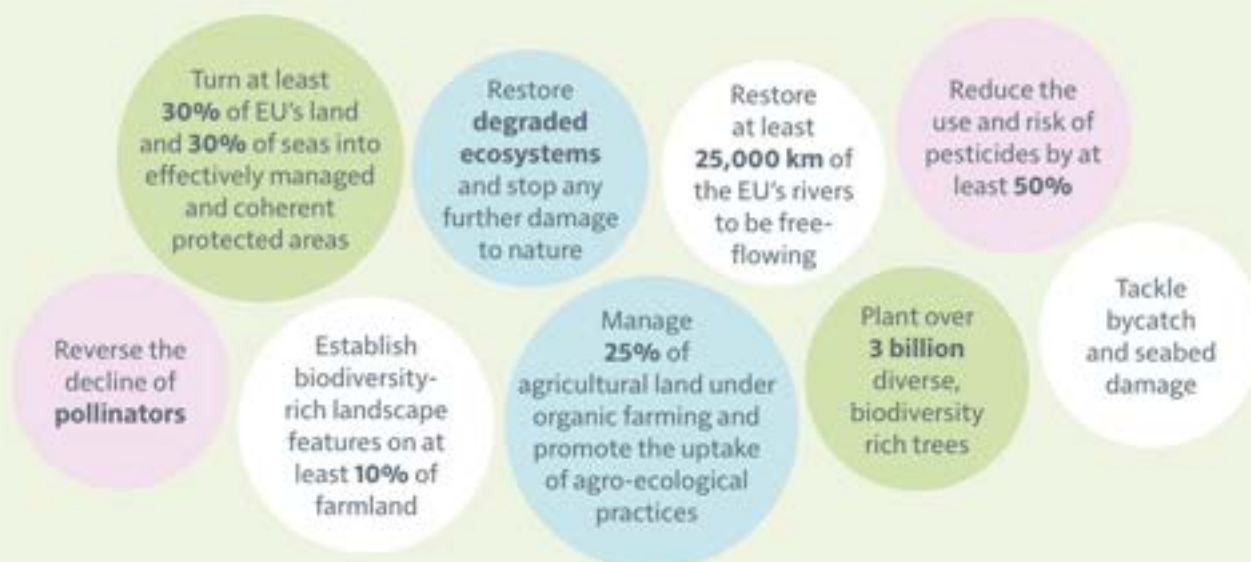


National

EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 – is a comprehensive and long-term plan to protect nature and reverse the degradation of ecosystems. The strategy aims to assist with the recovery of Europe's biodiversity by 2030.

The 2030 Biodiversity Strategy builds upon and goes beyond the existing EU Birds and Habitats Directives and the EU Natura 2000 Network of protected areas.

It sets ambitious EU targets and commitments for 2030 to achieve healthy and resilient ecosystems. For example:



Nature Positive 2030 report

In order for the UK to meet its 30 by 30 commitments set out in the Global Biodiversity Framework, its five statutory nature conservation bodies came together to produce the Nature Positive 2030 report. The report looks at best practice across the UK and presents solutions that can be scaled up to achieve change.



All- Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025

The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan is a framework bringing together different sectors from local authorities, to farmers, schools, gardeners, and businesses, to try to create a landscape where pollinators can survive and thrive.

One third of our bee species are threatened with extinction from Ireland. This is because we have drastically reduced the amount of food and safe nesting sites that support them. Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is an official partner of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan and is committed to improving our district for pollinators.

Regional

Draft Environment Strategy for NI

The draft Environment Strategy is an overarching document setting out Northern Ireland's environmental priorities for the coming decades and forms part of the Green Growth agenda. The strategy links a number of proposed actions and targets to improve our environment to the relevant Sustainable Development Goals set out by the United Nations.

Biodiversity Strategy for NI (pending)

The Biodiversity Strategy for NI to 2020 has been reviewed and consultation has begun on a new Nature Recovery strategy. It is hoped that the Strategy will be out for public consultation by the end of 2024.

The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022

The Climate Change Act (NI) 2022 sets a target of at least 100% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) is required to produce 5-year Climate Action Plans (CAPs) to set out policies and proposals on how the emissions targets will be achieved. CAPs must include annual greenhouse gas emissions targets as well as air quality, soil quality and biodiversity targets.

Green Growth Strategy

The draft Green Growth Strategy is the Northern Ireland Executive's multi-decade strategy to 2050, balancing climate, environment, and the economy in Northern Ireland. It sets out the long-term vision for tackling the climate crisis.

NI Peatland Strategy 2021 – 2040

The Northern Ireland Peatland Strategy provides a framework for conserving intact semi-natural peatlands and restoring degraded semi-natural peatlands. It identifies the ecosystem services provided by healthy peatlands, including climate regulation and adaptation, specialised biodiversity, good water quality, flood alleviation and an historical archive. Peatlands also provide a unique landscape for recreation and education. A cross-sectoral group, the Northern Ireland Peatland Partnership will provide oversight and ensure delivery of the strategic objectives and actions contained within the strategy.

Wildfires in NI – Draft Strategic Way Forward

This framework aims to tackle the threat and impact of wildfires. It is driven by 5 strategic goals including partnership working and building resilience into those landscapes and habitats most susceptible to wildfire.

Delivery of these goals is based around 6 Strategic Themes:

- Governance
- Engagement
- Land Management
- Response
- Policy, Legislation and Enforcement
- Evidence.

BELOW: Moneyscalp Wood, Bryansford



Local

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council recognises the importance of a healthy environment reflecting the region's natural diversity of terrestrial and aquatic habitats and ecosystems. This is evidenced by the role that biodiversity plays across many of our Council plans.

Draft Corporate Plan 2024-2027

Of the eight strategic outcomes listed in the draft corporate plan, those specific to the environment are:



Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future.

- Key actions under this objective include the development and implementation of the Biodiversity Strategy, a Climate Change and Sustainable Development Strategy, a Local Climate Change Adaptation Plan, and a Tree Strategy for Council.

Support regenerative tourism opportunities which promote our culture, heritage, and environment.

- A key action of this objective includes implementing the Mourne Gullion Strangford UNESCO Global Geopark Masterplan, which acts as a blueprint for responsible tourism, conservation, and education.

Deliver sustainable services.

- A key action of this objective involves accurate data collection to better inform actions related to sustainability and climate change.

Living Well Together – A community plan for Newry, Mourne and Down to 2030

The first community plan for Newry, Mourne and Down district describes a vision of “a place with strong, safe and vibrant communities where everyone has a good quality of life and access to opportunities, choices and high-quality services which are sustainable, accessible and meet people’s needs”.



The positive outcomes of the community plan relevant to the environment include;

- All people in Newry, Mourne and Down enjoy good health and wellbeing.
- All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from a clean, quality, and sustainable environment.

Performance Improvement Plan 2024-2025

The Council's performance improvement objectives aim to enhance the sustainable quality of life for ratepayers and local communities.

Objectives with relevance to the Biodiversity Strategy are;

1. We will support the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our leisure facilities and services.
3. We will improve the cleanliness of our district by addressing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents.
4. We will improve our sustainability and reduce our impacts in relation to climate change.



Biodiversity loss can have significant direct human health impacts if ecosystem services are no longer adequate to meet social needs. A diverse and healthy environment is crucial to human well-being at present and in the future.

Local Development Plan

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council has commenced work on a Local Development Plan (LDP) which will support economic and social needs in the district in line with regional strategies and policies, while providing the delivery of sustainable development. The unique, diverse natural environment within the district plays a vital role as a tourist attraction and contributes towards economic development. It is important however that any future developments are subject to rigorous independent environmental impact assessment and adhere to the precautionary principle. The objectives and policies of the LDP when finalised, will seek to protect, conserve, and enhance our environment.

Local Climate Adaptation Plan

Climate change is the long-term shift in average weather patterns across the world and is arguably the most serious threat we face today to our way of life. Newry, Mourne and Down District Council declared a climate emergency in October 2019. A Climate Change Symposium 'Our Climate - Our Challenge' was held on 12 March 2020 at Killeavy Castle. This high-profile event brought together a range of internationally renowned expert speakers as well as councils and community organisations from across the UK and Ireland who have demonstrated best practice in dealing with climate change and who have achieved practical solutions and carbon reductions on the ground. Leading on from this, council agreed to develop a local climate adaptation plan to mitigate the impacts their operations have on the climate. Working with Climate NI, the process is led by a Cross-Departmental Officer Working Group. The plan will include positive action to reduce our impacts on climate change (Mitigation) and increase our resilience to deal with its impacts (Adaptation).



In addition to the aforementioned documents, the **Biodiversity Strategy** will also compliment several other action plans and strategies (many of which are currently being drafted).

These include the Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy, Open Spaces Strategy, Ring of Gullion AONB Management Plan, the Strangford Lough and Lecale AONB Management Plan, the Mourne AONB Management Plan, The Mourne, Gullion and Strangford UNESCO Global Geopark 4-year Business Plan and 10-year Master Plan, Marine Protected Area Management Plans for Carlingford Lough, Murlough and Strangford Lough, and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Tree Strategy. Special Area of Conservation Management Plans for Slieve Gullion and Eastern Mournes, and Down and Armagh Forestry Plans.

ABOVE: Speakers at the Climate Change Symposium

Moving forward with action for Biodiversity

The **Biodiversity Strategy** and associated internal **Action Plan** will guide the protection and enhancement of biodiversity across Newry, Mourne and Down District over the next 6 years to 2030.

The realistic, achievable plan will focus mainly on Council managed estate, but opportunities for partnership working will be explored and developed.



Newry, Mourne and Down District Council manage a diverse range of green space across the district. Mapping of Council maintained areas is still being carried out, as more areas are added to the Council register. Managed assets include forest parks, coastal areas, play and amenity areas, graveyards, playing fields, rights of way and many buildings, structures, and monuments.

Green spaces and open areas are places in which biodiversity can thrive, if managed appropriately. Managing our green spaces for biodiversity will increase their ability to capture and store carbon. They also provide recreation for people and offer health benefits associated with connecting with nature.



This Biodiversity Strategy will continue with the aims of our previous Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs), which are:

- To conserve and enhance the rich biodiversity of the district for both current and future generations.
- Educate and raise awareness of the importance and variety of biodiversity found within the Newry, Mourne and Down district area.
- Encourage local ownership of Newry, Mourne and Down district's biodiversity.

To ensure Council meets our biodiversity commitments and delivers on the biodiversity duty, we will focus action on 5 key themes.

These over-arching themes will allow for biodiversity management options to be implemented across a range of habitat types. The themes will be:

THEME 1	Protecting our Priority Habitats & Species
THEME 2	Trees and Woodland
THEME 3	Pollinators
THEME 4	Invasive Species
THEME 5	Raising Awareness and Education

Protecting our Priority Habitats and Species

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is the third largest council area within Northern Ireland comprising approximately 11% of the total land area and over 100 miles of coastline. The district is renowned for its scenic beauty and contains many sites rich in wildlife and designated for their nature conservation value.

3rd
largest

council area within
Northern Ireland

100
miles

of stunning
coastline

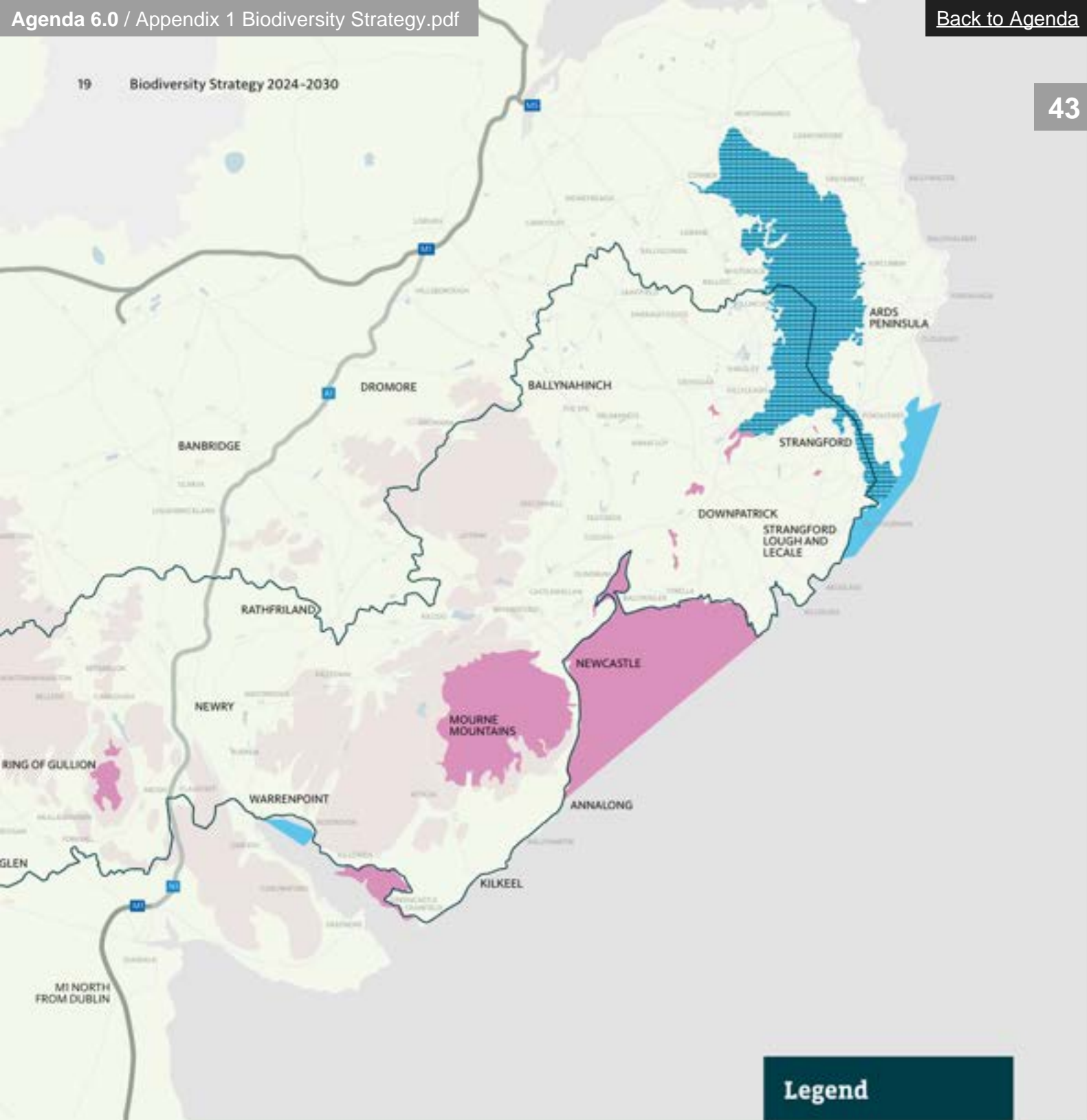
11%

of the total
land area of NI

90

protected sites for
nature conservation









There are over 90 designated sites of regional, national, and international importance in the Newry, Mourne and Down area containing a range of important habitats and species (Appendix 1).

Most of these sites are in private ownership. Newry, Mourne and Down District Council work with a variety of organisations and stakeholders to help protect and conserve these important sites.

Legend

-  **RAMSAR**
-  **SPA**
Special Protection Area
-  **SAC**
Special Area of Conservation
-  **MCZ Inshore**
Marine Conservation Zone

Protecting our Priority Habitats and Species

Biodiversity action across the district

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council has worked in partnership with other stakeholders to implement biodiversity action since the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) process began in 2007. A biodiversity steering group consisting of representatives from governmental departments, environmental organisations, and local community groups, led the development and implementation of LBAPs within the council area.



Partnership working with other councils North and South of the border has allowed a more landscape scale approach to biodiversity action. Newry, Mourne and Down District Council has acted as the lead partner on large Interreg funded, cross border projects such as 'Action for Biodiversity' (2010-2013), ASCENT⁴ (2016-2019), and 'CANN'⁵ (2017-2022). These projects have delivered significant outcomes for biodiversity, protecting priority habitats such as peatlands and wetlands.

Other Heritage Lottery Funded (HLF) projects such as 'Biodiversity Games' and 'Bee-licious' have also achieved targets for biodiversity recording and pollinators and highlighted the benefits of partnership working.

Dragons in the Hills, a project to improve our knowledge of the conservation status of our three native amphibians and reptiles: common frog, common lizard and smooth newt in the Mourne Gullion Strangford UNESCO Global Geopark, was awarded £100,000 from HLF. The project mapped their distribution and encouraged land managers to create and connect important habitat features, increasing the amount of suitable areas for these important species.

LEFT: Newry, Mourne and Down District Council representatives at the CANN closing conference.

⁴Ascent - Ascent (ascent-project.eu)

⁵CANN Project - Collaborative Action for the Natura Network (seuph.eu)



ABOVE: Common lizard © Ronald Surgenor
 LEFT: A bat recording event organised
 through the Biodiversity Games project.

Protecting our Priority Habitats and Species

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)

The Ring of Gullion (ROG) and Strangford and Lecale AONB management plans also work in partnership with a variety of organisations and stakeholders to protect and conserve the landscape character and natural, built, and cultural heritage of the areas.

The Ring of Gullion Landscape Partnership scheme was part of the Heritage Lottery Fund's programme to conserve and enhance some of the region's most treasured landscapes. Led by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, a £1.4 million programme aimed to engage people with the ROG AONB and surrounding landscape. Actions ranged from trail construction to storytelling and from interpreting the history of Newry canal to enhancing the areas rich biodiversity.

Another successful project in the area was ASCENT, which worked to address the environmental challenges facing seven northern European upland areas. Donegal County Council acted as lead partner, working collaboratively with Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, Mourne Heritage Trust and Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust in Northern Ireland, as well as partners in Finland, Norway and Iceland. The project worked to tackle the degradation, erosion, and loss of biodiversity at our upland sites using innovative tools and techniques.



Ring of Gullion
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



**Strangford
& Lecale**
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

RIGHT: Ring of Gullion, Alan Hopps





Protecting our Priority Habitats and Species

Strangford Lough and Lecale AONB is a coastal area containing unique and very different priority habitats and species to that of ROG. Species such as seals, dolphins, whales and basking shark have all been spotted in the lough.

The 'Share the Shore' project advises visitors of how to enjoy our coastal sites without causing harm to wildlife. Every autumn and winter thousands of over-wintering birds come to our shores from colder climes, for example Light-Bellied Brent Geese from Canada. They arrive with their young, tired, and hungry and need to rest and feed. They only have a small window to feed on the shore when the tide goes out. It is important that they are not forced to take flight unnecessarily as this causes them to lose a lot of energy and valuable feeding time. Share the shore reminds visitors to keep dogs on leads away from the feeding and roosting birds.

The coast care project worked with True Harvest seeds to help protect and conserve the important habitats and species of the coastline of the Strangford Lough and Lecale AONB. Volunteers assisted in making seed collections of threatened species, which were then grown on and replanted back into their areas after some habitat management. Surveying these habitats regularly will help to ensure these important habitats remain in favourable condition for future generations.

The management teams of the Ring of Gullion, Mourne, and Strangford and Lecale AONBs have also teamed up with the Woodland Trust to work with local farmers and encourage them to sign up for a farm plan project. The project focuses on the use of green infrastructure and management changes as an essential part of farming production.

UNESCO Global Geopark

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council has recently established a UNESCO Global Geopark. The Mourne Gullion Strangford UNESCO Global Geopark (UGGp) land boundary follows the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council administrative boundary. The marine part of the geopark encompasses the Marine Protected Areas (MPA) bordering the land part of the park: Murlough Bay MPA, Strangford Lough MPA and Carlingford Lough MPA. Within this unique landscape, organisations, communities, and individuals are united in their commitment to harness the full potential of this asset while honouring the rich heritage that defines the character of the area. The UNESCO Global Geopark brand will use the shared geological heritage of the three areas as a mechanism for sustainable tourism: generating economic benefits, providing recreational opportunities and increasing awareness of the natural capital of the entire area. (Appendix 2)



RIGHT: Brent Geese, Strangford Lough and Lecale Partnership (SLLP)





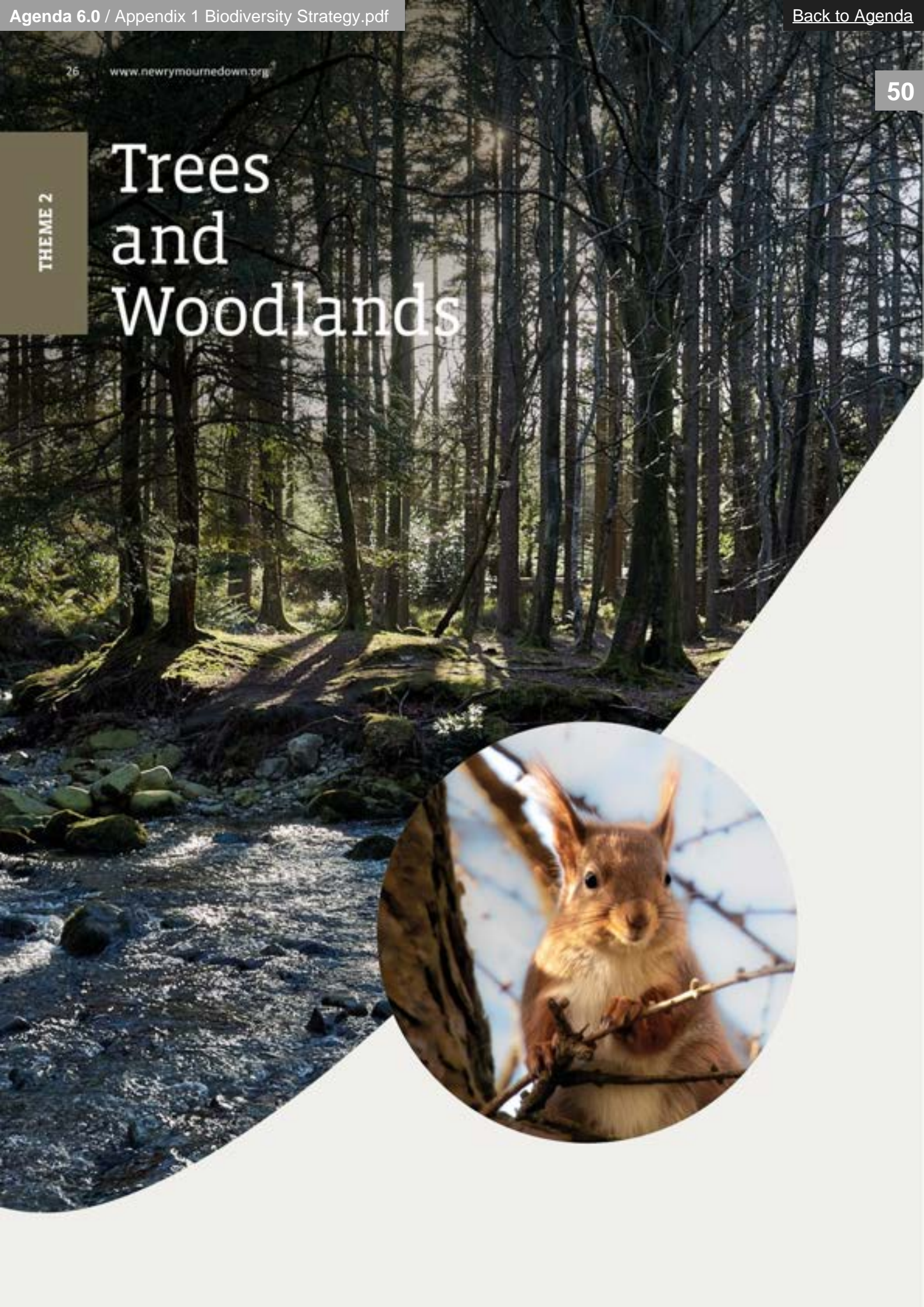
Our next steps

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council will continue to work in partnership with other organisations and groups to promote, protect and improve biodiversity within the district.

- ▶ Continue to deliver the Ring of Gullion and Strangford and Lecale AONB Management Plans.
- ▶ Continue to work in **partnership** with stakeholders to deliver the Mourne Gullion Strangford UNESCO Global Geopark Masterplan.
- ▶ Access funding streams such as PEACEPLUS to deliver biodiversity and conservation action across the district.
- ▶ Choose one '**flagship species or habitat**' per year to promote through awareness raising campaigns or practical action.

THEME 2

Trees and Woodlands



Trees and woodlands are some of our most valuable natural assets. Not only do they provide us with the air that we breathe, but they are also home to many species of plants and animals, some of which are threatened or vulnerable. Other ecosystem services of trees include carbon sequestration, flood alleviation, soil stability, natural play areas and many more.

A variety of woodland types can be found within Newry, Mourne and Down District.

Oakwood

Oakwoods are characterised by the predominance of either sessile oak or pendunculate oak, with downy birch in the canopy layer. The understory species consist of holly, hazel and rowan. Priority species associated with Oakwoods include red squirrel, common pipistrelle bat and song thrush.

Rostrevor Wood SAC is a wonderful example of an ancient oakwood, known to be at least 250 years old and a possible remnant of the original forest which once covered the region.

Coniferous woodland consists of areas planted with non-native species such as Sitka spruce, Norway spruce and Larch. While such woodlands harbour relatively few plant and animal species when compared to native woodlands, they can be important for priority species such as pine marten and red squirrel. Coniferous woodland can be found across the district, including Council managed forest parks such as Slieve Gullion and Castlewellan.

Mixed Ashwood

Mixed ashwoods occurs in small, isolated stands throughout the district. While ash is the dominant tree species, other species such as oak, downy birch, wild cherry, rowan, holly, hazel and hawthorn can all be present. Such woodland often has a rich diversity of plants in the ground layer including scattered ferns as well as carpets of bluebell, opposite-leaved golden saxifrage and wood sorrel.

Ash trees across Ireland and the UK are under threat of a disease called ash dieback, caused by the fungus *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*. It will kill up to 80% of ash trees, changing the landscape forever and costing an estimated £15 billion to manage (Woodland Trust). The loss of ash trees from our landscape will have a devastating impact on the biodiversity of our woodlands, as well as a major loss in connections between habitats as we lose hedges and individual trees outside of woods. Newry, Mourne and Down Council will continue to monitor ash trees on land we manage for disease and potential health and safety implications.

In Newry, Mourne and Down, mixed ashwoods can be found on Fathom Mountain and in the Newcastle valleys.



Trees and Woodland

Wet Woodlands

Wet woodlands occur on poorly drained land or areas that are waterlogged, such as around lake shores, along streams, on hill-side flushes and on fens and cutover bogs. Typically, wet woodlands are dominated by willow, alder or downy birch. There is normally a varied herb layer consistent with this habitat. The high humidity present beneath the tree canopy also favours the growth of a variety of mosses and liverworts. Priority species associated with wet woodland include song thrush, spotted flycatcher and common pipistrelle bats.

Wet woodland has developed undisturbed in Hollymount Forest National Nature Reserve (NNR) near Downpatrick since 1745, where yellow flag iris and other wetland plants dominate the ground under the dense canopy of alder and willow trees.



Parkland

Parkland is a special type of woodland that is uncommon in Northern Ireland. They are designed landscapes associated with significant houses or demesnes. Parkland includes old or veteran trees where the land has often been converted to other uses such as arable farming and amenity land and where the surviving trees are of nature conservation interest. It generally contains some of the oldest and largest trees in Northern Ireland. Veteran trees can support cavity-nesting birds such as great tit, blue tit, spotted flycatcher, and barn owl for example, as well as roosting common pipistrelle bat and brown long-eared bat. Overall, Parkland is threatened or in declining condition.

Examples of parkland in Newry, Mourne and Down district include Creggan Poet's Glen and Mourne Park outside Kilkeel, which has recently been opened to the public.





Threats to our woodlands

Our trees and woodlands face a challenging combination of pressures, including:

- Climate change
- Inappropriate development
- Inappropriate harvesting methods
- Pollution
- Attack from deadly tree disease and pests

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council understand the importance of planting native trees and hedgerows. They are vital in tackling climate change and reducing biodiversity loss, acting as homes and natural corridors for wildlife. The Council is currently finalising a Tree Strategy for the district, which aims to direct future woodland planting and management. Newry, Mourne and Down has only 5.58% woodland cover. The tree strategy aims to increase woodland cover across the district in line with the 13% by 2030 target. Council is aware of the importance of conserving and protecting existing old, large trees. Where these trees need to be replaced, Council will replant larger, standard varieties where possible.

"Northern Ireland ranks badly as one of the least-wooded regions in Europe, with just 8.7% woodland cover compared with the European average of 37%. In addition, almost 60% of our woodland is in the form of recent conifer plantations."

Woodland Trust, 2021

target to increase
woodland cover to
13%
by 2030

THEME 2

Trees and Woodland

Planting Schemes

The council will continue to work in partnership with businesses, community groups and schools to plant native trees and hedgerows within Newry, Mourne and Down District Council. Ring of Gullion AONB, recently joined by Strangford Lough and Lecale AONB, have done a yearly give away of at least 10,000 free trees for biodiversity since 2015. Another project saw Newry, Mourne and Down District Council work with ABP Newry to plant 2000 native trees across the district as part of the food group's environmental targets.

Native Tree Nursery at Castlewellan

Building on from the volunteer run native tree nursery at Tí Chulainn in Mullaghbawn, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council has relocated the nursery to Castlewellan Forest Park, where a permanent member of staff will be there to lead the project. The Council will continue to work with volunteers to collect, plant and nurture native trees to distribute locally for planting.

BELOW: Hawthorn Hill, Danielle Bagley





Our next steps

Trees are our history and our future. They define our landscape. Newry, Mourne and Down District Council are committed to protecting and expanding our trees and woodlands.

ABOVE: Castlewellan Tree Nursery

- ▶ **Continue** to develop the native tree nursery at Castlewellan Forest Park.
- ▶ **Implement** actions in the Council Tree Strategy, including; Replacement of old, diseased trees, and ensuring a minimum of 90% native species are used across all tree planting schemes.
- ▶ **Work** with local community groups, businesses and other stakeholders on creation of new woodlands across the district.
- ▶ **Continue** with annual public tree giveaway coordinated by the AONB's teams and Geopark staff.

Pollinators

It is almost impossible to over-emphasise the important role that pollinators play in nature. Pollinators include species such as bumblebees, solitary bees, hoverflies and other insects.

All Ireland Pollinator Plan (AIPP)

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council are formal partners of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan (AIPP). The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan for 2021-2025 is a five-year road map that aims to help bees, other pollinating insects, and our wider biodiversity.

Insects are pollinators of 80% of all plant species in Europe, including most fruits, many vegetables, and some biofuel crops (DEFRA). In Ireland, the pollination services provided for 'free' by wild pollinators have an estimated value of €900 million to the Irish economy (EPA, research 291). In the UK (and globally) £690 million of crops are pollinated annually by bees, moths, butterflies, hoverflies, flies and beetles (The Wildlife Trusts).

Newry, Mourne and Down district council has been working with DfI Roads to plant native wildflowers at suitable roadside verges across the district. These sites will become part of our rewilding sites and we aim to continue to work in partnership to deliver action for pollinators and other invertebrates.

Rewilding Newry, Mourne and Down

Newry Mourne and Down District Council began a new initiative in 2020 to 're-wild' areas across the district. This project involves improving Council owned greenspaces for wildlife by either changing the grass mowing regime or through planting native wildflowers, shrubs and trees.

By leaving areas of grass uncut, plants already present in the soil have the chance to grow and bloom, providing food and shelter for important pollinators and other wildlife. This method has been carried out in some of our larger parks such as Kilbroney Park in Rostrevor and Islands Park in Newcastle.





Our next steps

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council will continue to improve our district for pollinators and other invertebrates.

“If the bee disappeared off the surface of the globe, then man would have only four years of life left.”

Albert Einstein

- ▶ **Continue** to meet targets for the AIPP by improving Council greenspaces for pollinators.
- ▶ **Reduce** the frequency of amenity grassland cutting per year at selected sites, particularly during No Mow May.
- ▶ **Continue** to work in partnership with DfI and others to deliver action for pollinators.

Invasive Species

Invasive alien species are defined as non-native animals, plants, or pathogens whose introduction or spread has been caused by human activity. In some cases, invasive species arrive here accidentally, on our vehicles or belongings, but in many cases, they have been intentionally introduced, as plants in our gardens, or as pets.

Invasive species pose a significant threat to our native wildlife and the functioning of our ecosystems. The estimated annual cost of invasive species to the economies of Ireland and Northern Ireland is over €261 million.

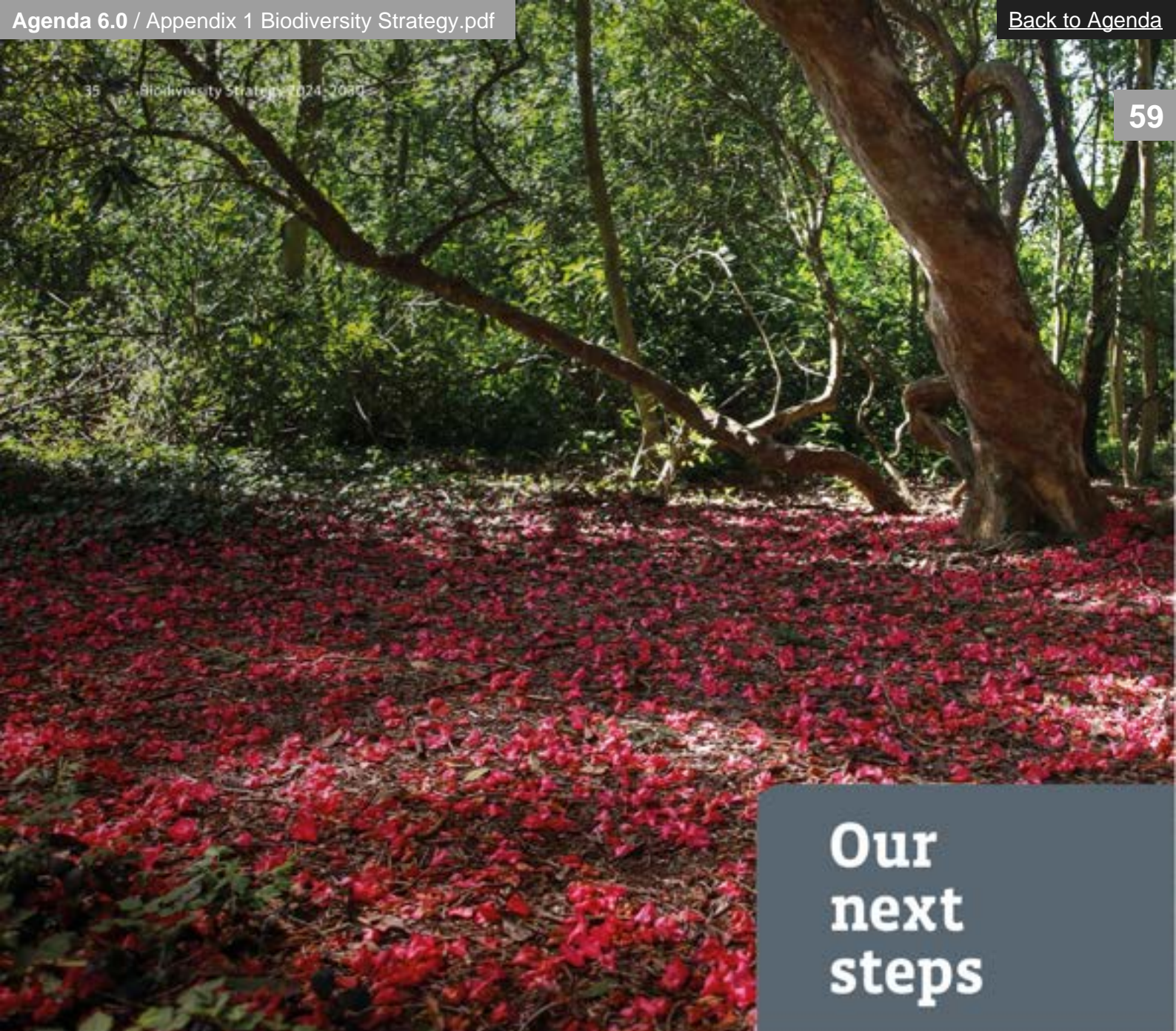
(Kelly et al., 2013 report)

Legislation

The Wildlife Order (NI) 1985 requires all landowners to prevent the spread of key Invasive Alien species on their land. Article 15 of this legislation states it is an offence to introduce, grow in the wild, allow to escape into the wild, any species of plant listed under Schedule 9, part II of the order. Listed species include Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam and Giant Hogweed.

The Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, introduced new provisions and amended the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 to reflect the increasing significance of protecting Northern Ireland's biodiversity.

The Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order (NI) 2019 brought further sanctions for the introduction and control of Invasive Alien Species. A list of 66 Widely Spread Species of Union Concern is included within the Order, which landowners are legally obliged to put management measures in place for. Species listed include grey squirrels and giant hogweed. More information on each species and their distribution can be found on the Invasive Species Northern Ireland website www.invasivespeciesni.co.uk



Our next steps

- ▶ **Continue** with control and removal of known invasive alien plant species from Council owned/managed sites.
- ▶ **Highlight** invasive species week in May every year, raising awareness among the public of key problem species and how to treat them.
- ▶ **Apply for external funding** to trial alternative methods for weed and invasive species control.

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council have surveyed and mapped Invasive Alien Species on our managed estate using Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to assist with ongoing management and eradication. A full survey of Invasive Species in the Ring of Gullion AONB was carried out by INVAS Biosecurity in 2016 and an action plan is currently being delivered. The Woodland Trust surveyed Delamont on behalf of Council in 2021 and produced a woodland restoration management plan, which includes the removal of invasive rhododendron and cherry laurel. The Council have also liaised with DfI Roads Service and collated their invasive species records across the district to form a better picture of problem areas.

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council will continue to eradicate and control invasive alien species across our managed estate with the aim of reducing their impact on our native biodiversity.

Raising awareness and education

Raising awareness of the importance of biodiversity and a healthy environment both internally within Council and externally among schools and the local community is a key element of the Biodiversity Strategy.



Biodiversity Education at Schools

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council delivers biodiversity education to local schools through the Council Biodiversity Officer and the Ring of Gullion and Strangford and Lecale AONBs team.

Eco-Schools programme

Every school in Newry, Mourne and Down District Council area is registered with the Eco-Schools programme. The programme, coordinated by Keep NI Beautiful, provides an ideal way for fostering environmental awareness in the entire school, linking to many curriculum subjects. The primary aim of the Eco-Schools programme is to educate and empower young people to make positive decisions and become change-makers for an environmentally sustainable world.

The Council provides support to schools, on request, when undertaking action for topics under the Eco-Schools programme. There are eleven Eco-Schools topics, one of which is Biodiversity. Other relevant topics include climate action and outdoor learning.

LEFT: Eco-Schools celebration event, Liz Boyle



Educating the public on biodiversity issues

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council use interpretation panels, information leaflets, workshops and training days to educate members of the public and relevant stakeholders about key environmental issues.

WiSe Training Scheme

WiSe is the UK's national training scheme for minimising disturbance to marine wildlife. The waters around our district are home to a fantastic variety of marine wildlife, whether visible from the shore or from a boat. However, these wild animals are vulnerable to disturbance if not encountered in a wildlife safe way. Strangford and Lecale AONB staff coordinate WiSe training days for relevant stakeholders, including boat operators and recreational users of the lough and our marine and coastal habitats.

Events and Awareness Raising

The Council runs a series of biodiversity and environmental themed events throughout the year hosted by the Biodiversity Officer, Ring of Gullion and Strangford and Lecale AONB teams, as well as the tourism department.

Events include big butterfly counts, bat walks, coastal activities, and red squirrel days. Other 'citizen science' events, where members of the public undertake scientific work, are organised in partnership with professional scientists and organisations such as CEDaR (Centre for Environmental Data and Recording). Training members of the public in species ID and recording is a vital tool in monitoring populations and deciding on whether action is needed to recover or control the species.

Raising awareness and education

Promoting Biodiversity

Biodiversity is promoted through the Council website, eLearning platform, internal council newsletters and emails. Press releases and social media channels are used to highlight specific events as and when they occur.

The use of interpretation panels and signage to raise awareness of a particular project, habitat, or species, is another vital tool in educating the public about biodiversity.



LEFT: Castlewellan Bioblitz event poster
BELOW: Looking at species under the microscope





Our next steps

When people connect with nature and understand the role it plays in improving our health and wellbeing, they are more inclined to want to protect it.

ABOVE: Castlewellan Bioblitz

- ▶ **Continue** to run an annual programme of Council led Biodiversity related events and encourage public participation in nationwide citizen science wildlife projects.
- ▶ **Continue** to provide biodiversity educational visits/workshops to schools on request as part of their Eco-Schools programme.
- ▶ **Continue** to educate the public and relevant stakeholders about wildlife disturbance through use of interpretation panels, leaflets and training workshops.

Monitoring and Reporting

Monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the **Biodiversity Strategy** and associated **Action Plan** is extremely important.



Newry, Mourne and Down Council recognises the need for adapting to changes in the wider strategic and legislative environment relating to biodiversity.

The internal Action Plan associated with this strategy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate in response to new strategies and legislation developed.

Performance outcomes including numbers of native trees planted and hectares of species rich meadow created and maintained for example, will be reported on annually, both internally and externally to relevant stakeholders. Council will also review the resources required to deliver on our actions annually and seek external funding and support when required. Actions will also be updated as and when additional partnership and funding opportunities arise.

LEFT: Carrlough from Gullion

Appendices



Appendix 1

Designated Sites

There are over 90 designated sites of regional, national, and international importance in the Newry, Mourne and Down area containing a range of important habitats and species.

Special Protection Areas (SPAs)

In 1979, UN member states including the United Kingdom, adopted The Birds Directive which aimed to protect all European bird species. These sites deemed important for breeding, overwintering and migrating birds are designated as Special Protection Areas (SPAs). There are three SPAs designated in the district: Carlingford Lough, Killough Bay and Strangford Lough.

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)

In 1992 the European Union also adopted a directive on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild flora and fauna, often called The Habitats Directive. This required all member states, including the UK, to designate a series of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) to protect some of the rarest or seriously threatened habitats and species in a European context. There are eleven SACs within the district including Lecale fens, Murlough and Rostrevor wood.

Sites designated under both directives for their conservation interest are often known as 'Natura 2000' sites. In 1995, the EU Habitats Directive was transposed into 32 Northern Ireland legislation as the Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended). This legislation provides protection for our most vulnerable

habitats and species. Despite the UK exiting the EU, the level of protection to our habitats and species in the wider countryside and in our protected areas will remain unchanged.

Ramsar Sites

Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance, listed under the Ramsar convention, where signatories are required to conserve such areas through the highest form of protection. A wetland is defined as an area of marsh, fen, peatland, or water, whether natural, or artificial, permanent, or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish, or salt and including areas of intertidal marine water. There are four Ramsar sites in the district, including Turmennan and Killough Bay.

Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs)

ASSIs are sites of special interest designated under the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 (as amended). ASSIs are areas of land that have been identified through a scientific survey as being of the highest degree of conservation value, based on their flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features. They have a well-defined boundary and by and large remain in private ownership. There are sixty-two ASSIs within the District. Habitats range from species rich grasslands at Levallymore and Tullyratty, to fens at Turmennan and Ballycam, heathland at Slieve Gullion and the Eastern Mournes and running and standing freshwater at Shimna River and Lurgan Lough.

Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs)

Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) are designated under the Marine Act (Northern Ireland) 2013. The designation of MCZs seeks to safeguard vulnerable or unique habitats and species of national importance in the Northern Ireland inshore region (within 12 miles of the coast). MCZs form part of the NI Marine Protected Network (Marine SPA, SAC, Ramsar and ASSI). There may be circumstances where MCZ sites fully or partially overlap with other designations, but this will be to protect different features. There are currently two MCZs designated within the District, Strangford Lough and Carlingford Lough.

Appendix 2

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's biodiversity work in the Geopark and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

This section provides information on the management for Ring of Gullion and Strangford & Lecale Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and Strangford Lough, Murlough, and Carlingford Lough Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) within the Mourne Gullion Strangford Geopark through Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Environment Fund.

The various partnerships involved are committed to achieving measurable environmental outcomes. The focus is on fulfilling environmental obligations outlined in various strategies, policies, and legislation. Newry Mourne and Down District Council deliver the actions for this environment fund for The Ring of Gullion and Strangford & Lecale AONBs, along with the Strangford Lough, Murlough, and Carlingford Lough MPAs.

Our Objectives:

Enhancing Wellbeing Through Healthy Landscapes:

1. Creating environments that contribute to the overall wellbeing of communities.
2. Establishing places where people aspire to live, work, and visit.

Positive Sub-regional Environmental Impact:


1. Implementing initiatives with positive environmental effects at a sub-regional level.
2. Contributing to the overall health and vitality of the areas we manage.

Community Involvement and Support:

1. Securing substantial funding from two local authorities to support our initiatives.
2. Engaging volunteers in project delivery to foster a living, working landscape cherished by all.

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Downpatrick Office
 Downshire Civic Centre
 Downshire Estate, Ardglass Road
 Downpatrick BT30 6GQ

NMDDC Biodiversity Strategy

Action Plan 2024-2030

DRAFT



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

Background

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is working to embed biodiversity across all relevant operations, ensuring that we play our role in enhancing biodiversity through our everyday functions. With the development of this Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan, the Council aims to provide leadership and best practice examples for others. To guide our work over the coming years we will focus on the five key areas of the biodiversity duty;

- The protection of biodiversity
- The maintenance of biodiversity
- Enhancing biodiversity
- Restoring biodiversity
- Promoting the understanding of biodiversity both within and outside the organisation

The Biodiversity Strategy will guide the protection and enhancement of biodiversity across Newry, Mourne and Down District over the next 6 years. The realistic, achievable plan will focus mainly on Council managed estate, but opportunities for partnership working will be explored and developed.

To ensure Council meets our biodiversity commitments and delivers on the biodiversity duty, we will focus action on 5 key themes. These over-arching themes will allow for biodiversity management options to be implemented across a range of habitat types. The themes will be:

Protecting our priority habitats and species

Trees and woodland

Pollinators

Invasive species

Raising awareness and education

Protecting our priority habitats and species						
Ref Number	Action/Target	Who	When	Status	Performance Measure	
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	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Source external project funding where required	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 Global Geopark Masterplan	Geopark Staff and relevant stakeholders (listed in MGS Action Plan)	Ongoing	Currently being finalised	Programme milestones achieved.	

Protecting our priority habitats and species					
Ref Number	Action/Target	Who	When	Status	Performance Measure
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain an updated management plan for the Geopark, reviewed annually. 	Geopark Manager	Annually		Completed annual reviews
1.3	Access funding streams such as PEACEPLUS to deliver biodiversity and conservation action across the district.	Programmes unit staff, Biodiversity Officer, AONB/Geopark staff	Ongoing	Ongoing	Funding received and conservation/biodiversity projects successfully completed
1.4	<p>Ensure all capital projects taking place on/near protected habitats or species are appropriately assessed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out mitigation when required e.g. Black Guillemot nest boxes erected at Annalong Harbour after works to repair the wall filled in nesting holes. 	<p>Capital Projects staff</p> <p>Maintenance staff, Biodiversity Officer</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Replacement and new boxes to be placed by February 2025 ahead of nesting season</p>	<p>Assessments and relevant surveys completed and considered prior to projects taking place.</p> <p>Boxes successfully placed on harbour walls for returning Guillemots</p>

Protecting our priority habitats and species					
Ref Number	Action/Target	Who	When	Status	Performance Measure
1.5	Promote awareness of one flagship species or habitat annually. Engage practical actions where appropriate.	Biodiversity Officer, AONB/Geopark staff	Annually	Ongoing	Number of social media posts and/or practical conservation projects completed.
1.6	Maintain existing service level agreements (SLAs) with the Mourne Heritage Trust (MHT) to continue to manage our habitats and species across the district.	Head of Product Development and Visitor Experience, Geopark/AONB staff	Ongoing	Ongoing	SLAs renewed (overarching agreement annually and AONB/Geopark SLAs when required)

Trees and Woodland					
Ref Number	Action/Target	Who	When	Status	Performance Measure
2.1	Finalise Tree Strategy, which includes a plan of action to increase tree cover across the district in line with the 13% by 2030 target	Grounds Maintenance Manager	September 2023	Ongoing	Final Tree Strategy ratified by Council
	Implement actions in Tree Strategy, including;				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Replacement of old, diseased trees, and sustainable tree planting projects, ensuring a minimum of 90% native species are used.	Grounds Maintenance Staff	Ongoing		# of trees planted (including % native and biodiversity friendly).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Work with local community groups, businesses and other stakeholders on creation of new woodlands across the district.Continue with annual public tree giveaway coordinated by the AONBs and Geopark staff.	Grounds Maintenance staff, AONB/Geopark staff, DEA Coordinators, Biodiversity Officer, MHT and others.	Applications open Nov 2024, planting in Feb/Mar 2025	Funding dependent	# of trees planted on community and public land with support from NMDDC.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Development of a tree nursery in Castlewellan Forest Park, growing local provenance species.		2023		# of local provenance trees grown in the tree nursery and used for planting

Trees and Woodland					
Ref Number	Action/Target	Who	When	Status	Performance Measure
		Grounds Maintenance staff, Castlewellan staff			schemes across the district.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue working on a heritage tree project with partners across Ireland. 		Ongoing		# of heritage trees planted
		Grounds maintenance staff			
2.2	Manage existing Council woodland sites for biodiversity. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Before carrying out any ground works or tree felling, make sure to survey the area for protected species e.g. badgers, bats etc Erect and maintain bat boxes in suitable woodland/parkland sites, near rivers, canals and other water bodies. Extend the 'rewilding initiative' into suitable parkland/woodland sites to 	Maintenance staff, Biodiversity Officer, AONB/Geopark Staff	Ongoing		Record of survey/checks completed. # of bat boxes erected.

Trees and Woodland					
Ref Number	Action/Target	Who	When	Status	Performance Measure
	improve the habitat for pollinators and other invertebrates.				# and area of meadows created and managed.
2.3	Continue with removal of invasive species from Council owned/managed woodlands to allow regeneration of native woodland flora.	Grounds Maintenance Staff	Annually	Ongoing	Annual management programme completed
2.4	Finalise Local Climate Adaptation Plan, which will include targets to increase woodland cover across the district.	Sustainability Officer	March 2025	Ongoing	Published Climate Adaptation Plan.
2.5	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, Building Control staff	Ongoing	Ongoing	# of leaflets posted out to applicants.

Pollinators					
Ref Number	Action/Target	Who	When	Status	Performance Measure
3.1	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	Ongoing	Actions reported annually to AIPP.
3.2	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	Ongoing	# and area of rewilding sites created and managed for pollinators.
3.3	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.
3.4	Work in partnership with DfI to manage key roadside verges for pollinators	Grounds Maintenance Staff, Biodiversity Officer, DfI	Ongoing	Ongoing	# and area of roadside verges managed.

Pollinators					
Ref Number	Action/Target	Who	When	Status	Performance Measure
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	Ongoing	Peat usage phased out by 2025.
3.6	Reduce the quantity of pesticides used on Council managed land. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and declare pesticide free zones (protected and natural habitat sites etc.) 	Grounds Maintenance Staff	Ongoing	Ongoing	% reduction from baseline taken in 2019. # and area of sites that are pesticide free.
3.7	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	Ongoing	# of schemes participated in and promoted annually.

Invasive Species					
Ref Number	Action/Target	Who	When	Status	Performance Measure
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.
4.2	Provide invasive species identification, control, and management training to relevant Council staff. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to record/map invasives on Council owned land 	Biodiversity Officer, NIEA, Grounds Maintenance Staff, Capital projects staff, GIS Officer	Biennially	Ongoing	# of staff trained.
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.
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.
4.5	Continue to provide advice to members of the public on invasive species and their control.	Biodiversity Officer	Ongoing	Ongoing	# Requests for information on Tascomi.

Raising Awareness and Education					
Ref Number	Action/Target	Who	When	Status	Performance Measure
5.1	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.
5.2	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.
5.3	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
5.4	Continue to provide biodiversity educational visits/workshops to schools on request as part of their Eco-schools programme.	Biodiversity Officer	Ongoing	Ongoing	# of school site visits and workshops carried out.
5.5	Continue to inform the public where land is being managed for biodiversity using	Biodiversity Officer, Grounds Maintenance Staff, Marketing	Ongoing	Ongoing	# of signs and PR.

Raising Awareness and Education					
Ref Number	Action/Target	Who	When	Status	Performance Measure
	interpretive signs, social media, and press releases.				
5.6	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.
5.7	Encourage the public to get involved in practical activities and habitat restoration projects to increase the numbers of our priority species.	Biodiversity Officer, AONB/Geopark staff, Tourism staff	Ongoing	Ongoing	# of volunteers annually.
	Recruit a Volunteer and Outreach Officer as part of the Geopark to coordinate a conservation volunteer programme.		2024	Completed	

Biodiversity Strategy 2024-2030 Public Consultation Report

Introduction

This report presents the findings of an online public consultation conducted by DTNI for Newry, Mourne and Down Council's Biodiversity Strategy 2024-2030. The purpose of this survey was to gather insights regarding the community's thoughts about the aims and focus of the strategy, and to collect feedback on the areas prioritised by the community.

Methodology

The survey consisted of nine questions. The survey was hosted on the Speak NMD online platform, and distributed through social media. The consultation ran from Friday 1st December 2023 to Friday 9th February 2024.

Respondent Demographics

Total respondents during live window: 38

Answering as: The majority of respondents answered as a 'Person living in NI'.

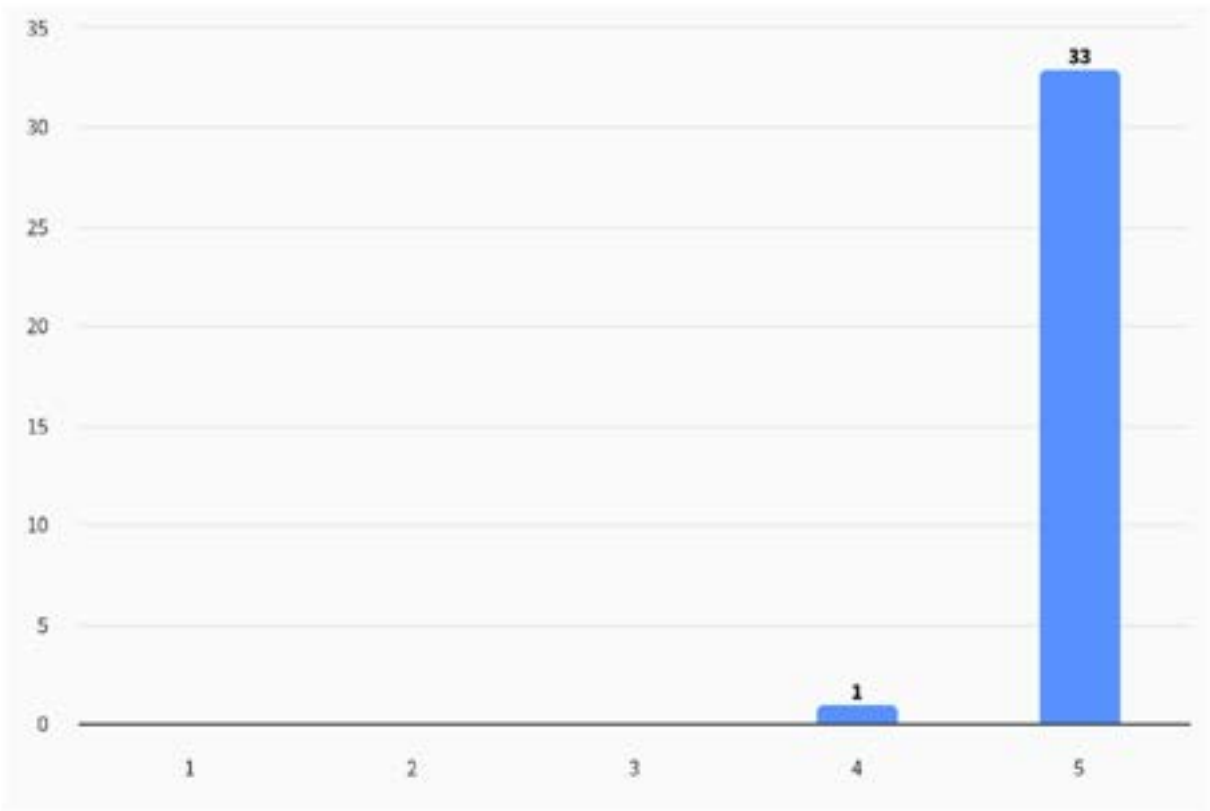
Survey Findings and Analysis

1. Biodiversity Protection Sentiment

Question: Please tell us how important protecting biodiversity is to you

Response: From 1 for 'Not at all important' to 5 'Extremely important'

0 : 0%
25 : 0%
50 : 0%
75 : 2.94%
100 : 97.06%



Analysis:

The overwhelming majority of respondents (97.06%) rated the importance of protecting biodiversity as 'Extremely important' (rating of 5). This indicates a strong sentiment within the community towards the significance of biodiversity preservation. The high percentage of respondents giving the highest rating suggests a widespread recognition of the critical role biodiversity plays in ecological health, human well-being, and the sustainability of ecosystems. This level of importance attributed to biodiversity protection highlights a clear mandate for the council to prioritise initiatives that conserve and enhance local biodiversity in its strategy.

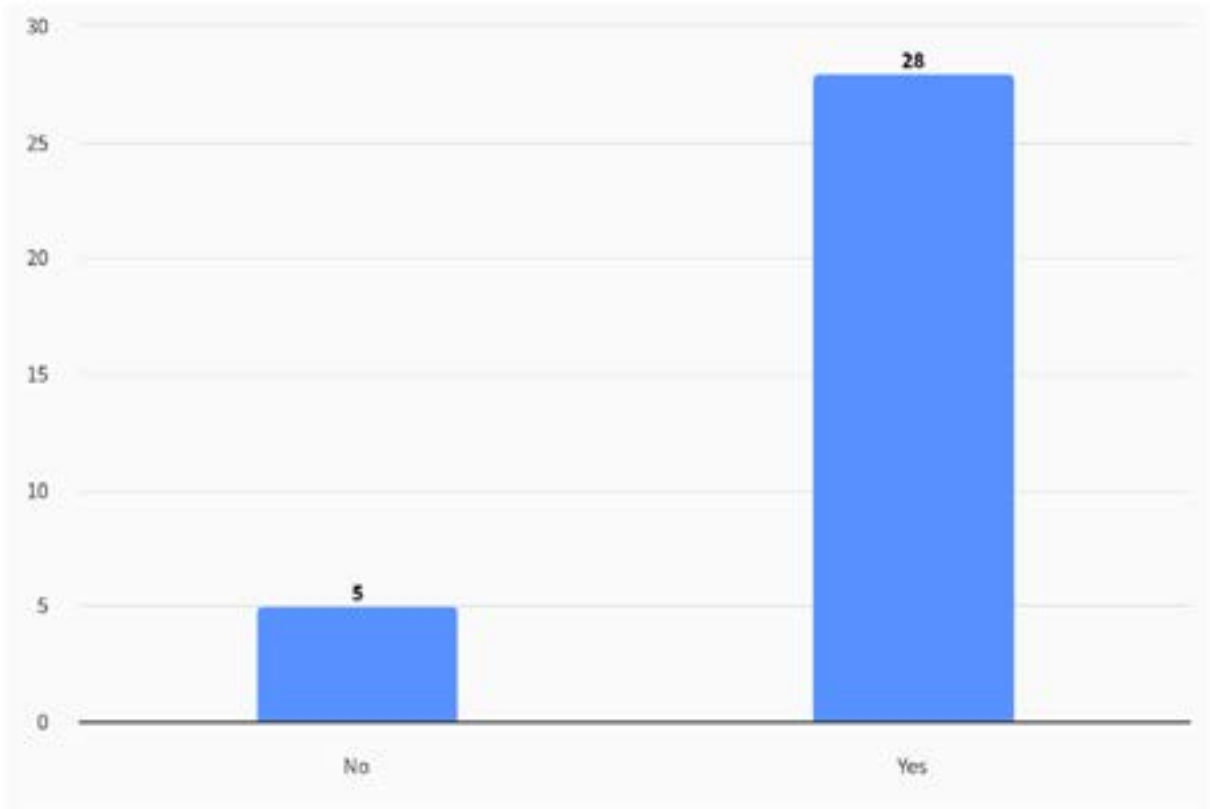
2. Strategy Aims

Question: Do you agree with the three aims of this strategy?

Response:

Yes: 84.85%

No: 15.15%



Question: If you disagree with the proposed aims of the Biodiversity Strategy, please tell us why

Response:

'We do not have a rich biodiversity. It is greatly degraded by human activity. We do have remnants of unique species populations and communities and diverse habitats'

'Regarding your planting of wildflowers for pollinators, the images you have used appear to be non-native wildflowers from wildflower seeds packets, which serve nowhere near the same role as our native wildflowers'

'Reducing mowing, introducing yellow rattle seed and allowing meadows to naturally form is what should be done here. There is a plethora of information from experts in this matter and I hope I don't see cornflower/poppy seed mixes being used in the council in an attempt to greenwash road sides quickly and cheaply!'

'If you need more advice contact experts'

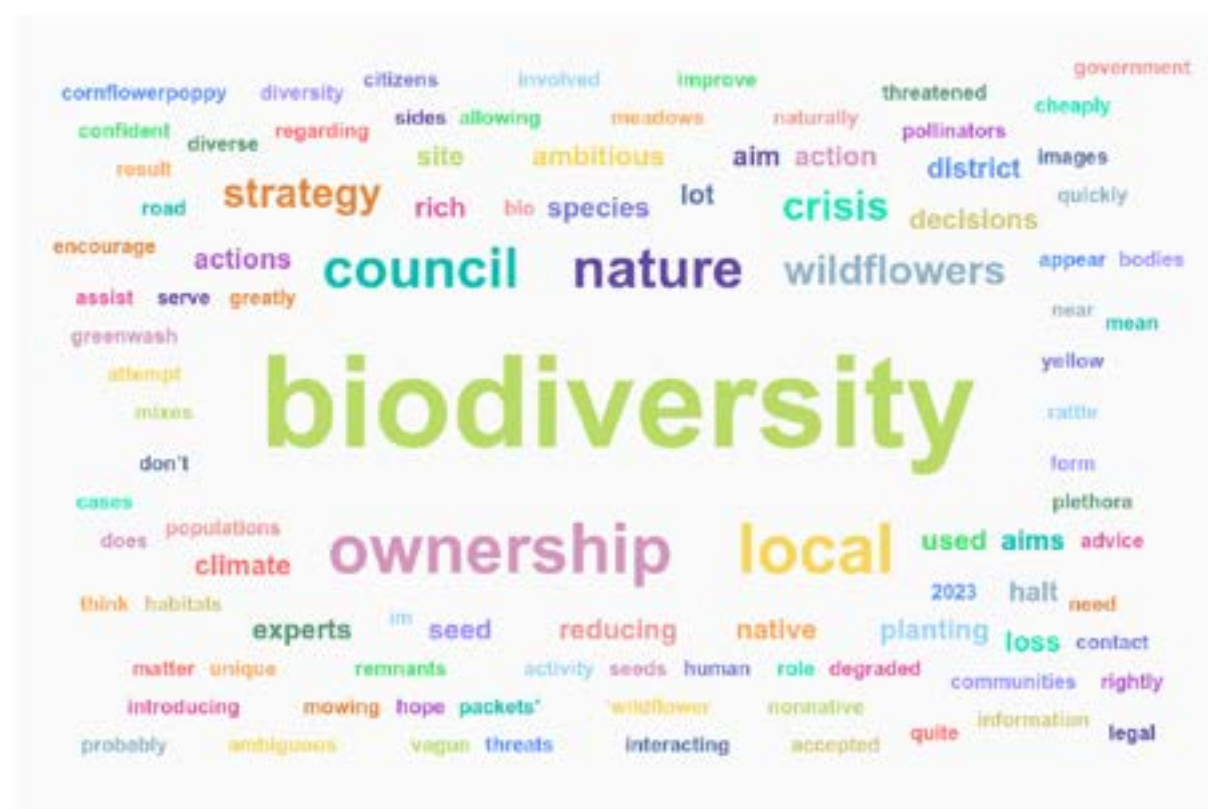
'I'm less than confident that local ownership will always result in decisions to put biodiversity first'

'1. Much of our biodiversity is threatened rather than rich. The Council has accepted quite rightly that there is a biodiversity crisis interacting with the climate crisis. 2.and of the threats to it. 3. Local ownership is too vague and ambiguous. Does it mean legal ownership? Probably not in most cases'

'I think it should be more than local ownership. The Council and Government Bodies such as Forest Service own a lot of land across the district and they could be doing a lot more in regards planting native species at each site and reducing felling/mowing at each site'

'They are limited in scope and not ambitious enough for the climate and biodiversity crisis. There should be provision for emergency action and funding, especially in light of the flooding in the District. The Council itself needs to be reformed to prioritise these aims, and lose its corporate focus and neoliberal economic approach to management of finances'

'This is a Biodiversity Strategy, although it seems to be a continuation of the previous Local Biodiversity Action Plan. The key aim of this strategy should be to halt the loss of biodiversity in the Newry Mourne and Down area. In the recent State of Nature Report 2023, NI ranks as the 12th worst country in the world in terms of biodiversity loss. To halt and reverse this decline will require ambitious targets, for which there can be no excuse not to deliver. People rely on nature for our survival and nature also has a right to exist. The one and only aim of this strategy should be to help nature to recover. The other proposed aims of education and local ownership are means to an end, they should not be the purpose of this document and its subsequent actions'



Analysis:

The majority of respondents (84.85%) agree with the three aims outlined in the Biodiversity Strategy. This indicates a general alignment between the proposed aims and the sentiments of the community. However, the minority who disagreed provided valuable insights that warrant attention.

Several respondents expressed concerns about the strategy's focus on local ownership and education, suggesting that these aspects may not adequately address the urgent need to protect biodiversity. Criticisms included the perception that the aims were not ambitious

enough to tackle the biodiversity crisis effectively and that they lacked specific measures for emergency action and funding.

Moreover, respondents highlighted the importance of using native species in conservation efforts and cautioned against the use of non-native wildflowers. They emphasised the need for more ambitious targets to halt and reverse biodiversity loss, especially given the area's current ecological challenges.

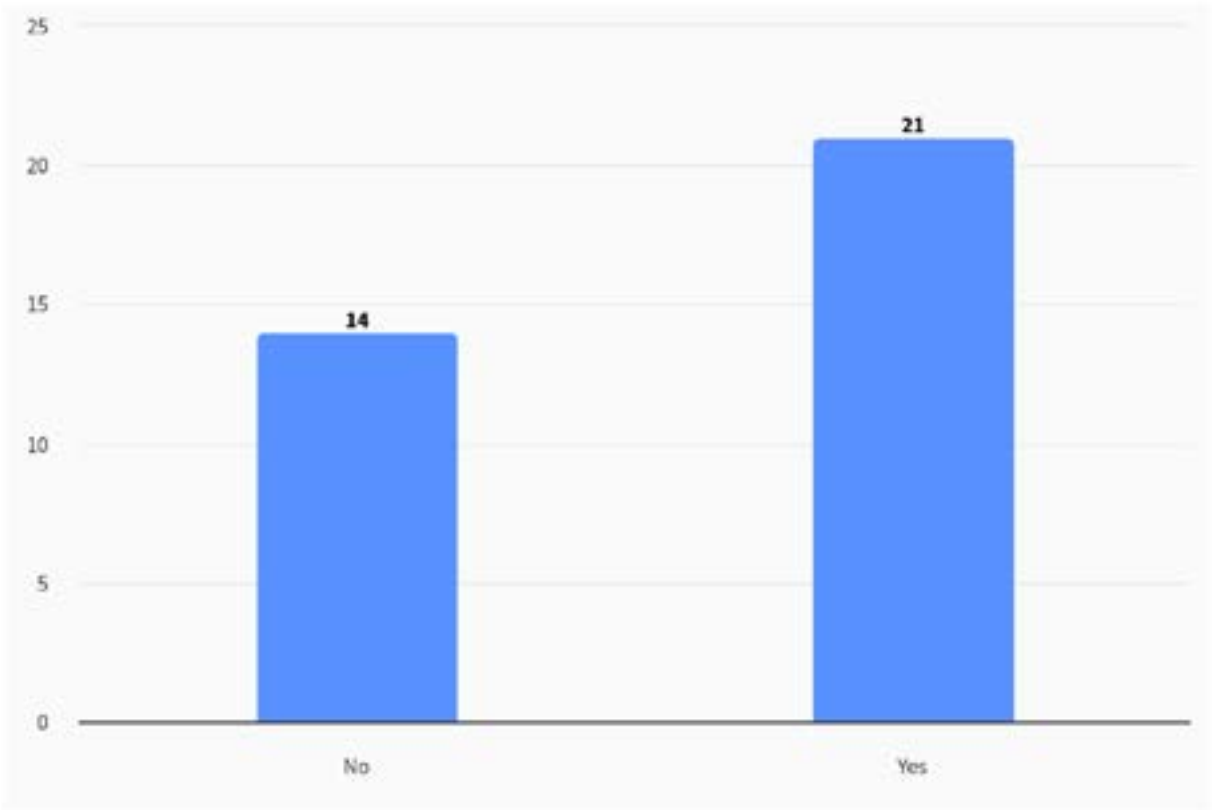
3. Additional Aims

Question: Are there any additional aims you feel should be included within the strategy?

Response:

Yes: 60%

No: 40%



Question: If you answered yes, please provide details

Response:

'To work in partnership with neighbouring authorities to protect and manage biodiversity where bioregions are spread over administrative boundaries'

'Restoration of lost biodiversity'

'Do not ignore the aquatic environment. Councils can lobby DAERA and other relevant departments to ensure they meet their statutory responsibilities as well as address the aspirations of people in NMD'

'The ploughing up of the countryside around Warrenpoint and its coastline for housing. More protection is required'

'I think there needs a plugged for carbon natural on all council buildings and vehicles'

'Regarding litter issues which are rampant around Newry, opportunities to allow people to attend litter-picking sessions coupled with environmental education would be beneficial for everyone'

'Protection of species and their habitats must come before considerations such as developing tourism. One example of retrograde steps by NMD council is the current attempt to run a gondola up to Thomas Quarry and put a restaurant there. It shows total disrespect for our natural heritage as well as being a massive waste of money that could be used to much greater benefit of both locals and visitors'

'Show people the benefit of planting wasteland with flowers and shrubs and how to even grow some vegetables to reduce carbon footprint on importation and seasonal options of veg. I feel connecting by growing something is a huge way to make people appreciate nature'

'Mowed grassland on council property should be converted to wildflower meadows'

'To give full weight to the climate and biodiversity crises in all council decisions relating to biodiversity'

'Working in partnership with other public bodies (eg forestry service) to ensure consistency'

'Partnership with other public bodies'

'The use of weed killers and other chemicals on roads and parks. NONE of these are safe for our bees and pollinators. Not even herbicides have been proven to affect both honey and bumblebees. So I believe that the council should find other ways. Remembering weeds are

wildflowers. Also need protection for the mountain goats whose numbers have dropped dramatically and in some places disappeared'

'To improve the biodiversity in the district. Helping groups to provide food and shelter for species to improve the biodiversity in the area'

'Climate emergency planning, Just Transition planning, council reform to prioritise environmental justice, green representatives and net zero within Council buildings, Planning Reform, agricultural management reform, sewage management'

'Focus on how sustainable and active transport can help reduce climate change and increase biodiversity by reducing pollution. We need far better infrastructure to move away from car usage'

'Specific projects with defined timeline eg. creation of bee friendly environments. The strategy is vague in areas and specifics'

'This is more an observation of what has not been mentioned.. the Gateway project of the gondola in Donard Park. Have you come to your senses and realised it was a ridiculous idea in the first place. Or, is it still on the cards and to be done while drawing as little attention to it as possible? If that be the case, I have to ask what vested interests are being served, because it does not fit with anything you have stated in the draft strategy!'

'We would suggest that given the Council's areas of responsibility, the aims of the strategy should be: Protection of biodiversity, enhancement of biodiversity, restoration of biodiversity and managing the threats to biodiversity and a final aim of raising awareness and involvement of local people and visitors to the district'



Analysis:

The survey results indicate a considerable proportion of respondents (60%) believe that additional aims should be included within the biodiversity strategy. Their suggestions encompass a broad range of concerns and priorities, reflecting the diverse perspectives within the community regarding biodiversity conservation and management.

Several respondents emphasised the importance of collaboration and partnership with neighbouring authorities and other public bodies to protect and manage biodiversity effectively, particularly where regions span administrative boundaries. Restoration of lost biodiversity also emerged as a significant theme, with respondents stressing the importance of reversing ecological damage and preserving habitats threatened by development or degradation. Concerns were also raised about specific environmental issues, such as littering, habitat destruction due to urban expansion, and the use of chemicals harmful to pollinators.

Additionally, respondents highlighted the need for proactive measures to mitigate the impacts of climate change, including climate emergency planning and the promotion of sustainable and active transport options to reduce pollution and enhance biodiversity.

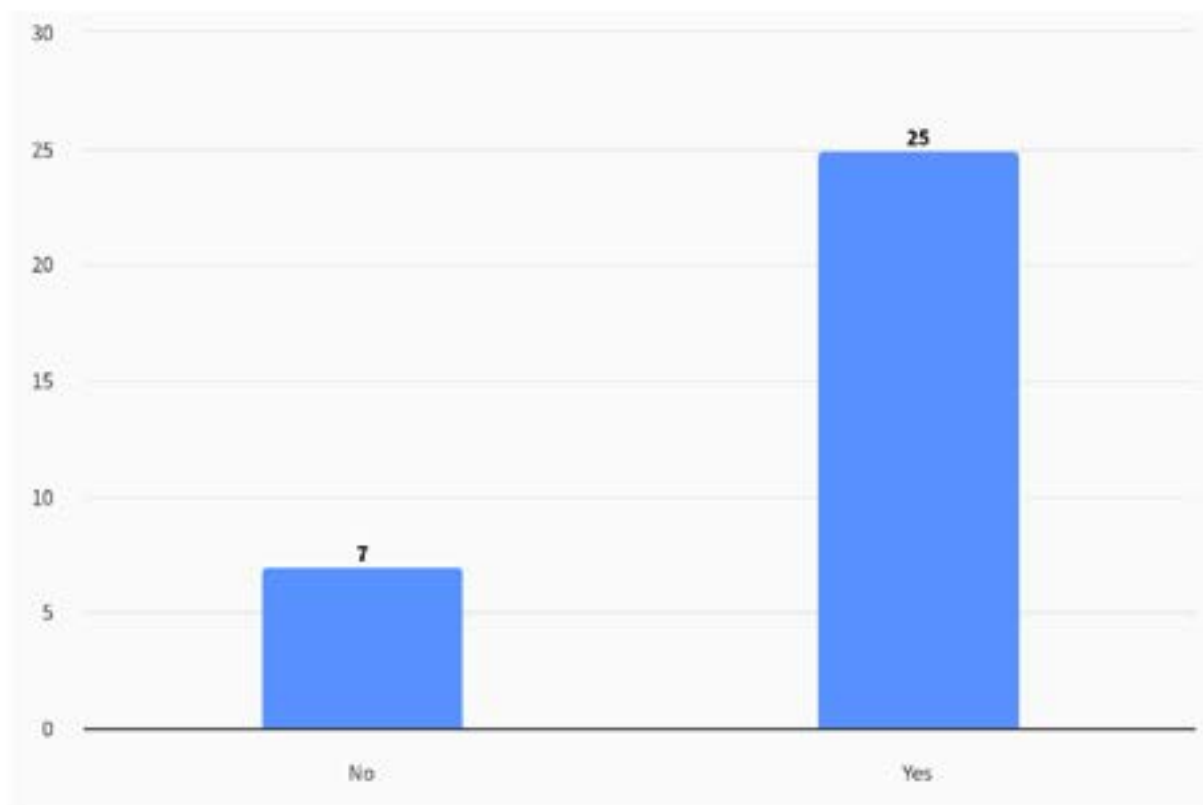
4. Trees & Woodlands

Question: The strategy identifies trees and woodland as a key theme. Do you agree with the proposed approach within the strategy for this theme?

Response:

Yes: 78.13%

No: 21.88%



Question: If you disagree, please provide specific details

Response:

'Trees are part of the answer recycling, new ways of working and no more impact on the environment'

'In general I like the approach but I think it should give stronger emphasis to protecting veteran trees. Also, the importance of wide and high hedges of varied native species with trees spaced along them should be highlighted, as corridors of connectivity between woodlands'

'Heathland, bogs, meadows, wetlands and coasts deserve attention as well as trees'

'It's hard to judge without seeing the Tree Strategy. It would be better if some of the actions from the tree strategy could be listed in the biodiversity strategy. How will the Council work with partners? Will they provide resources such as staff, funding for trees, mapping of areas to target to plant trees, farm plans, etc????? Is there a target for how many trees will be grown at the tree nursery. Are the plans to use the learning from the Islands Park project in other parts of the District? How long is the project in Islands Park?'

'There's not sufficient focus on protecting ancient oak trees. Non-native trees should not be used for afforestation projects'

'There needs to be much more emphasis on retaining existing trees and woodland. Scientific studies reported in New Scientist and elsewhere constantly record the dire effects of losing existing habitat and the failure of most replanting. Yet I witness Council wilfully destroying trees and woodland and planning projects such as the Mourne Gateway which will lead to that destruction. It also constantly approves planning applications that involve removal of trees and hedges, that are either not replaced, or are replaced by species of little biodiversity benefit. In what I have witnessed, Council appears to have very poor knowledge of the biodiversity value of different trees and hedging plants, as in their destruction of hawthorns in a hedge in our village and retention of sycamores'

'Woodlands are only one of many important habitats within the District. There are some habitats that are much more rare and fragile. While we would agree with the inclusion of trees and woodland within the strategy, some of NI's most important designated sites occur here. They include Eastern Mourne SAC, Western Mourne ASSI, Slieve Gullion SAC, Lecale fens SAC, Murlough ASSI and SAC and Strangford Lough SAC. Important habitats include peatlands, estuarine habitats, species-rich grassland, rocky shores, dry upland heath, fens and sand dune systems, etc. All of these habitats should be included, not just trees and woodland. In addition, the actions described in the draft strategy are very unambitious. Council plays a key role in protection of habitats through its role in Planning, which has potential to affect all of the habitats in the district'

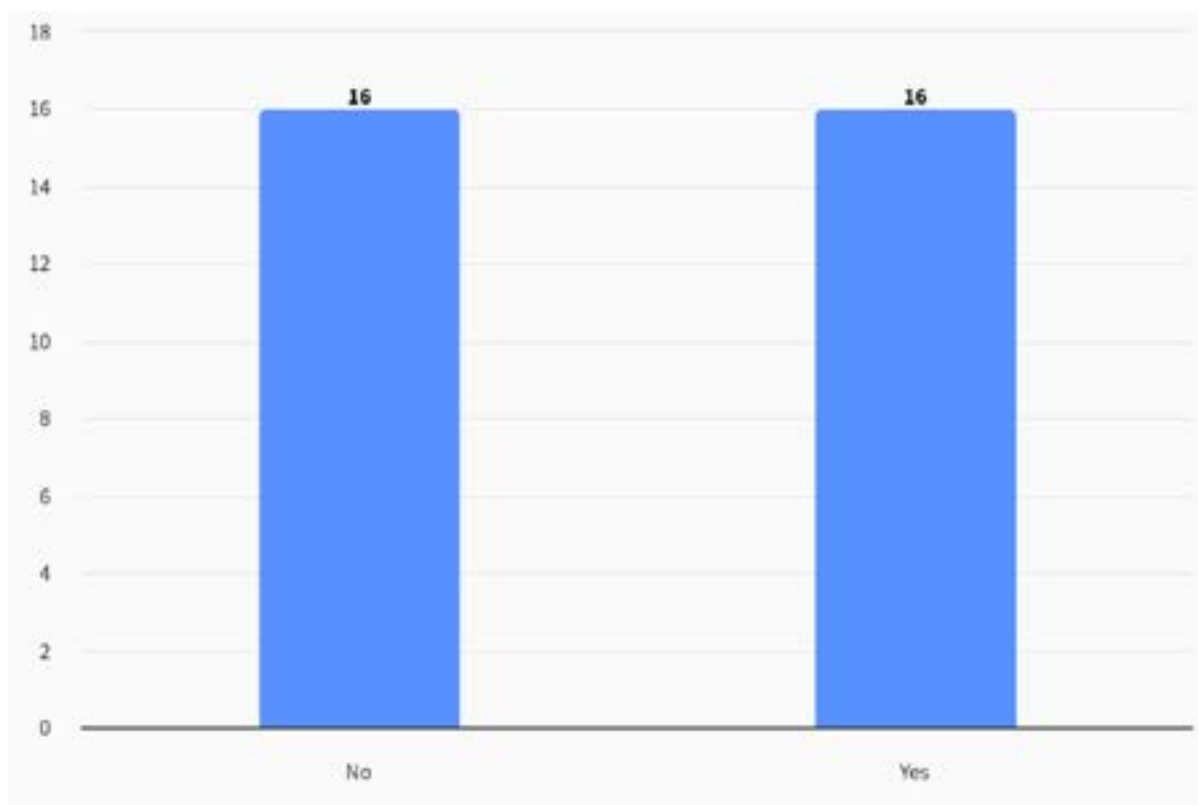


Question: Are there any other actions you feel should be included for trees and woodland?

Response:

Yes: 50%

No: 50%



Question: If you answered yes, please provide details

Response:

'To plant trees and other native wildlife plants on not only council land but partnering with other landowners to create woodland belts and corridors'

'Encourage more community tree planting schemes. Especially with school groups. Tree planting is a wonderful and fun outdoor activity for young people as well as being educational. Physical benefits of being outdoors in fresh air as well as young people learning about the importance of trees for all life'

'It should be native trees'

'Wild flowers on all grass land that is not used for sport, link up with DFI to do same on all grass verges'

'Though I agree woodlands are a vital component that needs to be addressed, I am weary of the council's previous use of non-native trees. There is no excuse for planting sycamore, beech, maples or any other non-native trees when there are plenty of sources of indigenous trees in the council, e.g. Rostrevor Oakwood. Additionally, tree planting should be a secondary

response to habitat restoration. Allowing for the natural regeneration of woodland but reducing grazing should be a priority. We need to see from the council plans on prioritising natural regeneration on allotted land close to established native woodland. At every opportunity, woodland should be allowed to naturally regenerate. Planting can supplement the process'

'Deer are eating young trees. Reintroducing predator species (former native wolves?) would help. It might also deter a few of the lazy campers who leave mountains of trash and broken bottles in our forests and mountains'

'Don't destroy Donard wood by putting a useless gondola on it! Preserve the beautiful mature trees there instead!'

'Work with farmers to encourage richer hedges and to plant woodland and scrub areas along river banks to minimise slurry run-off into rivers'

'Wider planting of native broadleaf food species eg. apples and hazels in council owned land'

'Ongoing commitment to appropriate management of woodlands rather than just planting new trees'

'Mapping of the district to identify where planting of trees could increase connectivity of habitats - develop a citizen science project to get community groups involved in the mapping. Closer relationship with Forest Service in regards replanting of their forest to increase biodiversity. Asking that their biodiversity targets are per forest rather than Forest Plans which include a number of forests which is diluting their biodiversity targets across a large area'

'Increased investment. Focus on preserving and restoring ancient oaks'

'A litter management project that will support woodland accessibility'

'Protect existing trees from manmade developments and construction including Donard Park!'

'Protection of trees and woodland through use of Tree Preservation Orders (a Planning function), production of a published list of existing TPOs and strong enforcement action for breaches. There could be a whole section on working with key stakeholders such as landowners and Forest Service to ensure planting of native woodland and removal of inappropriate planting on for example peatland sites and the use of non-native conifers. Council should also use only native species in urban planting schemes and landscaping around

Council facilities. A policy covering the management of existing woodland and parkland would be very useful eg. through retention of deadwood for fungi and invertebrates'



Analysis:

The survey results demonstrate a general agreement (78.13%) with the proposed approach for trees and woodland within the biodiversity strategy. However, a notable minority raised specific concerns, including the need for stronger emphasis on protecting veteran trees, diversifying habitats beyond woodlands, and ensuring clarity on implementation and resource allocation. Criticisms were also directed towards the perceived lack of ambition in proposed actions and the potential negative impacts of non-native tree species. Respondents suggested various actions to enhance trees and woodland conservation efforts, including community tree planting schemes, promoting native species, collaborating with landowners, and preserving existing trees through stronger enforcement measures and planning policies. Incorporating these suggestions could bolster the strategy's effectiveness and ensure a more comprehensive approach to trees and woodland conservation in the area.

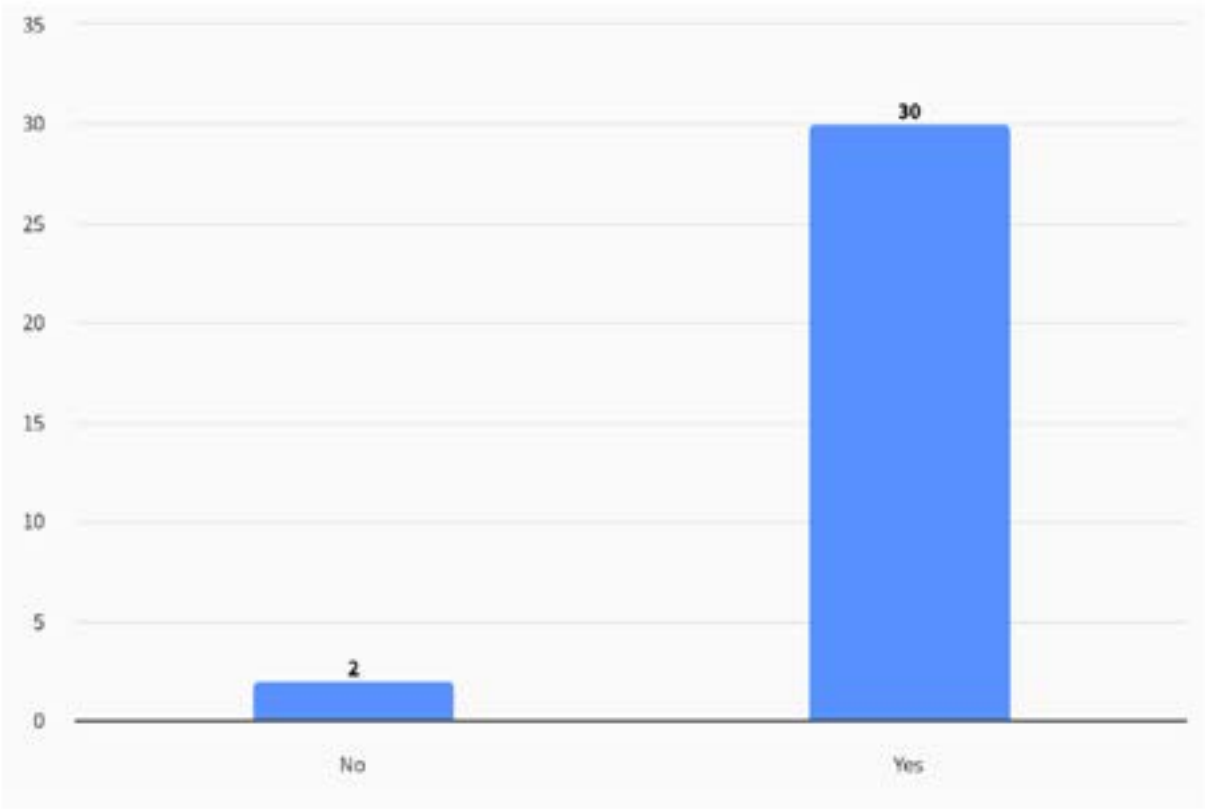
5. Pollinators & Other Invertebrates

Question: The strategy identifies pollinators and other invertebrates as a key theme. Do you agree with the proposed approach within the strategy for this theme?

Response:

Yes: 93.75%

No: 6.25%



Question: If you disagree, please provide specific details

Response:

'Needs more detail about how the actions, etc. will be delivered from the All Ireland Pollinator Plan. Will the Biodiversity Fund from the Council help with this? Will this be available until 2030??'

'The approach is not radical enough. It is window dressing. There is no willingness to manage farmland and planning in a way that will address this crisis'

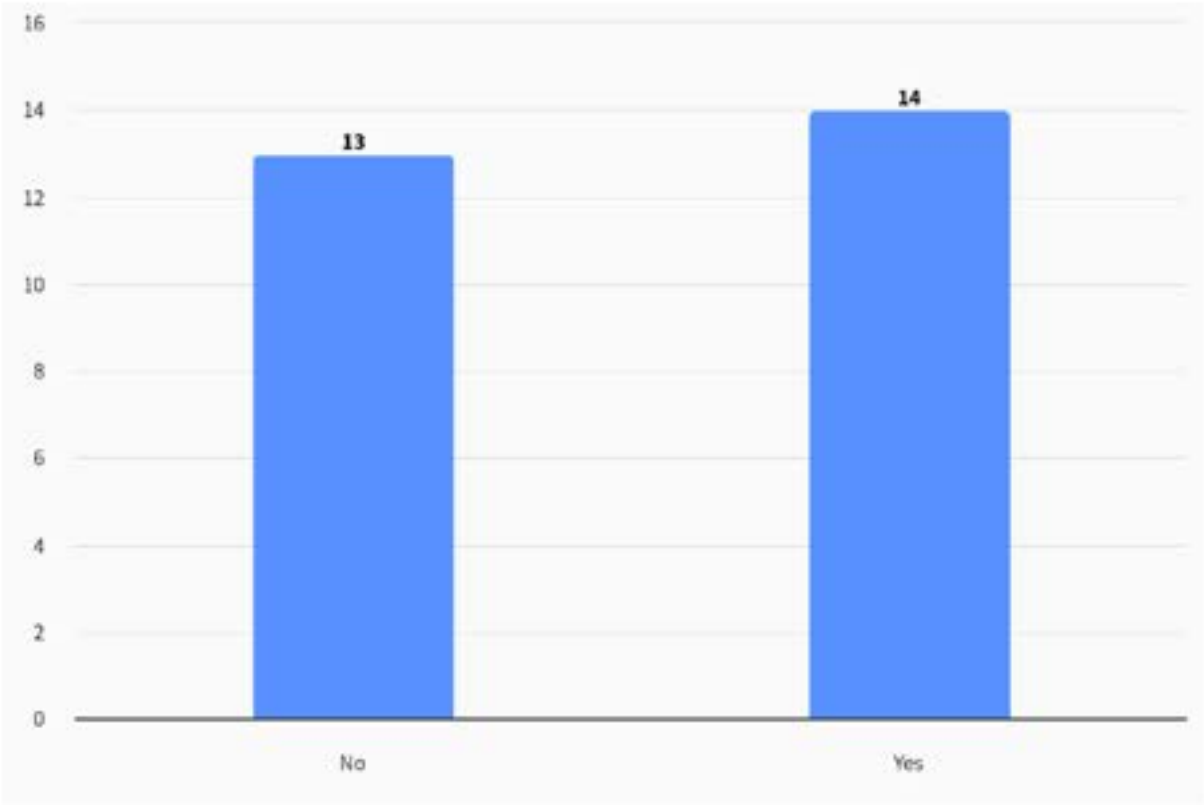
farmland planning address
council available approach
actions irelandway
window plan 2030 pollinator
crisis delivered needs radical
help fund biodiversity
manage willingness dressing

Question: Are there any other actions you feel should be included for pollinators and other invertebrates?

Response:

Yes: 51.85%

No: 48.15%



Question: If you answered yes, please provide details

Response:

‘Plant pollinating plants on roadsides’

‘More butterflies and moths identification events liked guided walks over reserves to highlight and educate people about their importance’

‘There needs to be resetting’

‘Work with all community groups and schools to do more. Stop giving grants to businesses to paint their buildings, open up more green spaces for people to use’

‘As mentioned before, not using store-bought non-native wildflower mixes’

‘They need vital habitat areas and food plants and insects to survive’

‘Wild flower meadows’

'Roadside verges and many council areas should be managed as a mosaic of mainly self-seeded native wildflower habitats. Herbicide spraying, except in the case of a few difficult invasives, should be replaced by hand weeding if required. Use the money spent on chemicals to pay seasonal workers instead'

'A complete ban on glyphosate and neonicotinoids on all council owned land'

'Zero tolerance on pesticide and herbicide use within the council. Spraying is a regular occurrence and education within council staff should be a priority'

'Mapping of where these projects are happening and where projects could be developed to expand these areas for pollinators. Are there any plans to carry out more surveying of pollinators in the area?'

'Plans to encourage the public to make their gardens biodiversity friendly. Encouraging the Government to provide more provision in the CAP reform for the development of wildflower meadows?'

'Banning pesticides'

'Resources and funding for communities to create invertebrate corridors with native shrubs/hedges and wildflowers. Removing pesticides like glyphosate. The establishment of bee colonies'

'Not all invertebrates are pollinators but nonetheless provide vital functions to ecosystems. There are many invertebrates that are NI Priority Species and these should be considered. How the Council manages its own land is important. For example, the grass verges along the Newry Canal towpath are cut right in the prime season for native wildflowers. Council should move to a cutting regime in August or September which allows the plants to flower and set seed. The wide scale use of herbicide and pesticides should be stopped'



Analysis:

The overwhelming majority of respondents (93.75%) expressed agreement with the proposed approach for pollinators and other invertebrates within the biodiversity strategy. However, a small percentage disagreed, citing concerns about the level of detail regarding implementation and the perceived lack of radical measures to address the biodiversity crisis, particularly in agricultural and planning practices.

Respondents who suggested additional actions for pollinators and other invertebrates emphasised the importance of creating habitat corridors, promoting native wildflowers, and implementing bans on harmful pesticides. Suggestions included planting pollinator-friendly plants on roadsides, organising identification events for butterflies and moths, and encouraging community involvement in biodiversity-friendly gardening practices. Concerns were also raised about the need for stricter regulations on pesticide use and the importance of adopting cutting regimes that allow wildflowers to flourish along public spaces like grass verges. These responses highlight the community's desire for more proactive measures to support pollinators and other invertebrates and underscore the importance of integrating these suggestions into the biodiversity strategy to enhance its effectiveness in protecting these vital species.

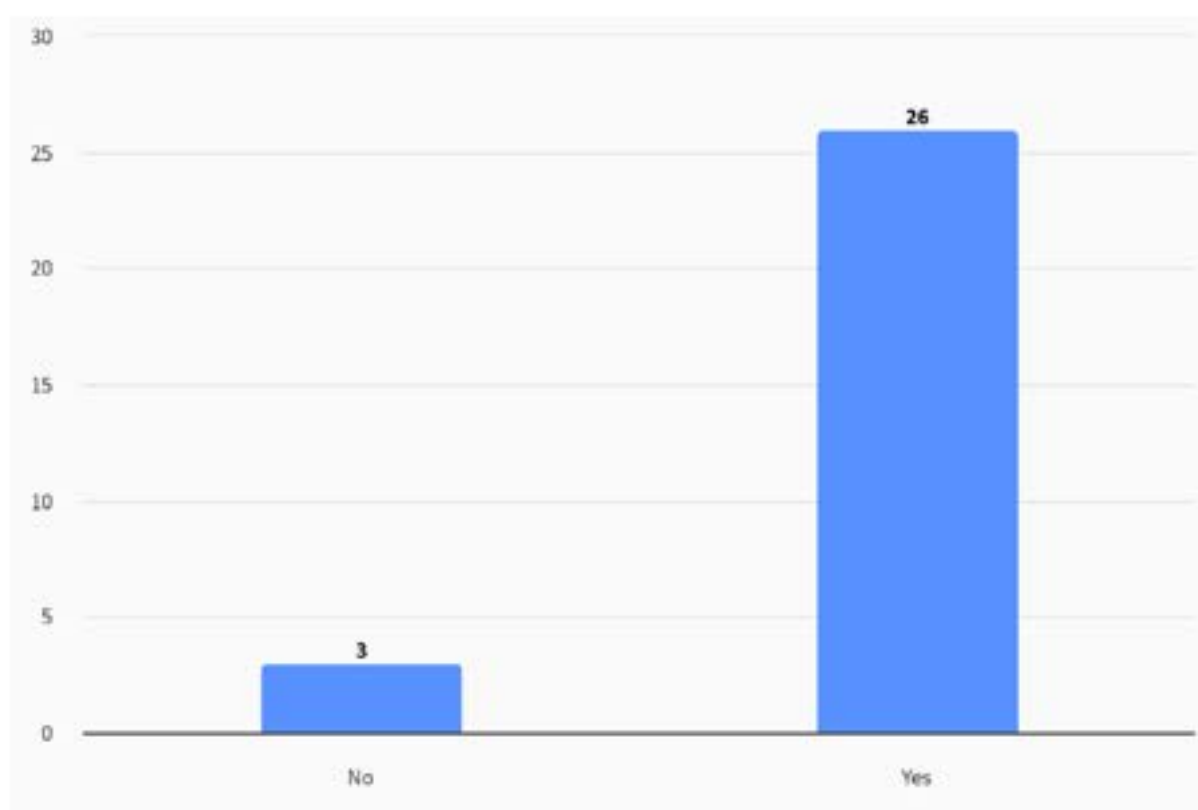
6. Invasive Alien Species

Question: The strategy identifies invasive alien species as a key theme. Do you agree with the proposed approach within the strategy for this theme?

Response:

Yes: 89.66%

No: 10.34%



Question: If you disagree, please provide specific details

Response:

'Is there plans to carry out removal of invasive rhododendron and cherry laurel in other forest parks? No mention of Grey Squirrels and its control in the district?'

'Invasive alien species need to be banned and a concerted plan needs to rectify existing problems but prevent new ones with radical action on a quicker timescale. The approach is not radical enough'

'Invasive species are only one of many threats to biodiversity. We feel it would be more useful to include more habitats and species as Themes and then include invasive alien species under management or protection of biodiversity. Grey squirrels should be included in the list of invasive species and actions taken to control them as they are a threat to our red squirrels'

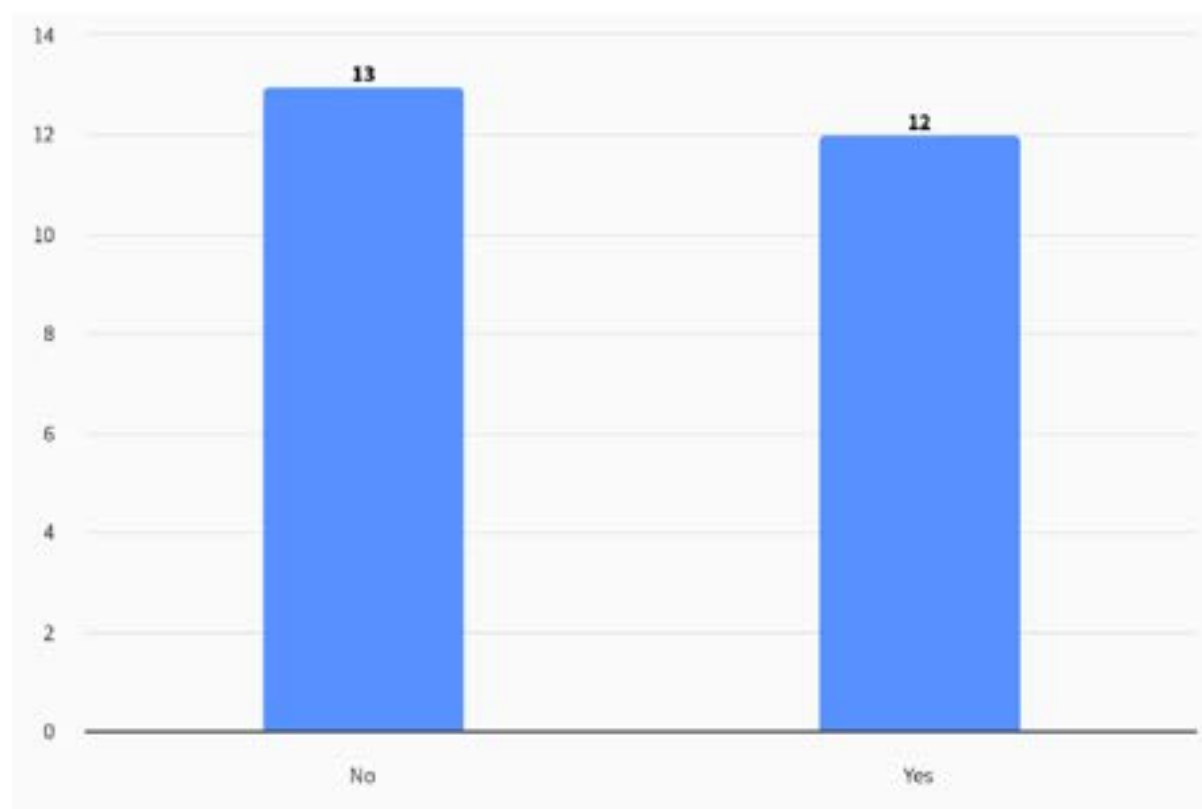


Question: Are there any other actions you feel should be included for invasive alien species?

Response:

Yes: 48%

No: 52%



Question: If you answered yes, please provide details

Response:

'To work with landowners public and private to clear Himalayan balsam, laurel and rhododendrons from some our most special and natural habitats and to educate the public and garden centres not to plant in gardens near these special areas'

'No glyphosate'

'They need to be removed immediately unlike what is happening now'

'Public invasive species removal events such as pulling Himalayan Balsam can be done to engage people with species removal and nature recovery'

'Additionally, targeting sources of invasives should be the priority. There are copious amounts of ***** Knotweed around Newry Greenway. The Glen in Newry is also infested in cherry Laurel and could be with the proper management, a lovely woodland walk within Newry'

'Publically available Safe removal procedures for invasive species that can be carried out by anyone interested enough to part take'

'Regular monitoring for invasive species to enable swift action!'

'Educate citizens to the problems caused by grey squirrels and the significance in the return of pine martens in saving the red squirrel population'

'Be honest about the need to cull grey squirrels and other non native species'

'Money made available for land owners or for council to carry out work to get rid of invasive plants etc. on private land'

'Working with Red Squirrel Groups to control grey squirrels in the area'

'Import restrictions within businesses and agriculture or forestry within the Council area'

'Fines for anyone found to be responsible for their deliberate introduction'



Analysis:

The majority of respondents (89.66%) agreed with the proposed approach for addressing invasive alien species within the biodiversity strategy. However, a notable minority (10.34%) expressed dissent, citing concerns about the level of detail regarding specific actions and the perceived need for a more radical approach to tackle invasive species.

Respondents who suggested additional actions for invasive alien species emphasised the importance of proactive measures such as targeted removal of invasive plants like Himalayan balsam and rhododendron, public engagement through removal events, and education campaigns to raise awareness about the impact of invasive species. Suggestions also included implementing import restrictions, providing funding for invasive species removal on private land, and working collaboratively with red squirrel groups to control grey squirrel populations.

These responses highlight the community's recognition of the threat posed by invasive alien species and the need for comprehensive strategies to mitigate their impact on biodiversity. Incorporating these suggestions into the biodiversity strategy can enhance its effectiveness in addressing invasive species and safeguarding native ecosystems.

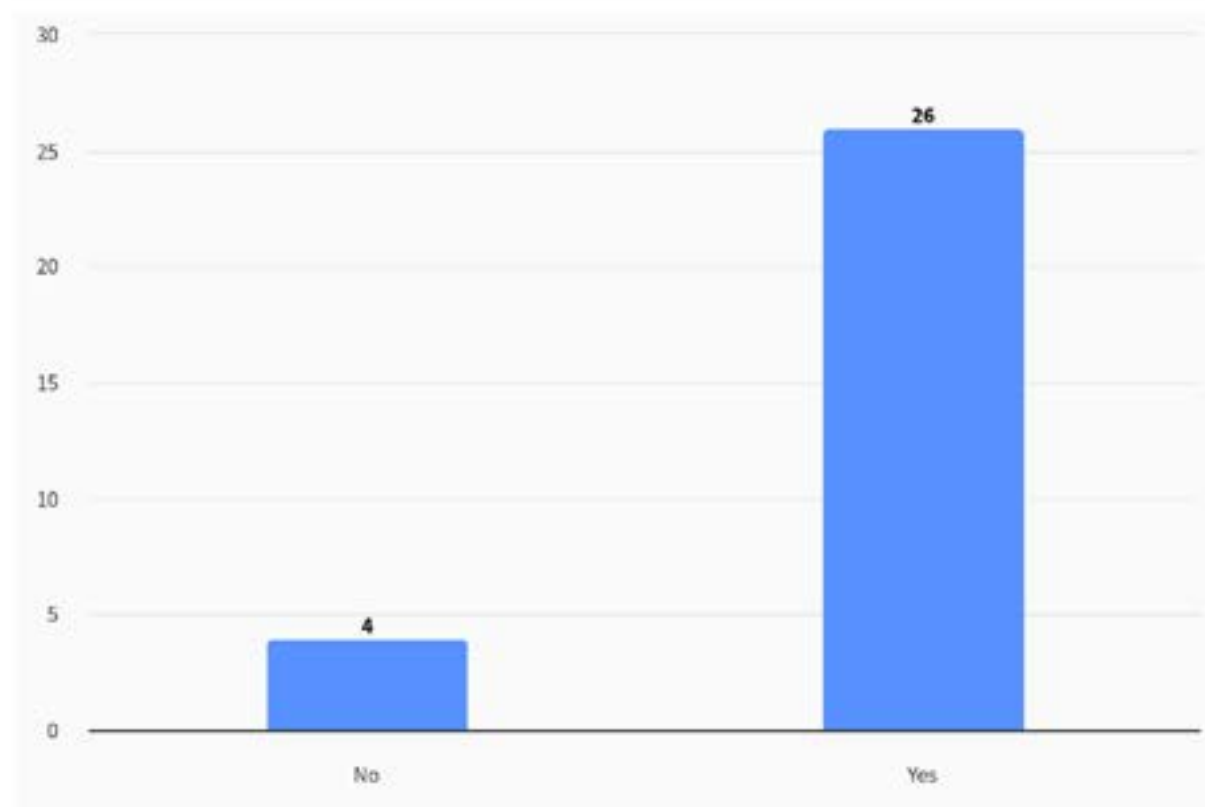
7. Raising Awareness & Education

Question: The strategy identifies raising awareness and education as a key theme. Do you agree with the proposed approach within the strategy for this theme?

Response:

Yes: 86.67%

No: 13.33%



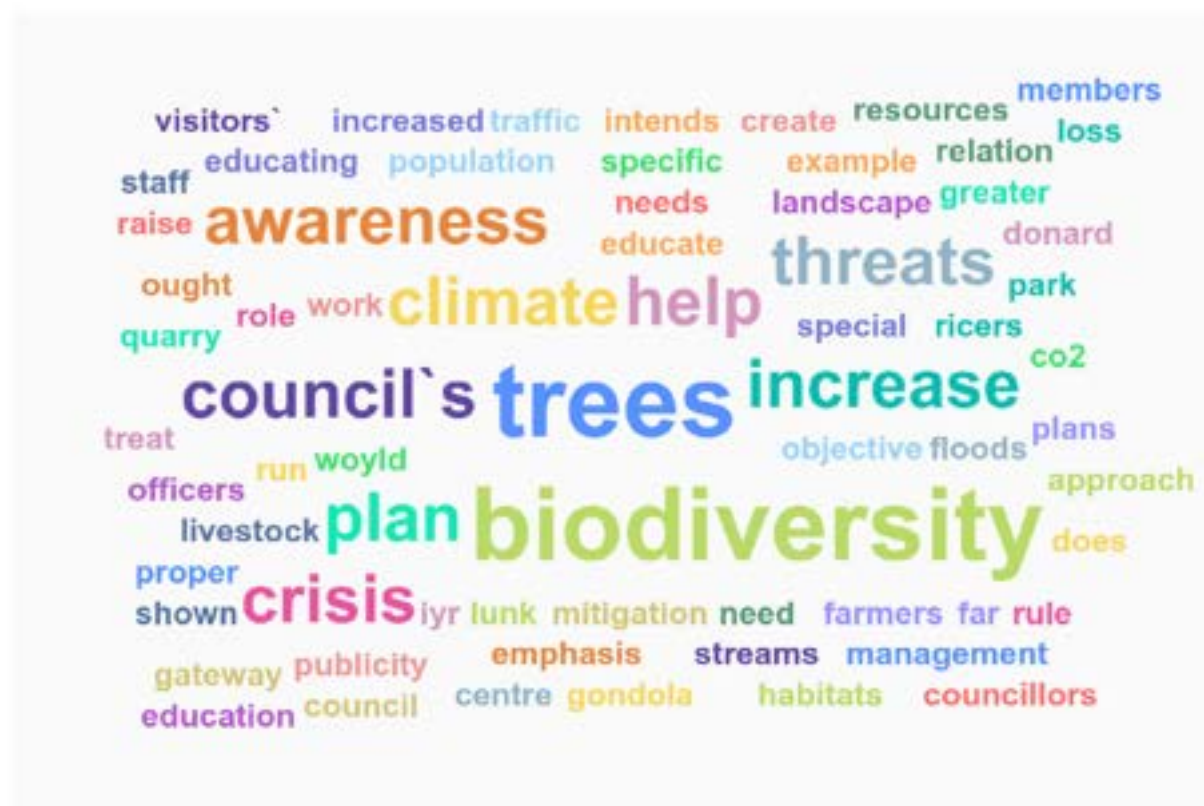
Question: If you disagree, please provide specific details

Response:

'A special objective would be to educate and work with farmers on the need for trees and that climate mitigation needs trees on landscape and trees can help with livestock management. Link to run off to our rivers and streams and increase in floods'

'There should be a much greater emphasis on the council's role in educating itself and the population on the threats to biodiversity. A specific example would be the council's publicity so far in relation to the Gateway plan. Many councillors and officers have not shown a proper awareness of the threats to habitats and biodiversity from a gondola from Donard Park to a visitors' centre in the quarry. The climate crisis ought to rule out the increased traffic and CO2 which this plan intends to create'

'Is there any plans to increase the resources in the Council to help raise awareness and education eg. staff members?'

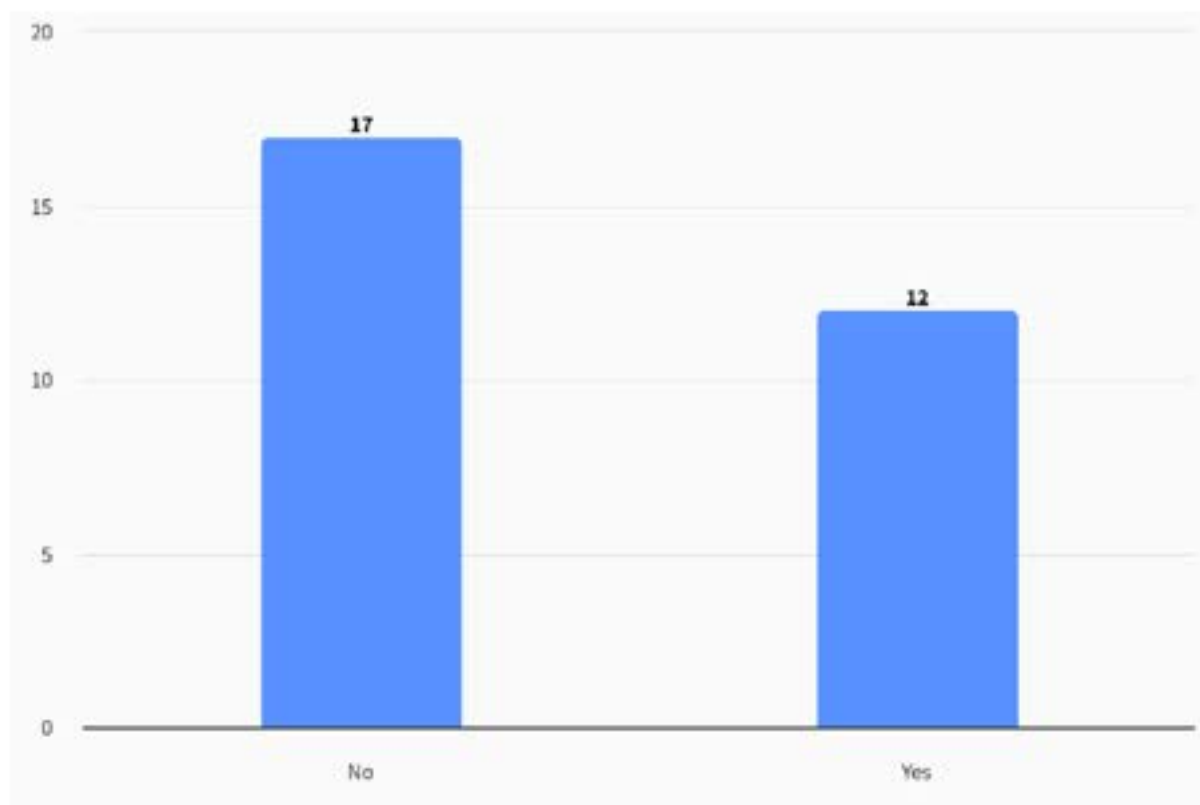


Question: Are there any other actions you feel should be included for raising awareness and education?

Response:

Yes: 41.38%

No: 58,62%



Question: If you answered yes, please provide details

Response:

'There are lots of organisations and NGOs that do this well. Don't compete with each other and manage resources for maximum impact'

'The should be more education at all our outdoor facilities'

'Specific workshops and sessions dedicated to certain wildlife groups such as pollinators, trees, wildflowers etc. There are people in the area who can be hired to facilitate these. Upscaling peoples' ID skills beyond bird-feeding workshops is vital to bolster community-wide skills and knowledge about biodiversity'

'All councillors and relevant officers should read and pay careful attention to the Mountaineering Ireland submission outlining the problems of the Gateway plan and sustainable alternatives fitting a time of biodiversity and climate crisis. They should spend time walking and familiarising themselves with the route of the gondola: Donard Park, Demesne, the Glen River, the forest and the quarry itself'

'Keep your own policies and practices up to date on your own website - the climate "emergency" you declared appears to have led to one single meeting back in 2020 - where

are all the rest of the actions and why have they not moved forwards. This should not be a PR stunt about good intentions but a candid analysis of where we are and what we can do about it'

'Permanent free education opportunities within forest parks'

'More citizen science projects for surveying of species. Working with landowners/ businesses to identify biodiversity areas and improve them'

'Sustainable Development Goals. Rights of Nature. UN Biodiversity Convention. A Citizens Assembly on Biodiversity Loss akin to that which took place in the Republic of Ireland'

'Education would be better used for businesses and local developers. Along with policies that insist on developers improving habitats around them and not doing harm to existing ecosystems (mandatory swift boxes in all new developments. Like in county mayo)'

'Needs to be community and school engagement supported by local businesses'

'Council should also seek to educate those whose actions can have a major effect on biodiversity, for example, businesses, housing developers, etc.'



Analysis:

While a significant majority of respondents (86.67%) agreed with the proposed approach for raising awareness and education within the biodiversity strategy, a notable minority (13.33%) expressed dissent, citing concerns about specific aspects of the approach and suggesting additional actions for consideration.

Critiques of the proposed approach included calls for a greater emphasis on educating farmers about the benefits of trees for climate mitigation and landscape management, as well as concerns about the lack of awareness among some council members regarding threats to biodiversity, particularly in relation to specific development plans. Additionally, respondents questioned whether sufficient resources were allocated to support education and awareness initiatives within the council.

Respondents who suggested additional actions emphasised the importance of collaboration with existing organisations and NGOs to maximise impact, expanding education initiatives at outdoor facilities, and conducting specific workshops on wildlife groups. They also highlighted the need for ongoing training and education for council members and officers, the establishment of citizen science projects, and engaging businesses and developers in biodiversity education and conservation efforts.

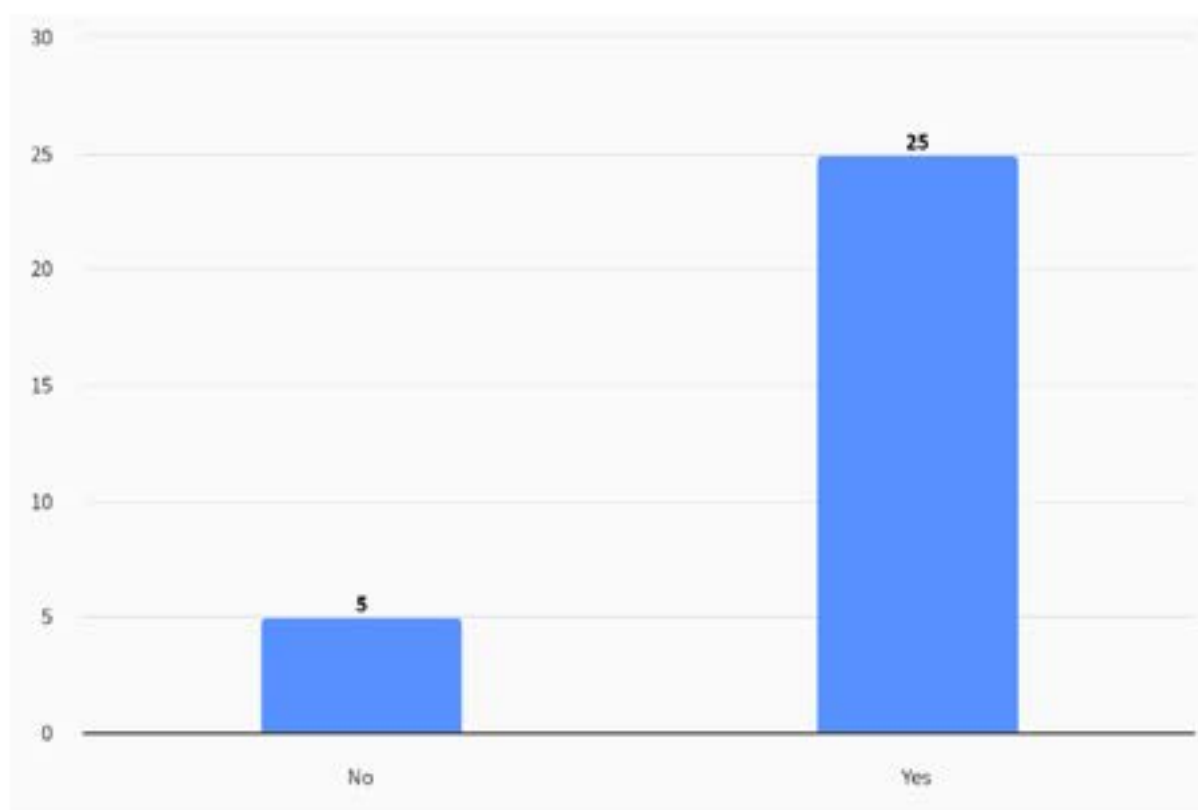
8. Working with Partners

Question: The strategy identifies working with partners as a key theme. Do you agree with the proposed approach within the strategy for this theme?

Response:

Yes: 83.33%

No: 16.67%



Question: If you disagree, please provide specific details

Response:

'There has been much great work done by the council, well listed in your draft. However the concerns of the public have not been heeded and responded to in relation to the Gateway. The National Trust has not agreed to its land being used and I think it should not and is not likely to do so. This does not look like a good model of partnership working for the period relevant to this draft strategy'

'The approach needs to include workers and trade unions, as well as community groups, in a coordinated Just Transition policy. Environmentally damaging business interests, especially agribusiness, need to be confronted and not considered partners when they are actively damaging the environment'

'Working with partners should not be isolated as a key theme, it should permeate throughout the work of Council. Council should automatically be working with partners rather than setting this as a target'

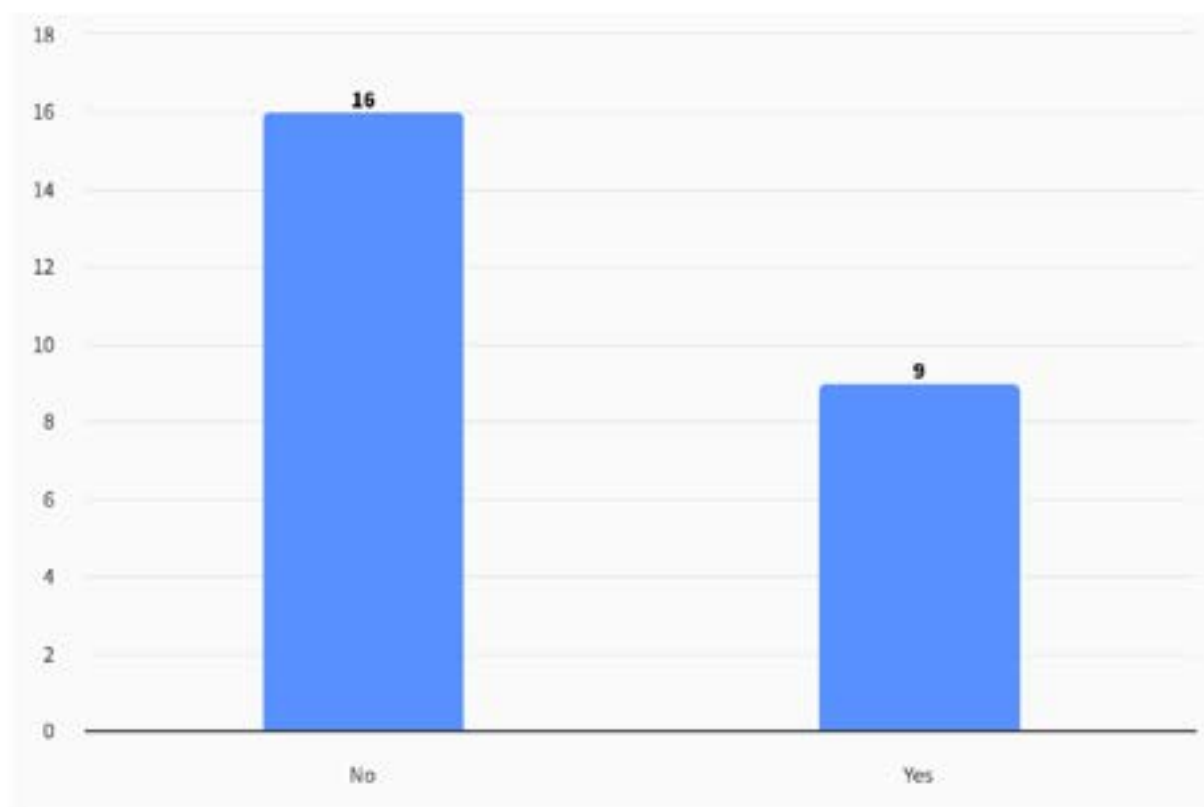


Question: Are there any other actions you feel should be included for raising awareness and education?

Response:

Yes: 36%

No: 64%



Question: If you answered yes, please provide details

Response:

'Please keep working in partnership as it's crucial to system change and do it strategically and with good process. Partnership is good working together and not just regular meetings'

'Better consultation with local people. For example, this consultation questionnaire is very hard to find on the council website. A search in the search box does not find it'

'Publish both shared initiatives and points of disagreement so we can see where we stand. Are the National Trust, the Mountaineering Council of Ireland and the Mourne Heritage Trust partners? If not, why not? Do they agree with the Mourne Gateway plans? If not, why not?'

'Are their any PEACEPLUS projects getting developed for Biodiversity? Are there any plans under the Shared Island theme? Are their links with the Biodiversity Officers in Louth and Monaghan developed? What are the plans to develop more partnerships? Could there be some avenue to work with partnerships and community groups to apply for funding - funding workshops on how to develop a biodiversity project and where to get funding from it. How do we link our partners with community groups to develop projects???'

'There is no mention of the Mourne Gateway Project which will have profound implications for biodiversity on Slieve Donard. It must be scrapped. There needs to be action to prevent pollution into the rivers and Irish sea'

'Working closely with NGOs like Friends of the Earth, Wildlife Trust, RSPB, Ulster Wildlife, National Trust'

'Conservation and sustainability certification/awards'



Analysis:

While a significant majority of respondents (83.33%) agreed with the proposed approach for working with partners within the biodiversity strategy, a minority (16.67%) voiced specific concerns and suggestions for improvement. Criticisms included the need for more responsiveness to public concerns, particularly regarding specific projects like the Mourne Gateway, and the inclusion of workers, trade unions, and community groups in partnership efforts. Some respondents also suggested that partnership working should be integrated throughout all council activities rather than isolated as a key theme.

Suggestions for additional actions emphasised the importance of strategic and transparent partnership working, better consultation with local communities, and the publication of shared initiatives and points of disagreement. Respondents also proposed exploring potential partnerships with organisations like the National Trust and the Mourne Heritage Trust, as well as NGOs like Friends of the Earth and RSPB, to enhance biodiversity conservation efforts. These responses underscore the community's recognition of the value of collaboration in achieving biodiversity goals and highlight opportunities for enhancing partnership working to maximise impact and transparency.

9. Additional Comments

Question: If you have any other comments to make about the strategy, please tell us here

Response:

'I think local communities need to be very on board and finding ways to link with groups and identify what is special and needs protected is vital'

'These strategies are all well and good but actions need to happen!'

'There is no mention of upland areas, mountains, bog or similar upland areas in the strategy. The mountains are an incredibly fragile environment and one of the main attractions for people coming to the area. There needs to be (at the very least) acknowledgement of the importance of the mountains within the council area. The Mourne are an AONB and need to be protected and managed appropriately, with sufficient resources allocated'

'Congratulations on some good work on biodiversity so far. Please take these comments as supportive of your good intentions while wishing that overall the council would take more seriously the climate and biodiversity crises'

'Peat free compost!'

'I don't see any reference to wetlands in the strategy? As stated, loss and fragmentation of natural habitats is the greatest threat to biodiversity. As it is, funding targeting wetlands is lacking. Should the council be doing more to raise awareness of its value and encouraging more wetland creation e.g. ponds, etc. I think there should be a theme for wetlands and rivers, etc. We have a number of rivers under threat from pollution'

'There is no mention of the Mourne Gateway Project which will have profound implications for biodiversity on Slieve Donard. This is negligent. COP28 is not mentioned. The strategy fails to address the urgency of the climate and biodiversity crisis. Tourism along the lines planned is not sustainable and will conflict with the limited aims of this strategy. A public forum should be convened to revise this strategy'

'Though this is a good start there is a lot more that needs to be done for us to achieve our goals by 2030. Councils like Antrim are doing important work that should be replicated. Without an assembly we need to rely on councils to make the changes that are needed to fight this climate emergency.'

'Council consistently fails to recognise that its constant pursuit of increased visitor numbers is leading to destruction of biodiversity, for example in Murlough Nature Reserve and the Mourne. What we need is Council actions and planning decisions that promote green, eco-sensitive small businesses and affordable homes for people living in its district, who are more likely to support biodiversity.

'We feel that this draft strategy is very unambitious and will not contribute to halting biodiversity loss or nature's recovery. It lacks a lot of important information including the following:

- No explanation of what it is or why it is important
- No explanation as to how the plan was developed and why there was not a review of species in the area or what protected sites exist within the district
- There is no reference/biography quoted for the statements/stats
- There are references to State of Nature 2019, while the most recent one is SoN 2023. Likewise it refers to COP27, even though COP28 is more recent. Reference is made to the EU Biodiversity Strategy, but this does not apply in NI. The relevance of these stats and policies is not analysed in the context of the Council i.e. what does it mean for Council?
- No explanation of how the Strategy will complement other action plans (p. 13)
- The aims referred to on p. 14 do not link directly with the Biodiversity Duty and simply continue on from the previous LBAP, so lack ambition.
- There are many very important habitats that occur within the District eg Peatlands, upland heath, fens, etc
- there was no reference to the Council's role in Planning which is a key conduit for environmental protection
- there is reference to an 'associated action plan' - we were not able to locate this
- no reference to implementation, monitoring and review of actions along the way
- in the monitoring and reporting section, there is no reference to where the data goes'



Analysis:

The feedback provided by respondents offers valuable insights and recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of the biodiversity strategy. Suggestions include the need for stronger community engagement to identify and protect local biodiversity hotspots, as well as emphasising the importance of translating strategy into concrete actions. Concerns were raised about the omission of critical habitats such as upland areas and wetlands, highlighting the importance of comprehensive coverage in conservation efforts. Moreover, there were calls for increased transparency, acknowledgment of the urgency of climate and biodiversity crises, and alignment with international commitments like COP28. Respondents also emphasised the need for sustainable tourism practices and eco-sensitive development to mitigate adverse impacts on biodiversity. Overall, the comments underscore the importance of addressing gaps and shortcomings in the strategy while advocating for more ambitious and holistic approaches to biodiversity conservation.

Conclusion

The findings of the public consultation on Newry, Mourne, and Down Council's Biodiversity Strategy 2024-2030 reflect a community deeply engaged in the conservation and protection of biodiversity. The overwhelming sentiment regarding the importance of biodiversity protection underscores a shared commitment to environmental stewardship. While the majority of respondents expressed agreement with the strategy's key themes and approaches, a significant minority provided valuable critiques and suggestions for improvement.

Key themes emerging from the responses include the need for stronger community engagement, transparent partnership working, and targeted actions to address specific conservation challenges. Concerns were raised regarding the omission of critical habitats, such as upland areas and wetlands, as well as the urgency of addressing the climate and biodiversity crises. Moreover, there were calls for greater alignment with international commitments, and sustainable development practices to mitigate adverse impacts on biodiversity.

In conclusion, the feedback provided by respondents offers valuable insights and recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness and ambition of the biodiversity strategy. By incorporating these suggestions, the council can better address community concerns, strengthen partnerships, and advance its commitment to biodiversity conservation for the benefit of current and future generations.

For further details or inquiries, please contact jane.kyle@dtni.org.uk

Report to:	Sustainability and Environment Committee
Date of Meeting:	18 th December 2024
Subject:	Review of Public Convenience Opening Times at Newcastle & Warrenpoint
Reporting Officer	Conor Sage, Assistant Director Sustainability
Contact Officer	Gail Kane, Head of Facilities

<div><div>For decision</div><div>For noting only</div><div>X</div></div>	
1.0	Purpose and Background
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to inform Elected Members of a revision to the closing times of public toilets in Newcastle and Warrenpoint, implemented following the adoption of the new schedules approved by the S&E Committee on 20th December 2023.</p> <p>As part of the work packages developed under the Public Convenience Strategy, it was agreed in December 2023 to conduct a review of the opening and closing times of public toilets.</p> <p>Following this review, the new opening and closing times for public toilets in Newcastle and Warrenpoint are as follows:</p> <p>March – May: 8:00am – 6:00pm June & September: 8:00am – 8:00pm July & August: 8:00am – 10:00pm October – February: 8:00am – 4:00pm</p> <p>For all other public toilets across the district, closing times remain at 4:00pm from 1st October to 28th February annually.</p>
2.0	Key Issues
2.1	<p>From 1st October 2024, the Council received feedback from elected members and members of the public regarding the 4:00pm closure of the public toilets in Warrenpoint.</p> <p>Given that Newcastle and Warrenpoint are key tourist areas within the district, it is proposed that the opening hours for public toilets in these locations be reviewed for the period from October to May.</p> <p>Proposed Adjustments for Newcastle:</p> <p>Extend the opening hours to 6:00pm from October to May for all six facilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Donard Park• Central Promenade• Downs Road• Castle Park• Islands Park• South Promenade

	<p>Proposed Adjustments for Warrenpoint:</p> <p>Public toilets at Warrenpoint Park to close at 5:00pm during winter months (October to February) to align with park closing times.</p> <p>Public toilets at The Square to remain open until 6:00pm from October to May.</p>
3.0	Recommendations
3.1	<p>Members are asked to note the following adjustments to the closing times of the toilet facilities at Newcastle and Warrenpoint:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended opening hours to 6:00pm from October to May each year for the public toilet facilities at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Warrenpoint Square ◦ Downs Road, Newcastle ◦ Central Promenade, Newcastle ◦ Donard Park, Newcastle ◦ Castle Park, Newcastle ◦ Islands Park, Newcastle ◦ South Promenade, Newcastle • Extended opening hours to 5:00pm from October to February each year for the public toilet facilities at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Warrenpoint Park
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	No additional cost implications as there is no amendment required to staffing times.
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1	<p><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations</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 <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><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></p>
6.0	Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)
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>
7.0	Appendices
7.1	None
8.0	Background Documents
8.1	None.

ITEM 3
ARC21 JOINT COMMITTEE
Meeting No 091
MINUTES
Thursday 31st October 2024
Using MS Teams

Members Present:

Councillor R Lynch	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council
Councillor E Thompson	Ards & North Down Borough Council
Councillor C Blaney	Ards & North Down Borough Council
Councillor J Cochrane	Ards & North Down Borough Council
Councillor A Givan	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Councillor G McKeen (<i>Deputy Chair</i>)	Mid & East Antrim Borough Council
Alderman M Morrow	Mid & East Antrim Borough Council
Councillor T Andrews	Newry, Mourne & Down District Council

Members' Apologies:

Councillor M Goodman (<i>Chair</i>)	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council
Councillor H Cushinan	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council
Councillor E McDonough-Brown	Belfast City Council
Councillor B Smyth	Belfast City Council
Councillor M Collins	Belfast City Council
Councillor P Kennedy	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Alderman S Skillen	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Councillor R Quigley	Mid & East Antrim Borough Council
Councillor C Enright	Newry, Mourne & Down District Council
Councillor K Murphy	Newry, Mourne & Down District Council

Officers Present:

T Walker	arc21
H Campbell	arc21
J Green	arc21
K Boal	arc21
B McKeown	arc21
M Laverty	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council
N Martin	Ards and North Down Borough Council
W Muldrew	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
S Morley	Mid & East Antrim Borough Council
D Carey	Mid & East Antrim Borough Council
C Hunter	Mid & East Antrim Borough Council

Officers' Apologies:

D Lindsay	Ards & North Down Borough Council
S Leonard	Belfast City Council
R Harvey	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
S Murphy	Newry, Mourne & Down District Council

Councillor McKeen took the Chair for the meeting.

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 090 held on 26 September 2024

The Joint Committee approved the minutes. Proposed by Alderman Morrow, seconded by Councillor Givan, and agreed by all.

Action: Agreed

Item 4 - Matters Arising

Any specific matters were discussed under the main agenda items.

Action: Noted

IN COMMITTEE

The Chair recommended that the meeting would now move "*in committee*" which was agreed. Proposed by Councillor Givan and seconded by Councillor Lynch.

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 six matters discussed.

Item 5 - Minutes of Joint Committee Meeting 090 held on 26 September 2024 'in committee' - approved

Item 6 - Matters Arising - noted

Item 7 - Residual Waste Treatment Project - noted

Item 8 - Commercially Sensitive Contract & Procurement Issues - approved

Item 9 - Tender Report - Supply of Services Relating to the Treatment and Energy Recovery/Disposal of Residual Waste Arisings - Dynamic Purchasing System, Lot 3 - Contract D - approved

Item 10 - Revenue Estimates 2025-2026 - approved

OUT OF COMMITTEE

Proposed by Councillor Givan and seconded by Alderman Morrow.

Item 11 - Contracts & Operations Briefing Report

Ms Boal provided a report on the high-level performance statistics for September.

Service Status

She reported that all services were operational during September and there were no requests from contractors to put any contingency arrangements in place.

Performance

The contractor performance for September was presented, which included details on the number of loads in each of the contracts, site visits, overweight vehicles, use of contingency arrangements, turnaround, availability, maintenance of records and reporting.

She noted that turnaround times had been reviewed, and in most cases the contractors provided adequate reasons and therefore no service credits were applied to them. However, service credits were applied to Irish Waste, NWP (MDR Haulage) and Bryson for failing to meet their contracted turnaround limits for failing to meet their contractual turnaround times.

She reported that the overweight vehicles continue to be monitored and have reduced this month especially on the Organics contract, but the numbers were still quite high. She noted that council officers had been asked to continue to liaise with their operational teams and sub-contractors to try and reduce these further and to try and keep them low going forward.

She noted that in September, all reports were submitted on time and there were no issues to report.

She advised that there were ten requests for bring site rectifications (they did not have the specified capacity) across all contracts. These were communicated to the contractors, and in all cases, they confirmed that they had been emptied within the required 48 hours and therefore no service credits were applied.

Health & Safety

(i) Incidents

During September 2024, Ms Boal reported that there were no Health & Safety incidents reported to arc21 by contractors. She advised that this was the second time this year that arc21 had not received any reports of H&S incidents and was a positive result. She noted that in order to keep incidents to a minimum, arc21 had asked council officers to continue to liaise with their H&S officers and operational managers, including those of external contractors, to ensure that their operational teams have due regard to Health & Safety obligations and that they continue to understand and abide by the site rules of each site.

(ii) Audits

In terms of audits, she reported that the external Health & Safety consultant continues to undertake health and safety audits.

In September, there was an audit conducted with ReGen/BCC at the Dargan Road Transfer Station. She noted that this report was still being finalised but that some minor recommendations and actions were identified and once this report is completed it will be shared with ReGen and BCC.

Rejected Loads

Ms Boal reported that there had been no rejected loads delivered into the MRF facilities in September and none into the Organics delivery sites in September 2024, and that officers continue to monitor the procedures to make sure vehicles for mixed use are properly emptied to avoid contamination.

arc21 Contract Tonnages

A list of the contract tonnages for September 2024, compared to the same period last year, was presented and summarised as follows:

- MRF Lot 1 - an increase of 4.3%;
- MRF Lot 2 - a 12.5% decrease for MDR material delivered to ReGen;
- Organics Contract - a 2.6% increase for Type 1 material and for Type 2 material, a decrease of 8.7%; and
- Landfill Contract - a 6.6% increase.

Supplies

The number of orders placed and delivered in September was presented and Ms Boal noted that there was one delivery non-compliant; this was due to the delivery arriving a day later.

She advised that, as discussed at last month's meeting regarding odour issues particularly at Warrenpoint, the Chair had written to the NIEA to see if the process could be streamlined and that arc21 is awaiting a response which will be reported to Members once received.

Following discussion the Joint Committee noted the report.

Action: Noted

Item 12 - Waste Tonnage Trends

Ms Boal presented a report showing the waste tonnage trends for materials delivered into the arc21 contracts and highlighted the following:

- Landfill - slightly higher in September than to previous year but on same trajectory;
- Belfast City Council (BCC) residual - almost coalescing at same point as last year ;
- Organics - Type 1 - coalescing at same point in 3 consecutive years;
- Organics Type 2 - running consistently lower than last year for a few months. She reported that there was an element of revenue share for this contract when arc21's constituent councils exceed 100k tonnes and that we will be doing the reconciliation shortly to see if there is any revenue share due to the councils. Following this, a report will be brought to Members;
- MRF combined tonnage - virtually converging at same point for last 3 years, NMDDC tonnage running below the level than last year but following the same trend pattern;
- Textiles - contractor trying to manage amount of material coming in and does not have the processing capacity to place materials on the market at the input rate, trying to reduce the amount of material received and storing a lot of it. She noted that arc21's tonnages were holding up well but that the contractor was committed to delivering the service for us and no indication that this would change going forward.

The other smaller contracts were also presented for information.

The Joint Committee noted the report.

Action: Noted

Item 13 - Consultation - Draft Programme for Government 2024-2027 'Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most' Public Consultation

Mr Walker presented the Joint Committee with a proposed response to the Draft Programme for Government 2024-2027 public consultation for consideration prior to submission by the deadline of 4 November.

He reported that there was little coverage in the consultation in regard to waste, except under the Circular Economy (a Department of Economy function). arc21 has highlighted an incoherent approach to policy development which is likely to restrict confidence and reduce investment in the necessary infrastructure which will be needed to deal with the different waste streams and contribute to the establishment of a circular economy in Northern Ireland.

Members were asked to consider the response with a view to ratifying its content and submitting it by the deadline of 4 November.

Following discussion, the Joint Committee agreed to approve the response for submission. Proposed by Councillor Thompson, seconded by Councillor Andrews, and agreed by all.

Action: Agreed

Item 14 - Consultation - Proposed new Code of Practice on Sampling and Reporting at Materials Facilities

Ms Boal presented a report to provide Members with the arc21 proposed response to the consultation on the Code of Practice on Sampling and Reporting at Materials Facilities.

She noted that the sampling and reporting regime in the other three jurisdictions had been in place for some time and that arc21 had voluntarily been sampling on the inputs and outputs of mixed dry recyclables received at Bryson and ReGen on the basis of the Wrap Sampling and Testing Guidance for Material Facilities issued in 2014, but not at the frequency specified in the new consultation.

In terms of the turnaround times for NI, she noted that this was still at draft stage and some things were unclear in terms of to arc21, its operators and NI more generally but the Department was aiming to put this into place from 1 April 2025 in line with the other jurisdictions.

She advised that she had met with the official leading this consultation, but they were unable to clarify a number of questions as yet so the intention would be to submit the response proposed in case of any ambiguities.

The aims of the introduction of the Code were outlined.

She noted that there were a number of aspects which appear ambiguous and which may, depending upon the interpretation, be different from the legislation and codes in England & Wales and Scotland. In particular, clarity was required on the material facilities, the material streams that are scheduled to be covered and some of the definitions that at the moment seem to cut across the intended position.

As the Code is currently drafted, she advised that there was some ambiguity as to whether Dirty MRFs will be covered. She noted that this is different to the way that the sampling regimes have been drafted in England and Wales, which share the same legislation, and in Scotland, and that arc21 is requesting some of the definitions be refined so that these facilities are excluded.

In addition, she advised that greater clarity is being sought in relation to defining the exemptions for councils and requirements for source segregated materials (e.g. single streams collected through kerbside sort, bring banks etc.)

Following discussion, the Joint Committee agreed to approve the response for submission and it was suggested that, should Members wish to provide any further comments, these be forwarded by 6 November. Proposed by Councillor Givan, seconded by Councillor Andrews, and agreed by all.

Action: Agreed

Item 15 - Waste Management Plan Addendum Engagement Update

Mr Walker reported that the engagement period had concluded and that four responses had been received. He noted that the next stage would be to consider and reflect upon the comments, where appropriate, in the finalised Waste Management Plan and then present to the Joint Committee for ratification. He noted that this was a temporary solution until a full review was carried out for a new Waste Management Plan following the finalisation of the new Waste Strategy.

He advised that the Waste Strategy consultation is expected probably around April/May 2025 which will have serious bearing on arc21's new Waste Management Plan which following a similar process to that used for the Addendum could ensure that a new Plan would be in place in 2028.

Following discussion, the Joint Committee noted the update.

Action: Noted

Item 16 - Annual Report 2023-2024

Mr Walker presented the arc21 Annual Report for the year to March 2024 which had previously been presented to the Joint Committee for comment.

Following consideration, the Joint Committee agreed to approve the Annual Report for publication. Proposed by Councillor Thompson, seconded by Alderman Morrow, and agreed by all.

Action: Agreed

Item 17 - AOB

Mr Walker reported upon a recent BBC online article concerning the use of EfW facilities to produce power which had caused disconcertion across the sector. He highlighted that EfW facilities are designed to treat waste, and power is a by-product of this treatment process.

He also reported upon the recent EPR developments at which the Chancellor had stated that if councils did not receive their full reimbursement of monies through the Scheme, Government would make good on this.

He noted that the indicative figures of what councils should be receiving through the EPR scheme should be arriving in councils next month.

Action: Noted

Item 18 - Next Meeting Tuesday 3 December 2024 hosted by Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council in Antrim Civic Centre (Hybrid)

Action: Noted

Date: _____ **Chairman:** _____

FROM THE MINISTER OF HEALTH



Marie Ward
Chief Executive
Newry and Mourne and Down District Council
fionnuala.branagh@nmandd.org

Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
BELFAST, BT4 3SQ
Tel: 028 9052 2556
Email: private.office@health-ni.gov.uk

Your Ref:

Our Ref: COR-2380-2024

Date: 21 November 2024

Dear Marie

Policy Proposals to inform the development of a new Public Health Bill

Thank you for your letter dated 11 October 2024 inviting my officials to brief Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Councillors on the policy proposals to inform the development of a new Public Health Bill for Northern Ireland consultation.

The consultation has received a large volume of responses which my officials are currently considering. When the consultation response analysis is completed, my officials will be in contact to arrange to meet the Council to discuss the Public Health Bill policy options and proposals.

Yours sincerely

Mike Nesbitt MLA
Minister of Health

cc: democratic.services@nmandd.org

Northern Ireland Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Management Statistics

Annual Report 2023/24



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Department o'

**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

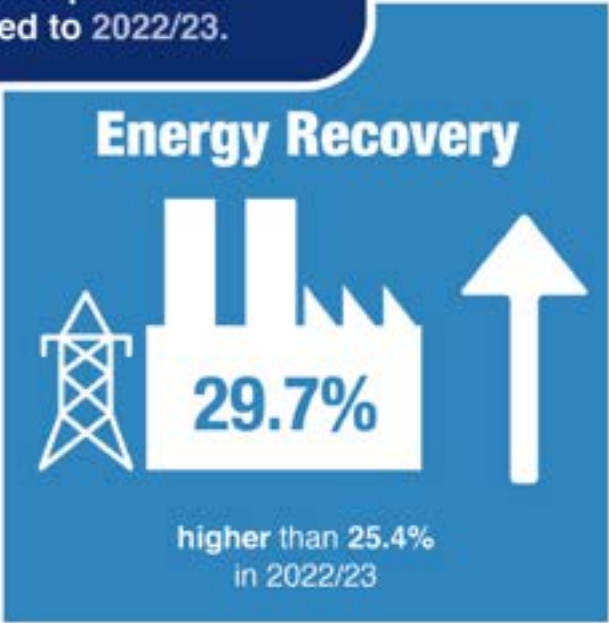
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valued by everyone.

Northern Ireland waste management statistics annual report 2023/24



Recycling, energy recovery and landfill rates of LAC municipal waste 2023/24 compared to 2022/23.



Key Points for Northern Ireland

- Northern Ireland's councils collected 1,000,681 tonnes of waste during 2023/24 which was 3.0 per cent higher than the amount collected in 2022/23. During 2023/24, 50.5 per cent of waste collected by councils was sent for recycling which was higher than the 49.7 per cent recycling rate reported in 2022/23.
- The landfill rate for waste collected by councils was 18.4 per cent in 2023/24, a fall from 74.0 per cent in 2006/07 and 23.1 per cent in 2022/23.
- In 2023/24, 29.7 per cent of waste arisings were sent for energy recovery. This compares to 25.4 per cent in 2022/23 and 0.4 per cent in 2009/10.
- Household waste accounted for 87.5 per cent of all local authority collected waste during 2023/24. The recycling rate for household waste was 51.1 per cent whilst the landfill rate for household waste was 18.0 per cent.
- Belfast generated the smallest amount of household waste per capita at 405 kg whilst Antrim & Newtownabbey recorded the largest at 545 kg per capita.
- There were 95,425 tonnes of biodegradable waste sent to landfill during 2023/24, a decrease of 21.7 per cent from the quantity reported in 2022/23 (121,925 tonnes).

Issue No: 15

Date of Publication: 28 November 2024

Theme: Agriculture and Environment

Reporting Period:

1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

URL: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/northern-ireland-local-authority-collected-municipal-waste-management-statistics>

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Reader Information

This document may be made available in alternative formats, please contact us to discuss your requirements. Definitions of key terms used in this publication are available in [Appendix 2 – Glossary](#).

The data are also used by media, the general public and special interest groups to inform policy and lifestyle choices related to the treatment of waste.

Further details are available in [Appendix 1 – Main Uses of Data](#)

Purpose

This is an annual publication which reports finalised figures on the key measurements of local authority collected municipal waste for councils and waste management groups in Northern Ireland.

The data contained are used by local authorities, waste management groups, Devolved Administrations, UK Government and the EU to measure progress towards achieving targets from various waste strategies including:

- The revised Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy
- The Waste Framework Directive

Data on household recycling was a population indicator for the previous Programme for Government (PfG) and has been proposed as an indicator in the forthcoming PfG.

Next Updates

- Provisional figures for July to September 2024 will be available in January 2025.
- Finalised data for 2024/25 are scheduled to be published in November 2025 and will supersede previously published data from the four quarterly returns for that financial year.
- The scheduled dates for all upcoming publications are available from the GOV.UK statistics release calendar: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics>

Introduction

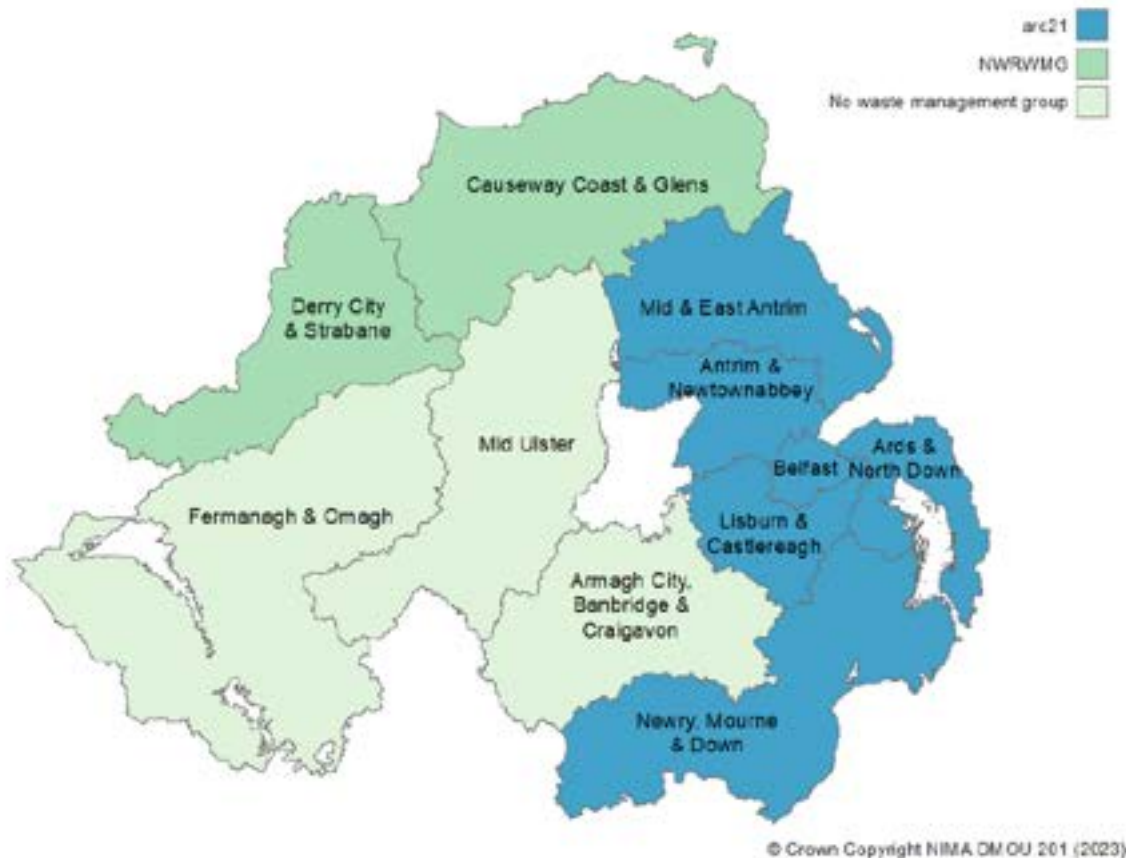
This report presents finalised and validated information on the quantities of local authority collected (LAC) municipal waste collected and managed in Northern Ireland over the 2023/24 financial year, as well as trend data over previous years. It provides information on the quantities of waste arising, sent for preparing for reuse, dry recycling, composting, energy recovery and sent to landfill. Some of these measurements are key performance indicators (KPIs). These are used to assess progress towards achieving waste strategy targets and where appropriate this is highlighted in the tables and charts.

Waste Management Groups (WMGs) produce, develop and implement Waste Management Plans for their areas of responsibility and are an important part of the data submission process. Figure 1 shows how eight councils have formed into two WMGs with 3 councils unaffiliated to any group. The group with the largest share of the population is arc21 with 59 per cent. The North West Regional Waste Management Group (NWRWMG) has 15 per cent of the population with the remaining 26 per cent residing in councils not belonging to a waste management group.

There are six councils in **arc21**: Antrim & Newtownabbey; Ards & North Down; Belfast; Lisburn & Castlereagh; Mid & East Antrim; and Newry, Mourne & Down.

NWRWMG contains two councils: Causeway Coast & Glens; and Derry City & Strabane. The remaining three councils are not members of a WMG: Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon; Fermanagh & Omagh; and Mid Ulster.

Figure 1: Map of councils and waste management groups in Northern Ireland

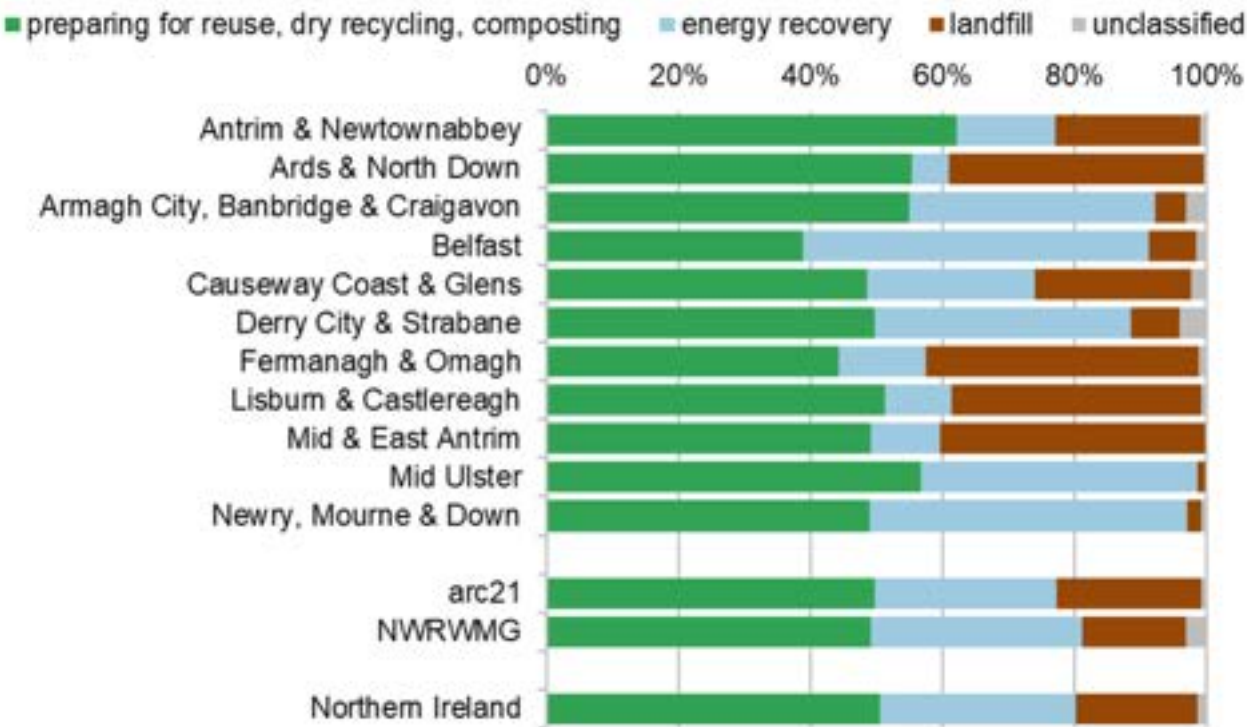


Overview

This report presents information on the quantities of local authority collected municipal waste managed in Northern Ireland during the 2023/24 financial year. The report is split into four sections, each of which cover local authority collected (LAC) municipal waste and, where appropriate, household waste:

- waste arisings (pages 5-8),
- reuse, dry recycling and composting (pages 9-13),
- energy recovery (pages 14-16),
- landfill (pages 17-19).

Figure 2: Waste preparing for reuse, dry recycling, composting, energy recovery and landfill rates by council and waste management group
Northern Ireland, 2023/24



At the Northern Ireland level, 50.5 per cent of waste collected by councils was sent for preparing for reuse, dry recycling and composting during 2023/24. Energy recovery accounted for 29.7 per cent whilst 18.4 per cent was sent to landfill. The remaining 1.4 per cent is likely to involve moisture and/or gaseous losses. Each of the rates are discussed in detail in the appropriate section of the report.

The rate of waste sent for preparing for reuse, dry recycling and composting was 0.9 percentage points higher than the rate recorded in 2022/23. The energy recovery rate increased by 4.3 percentage points whilst the landfill rate decreased by 4.8 percentage points.

Household waste accounted for 87.5 per cent of total waste. Household waste includes materials collected directly from households via kerbside collections, material taken to bring sites and civic amenity sites as well as several other smaller sources.

Waste Arisings

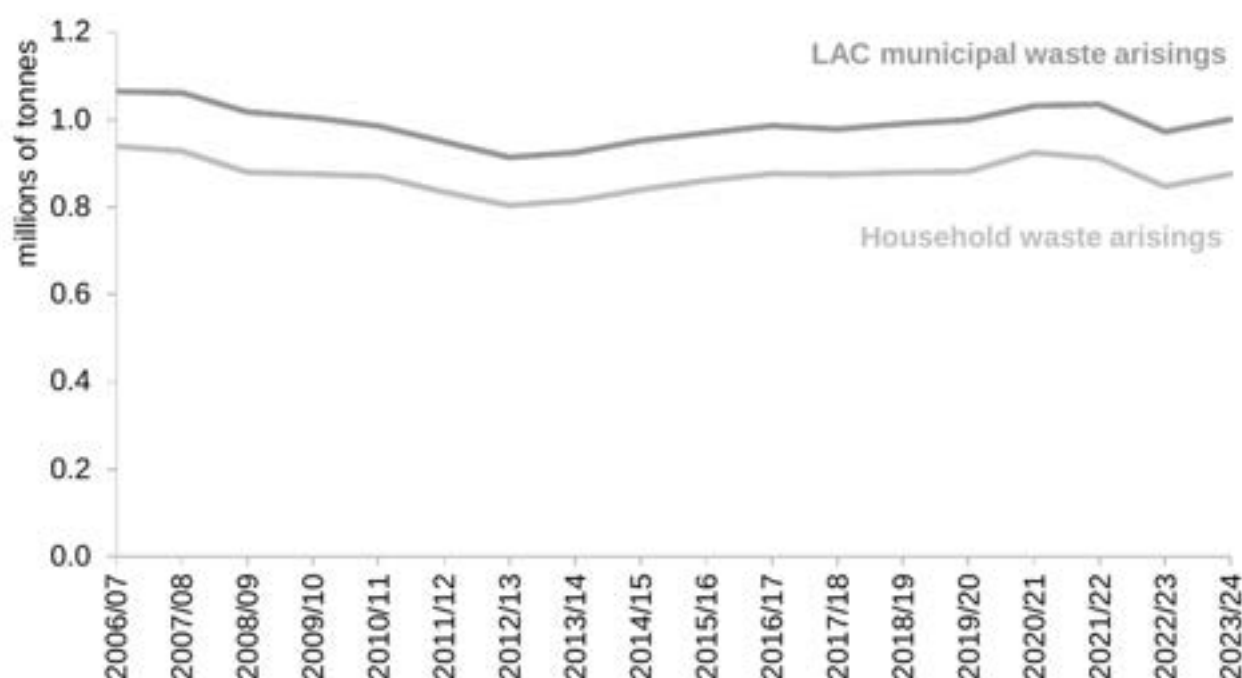
The total quantity of local authority collected (LAC) municipal waste arisings is a key performance indicator, KPI (j). This indicator is also used to monitor performance under the [Local Government \(Performance Indicators and Standards\) Order \(Northern Ireland\) 2015](#).

In 2023/24, Northern Ireland's councils collected 1,000,681 tonnes of waste. This is 3.0 per cent higher than in 2022/23 when 971,936 tonnes were collected. The tonnage of waste collected at kerbside increased by 2.2 per cent during 2023/24 compared to the previous year, whilst waste collected at civic amenity sites increased by 6.5 per cent.

Since 2006/07 household waste has accounted for 86-90 per cent of total waste collected by councils. In 2023/24 household waste accounted for 87.5 per cent. Household waste includes materials collected directly from households via kerbside collections, material taken to bring sites and civic amenity sites as well as several other smaller sources. The remaining 12.5 per cent was non-household waste such as rubble/soil and commercial/industrial waste.

Figure 3: Waste arisings

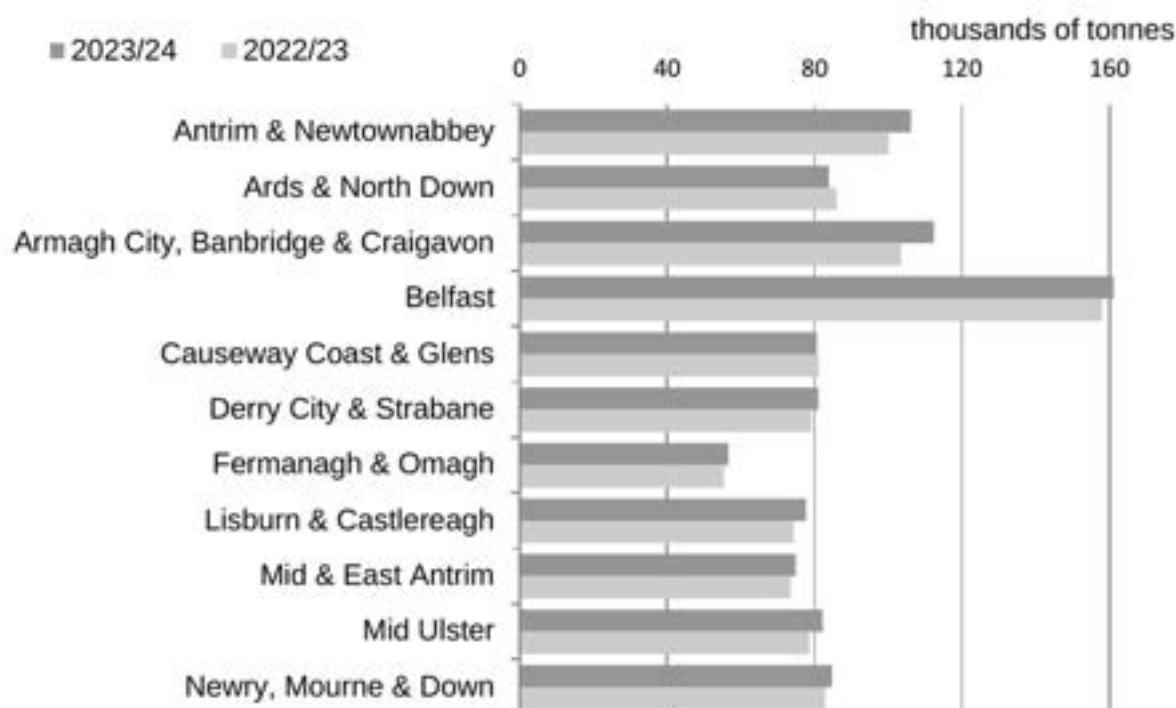
Northern Ireland, 2006/07 to 2023/24, KPI (j)



Total waste arisings fell from 1,064,090 tonnes in 2006/07 to a low of 913,546 in 2012/13, a 14.1 per cent decrease. From then until 2021/22, total arisings showed a generally increasing trend. A reduction in arisings was recorded in 2022/23 but in the latest year arisings have increased by 3.0 per cent to 1,000,681 tonnes.

Factors affecting waste arisings, the majority of which is household waste, include individual household behaviours, the advice and collection services provided by councils, the state of the economy and the weather conditions during the year.

Figure 4: Waste arisings by council
Northern Ireland, 2022/23 and 2023/24, KPI (j)

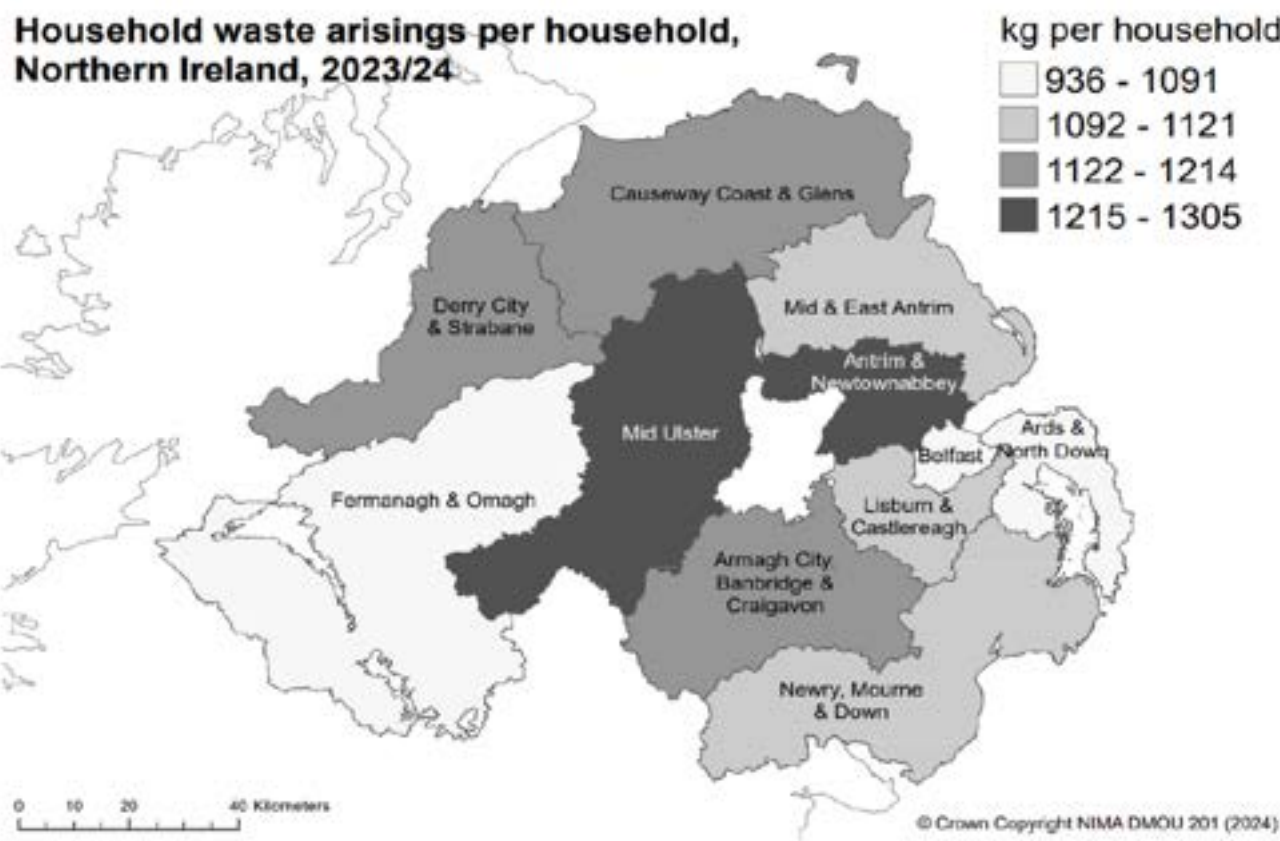


The proportion of waste collected by each council broadly reflects the population within the councils. Belfast City Council had the greatest waste arisings in 2023/24 with 161,097 tonnes. This was 16 per cent of total Northern Ireland waste arisings, with 18 per cent of the population living in this council area. Fermanagh & Omagh District Council had the lowest arisings in 2023/24 with 56,521 tonnes collected. This represented 6 per cent of total arisings during this period, the same as the proportion of the population living in the council area.

Nine councils reported increases in their waste arisings compared with last year, with Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon reporting the largest increase at 8.7 per cent. Antrim & Newtownabbey and Lisburn & Castlereagh reported increases of 6.0 and 4.6 per cent respectively. Ards & North Down and Causeway Coast & Glens reported a decrease in waste arisings to that reported in 2022/23.

There are two key performance indicators which look at household waste arisings in more detail by considering household waste arisings per capita, KPI (p), and per household KPI (h). In Northern Ireland there were 458 kilogrammes (kg) of household waste collected per capita and 1,118 kg per household during 2023/24, compared to 443 kilogrammes (kg) of household waste collected per capita and 1,091 kg per household during 2022/23.

Figure 5: Household waste arisings per capita and per household by council
Northern Ireland, 2023/24, KPIs (p) and (h)



Belfast generated the smallest amount of household waste per capita at 405 kg in 2023/24, followed by Fermanagh & Omagh and Newry, Mourne & Down. The largest quantity was recorded in Antrim & Newtownabbey at 545 kg per capita. Household waste per capita increased in all council areas except Ards & North Down. The largest increases compared to last year were recorded in Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon, Lisburn & Castlereagh and Antrim & Newtownabbey at 9.3 per cent, 5.4 per cent and 5.0 per cent respectively.

Household waste arisings per household are also shown in figure 5. Belfast City Council generated the smallest quantity of household waste per household at 936 kg per household. The largest quantity per household was recorded in both Antrim & Newtownabbey and Mid Ulster at 1,305 kg per household.

The arisings figures can be found in Tables 1 and 2 of the data tables appendix. The per capita and per household figures can be found in Table 18. All figures are also available from the [time series dataset](#).

Recycling (preparing for reuse, dry recycling and composting)

This section of the report looks at local authority collected (LAC) municipal and household waste recycling rates. Both are key performance indicators and now include waste sent for preparing for reuse, dry recycling and composting. Previously used key performance indicators KPI (a) and (e) have been modified, in line with the rest of the UK, to include waste sent for preparing for reuse, and relabelled as KPI (a2) and (e2). The impacts were small, adding 0.1 - 0.3 percentage points to the rates, and resulted in the break in the time series visible in Figure 6. The KPI (a2) indicator is also used to monitor performance under the [Local Government \(Performance Indicators and Standards\) Order \(Northern Ireland\) 2015](#).

In 2023/24, the LAC tonnage of waste sent for preparing for reuse, dry recycling and composting (referred to as 'recycling' for the rest of this section) was 505,647 tonnes. The recycling rate was 50.5 per cent, 0.9 percentage points higher than the recycling rate recorded in 2022/23.

Figure 6: Waste sent for preparing for reuse, dry recycling and composting
Northern Ireland, 2006/07 to 2023/24, KPIs (a), (a2), (e), (e2)

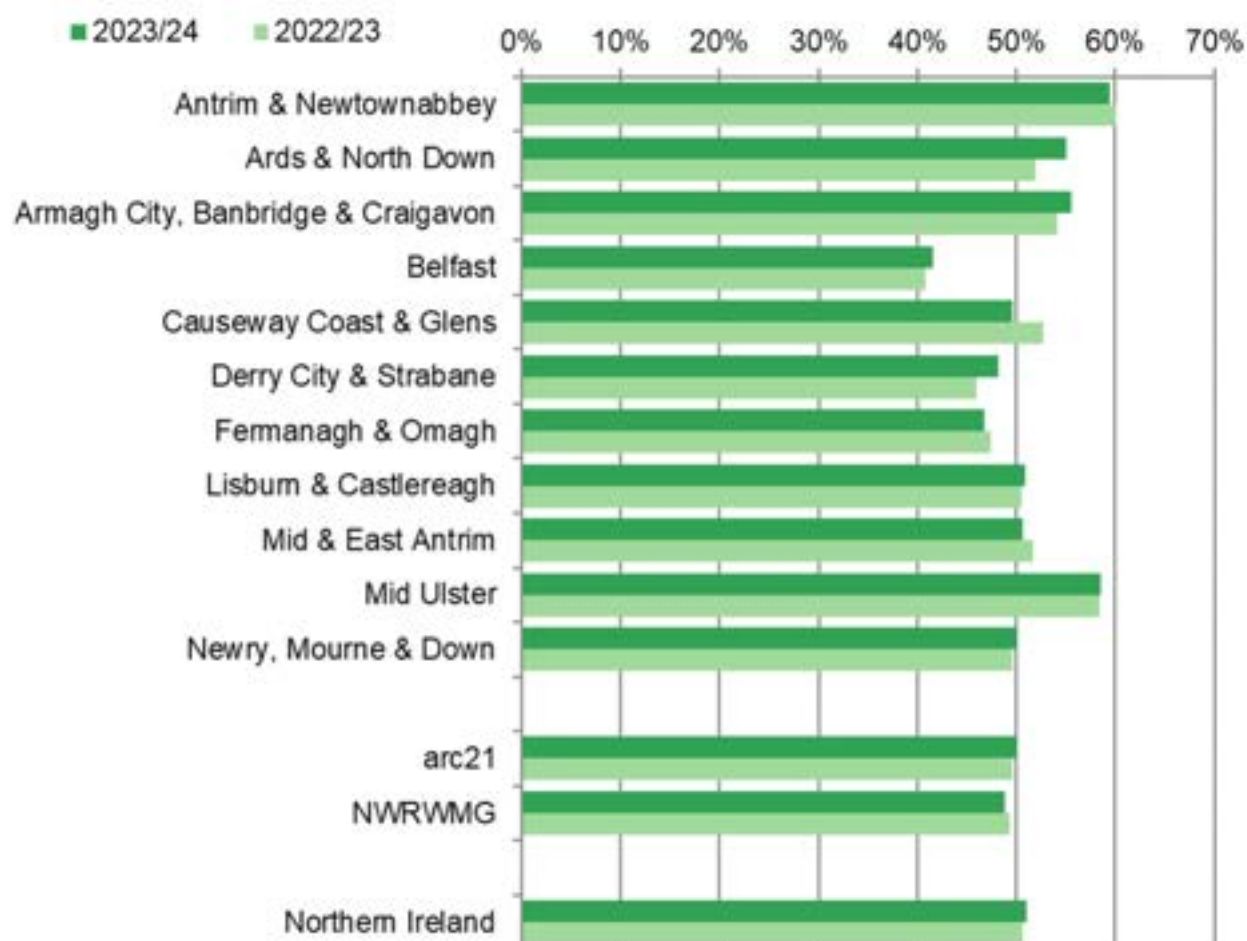


The household waste recycling rate was 51.1 per cent in 2023/24, similar to the household waste recycling rate recorded in 2022/23. The proportion of household waste sent for preparing for reuse was 0.3 per cent, dry recycling made up 22.7 per cent and composting was 28.0 per cent.

The household waste recycling rate continues to meet the Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy target to recycle 50 per cent of household waste by 2020. Additionally, the Programme for Government Framework 2016-2021 contained the percentage of household waste that is reused, recycled or composted as an indicator under outcome 2: we live and work sustainably, protecting the environment. It is also proposed as a population indicator in the next Programme for Government Framework.

Figure 7a compares the household recycling rates for 2023/24 and 2022/23, whilst figure 7b illustrates changes to the component parts of the household recycling rates for each council.

Figure 7a: Household waste preparing for reuse, dry recycling and composting rate by council and waste management group
Northern Ireland, 2022/23 and 2023/24, KPI (a2)



The lowest household waste recycling rate was recorded in Belfast at 41.6 per cent. The highest household waste recycling rates were recorded in Antrim & Newtownabbey and Mid Ulster at 59.4 per cent and 58.6 per cent respectively.

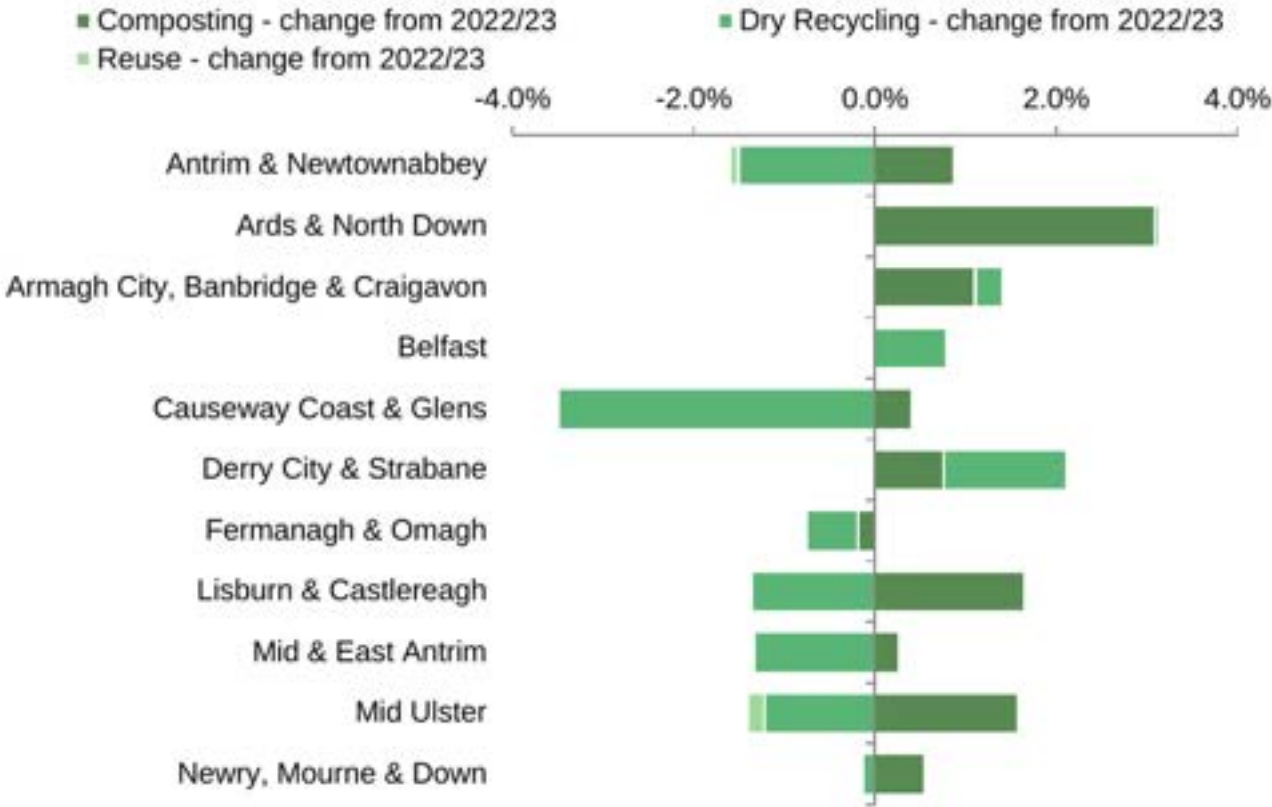
Four councils reported increased household recycling rates compared to 2022/23, with Ards & North Down reporting the largest increase at 3.2 percentage points. Smaller increases in household recycling rates were reported in Derry City & Strabane, Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon and Belfast. Four councils reported decreased household recycling rates compared to 2022/23, with Causeway Coast & Glens reporting the largest decrease at 3.1 percentage points. The remaining councils reported similar rates to 2022/23¹.

¹ Very small increases or decreases in figures (<0.5 per cent or <0.5 percentage points) are not highlighted in the commentary.

There was considerable variation in household dry recycling and composting rates between councils. Derry City & Strabane recorded the highest dry recycling rate at 29.2 per cent, whilst Lisburn & Castlereagh recorded the lowest rate at 17.5 per cent. The highest composting rate was recorded in Antrim & Newtownabbey at 36.5 per cent with Derry City & Strabane and Belfast both having the lowest rate at 18.6 per cent. Differences in composting rates across the council areas can be affected by variations in the urban-rural characteristics of the council areas.

Dry recycling and composting rates for household waste remained relatively stable for most councils compared to the previous year. The largest change in composting was an increase recorded in Ards & North Down where the rate increased by 3.1 percentage points. The largest change in dry recycling rate was a decrease of 3.5 percentage points in Causeway Coast & Glens compared to the rate in 2022/23.

Figure 7b: Change reported for household waste preparing for reuse rate, dry recycling rate and composting rate by council
Northern Ireland, 2023/24 compared to 2022/23

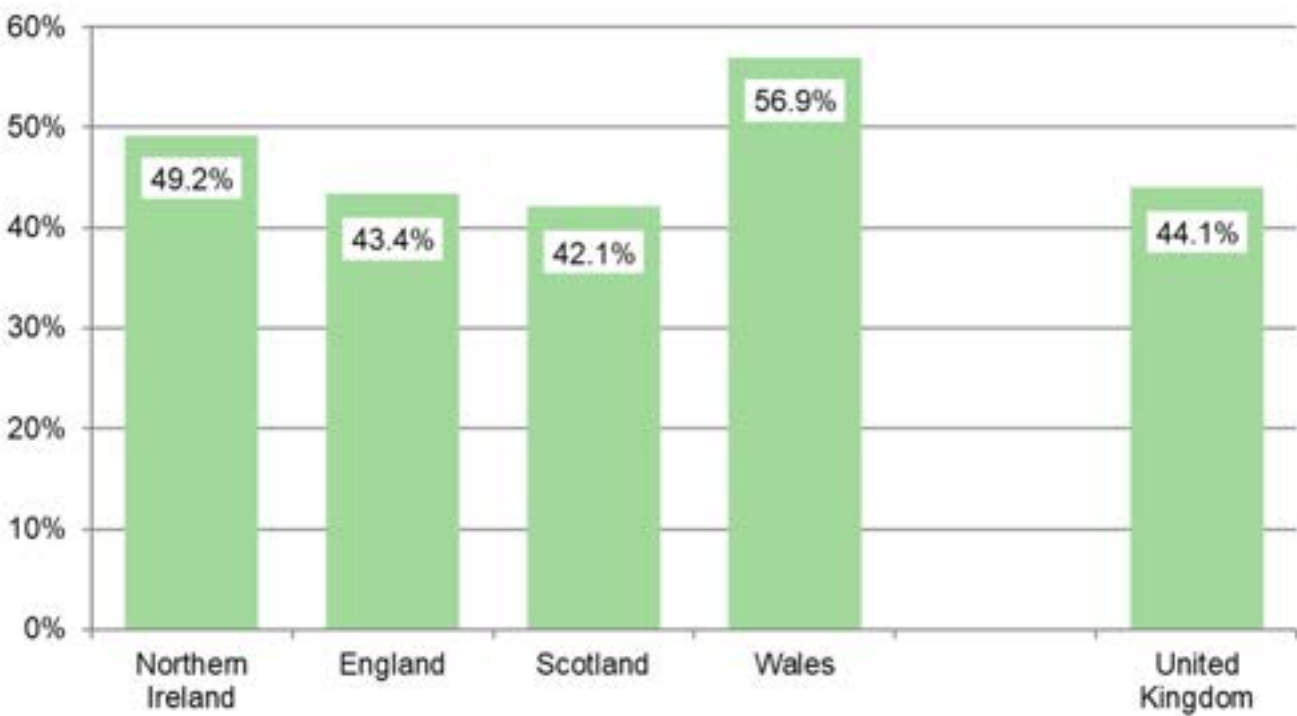


Waste from households recycling rate (including preparing for reuse and composting)

An additional recycling rate metric named ‘waste from households recycling rate’, whilst not a key performance indicator, can be used to make comparisons between each of the four UK countries. The UK waste from households recycling rate is reported by calendar year and was 44.1% in 2022, similar to the rate reported in 2021. The waste from household recycling rate for Northern Ireland was 49.2 per cent in 2022, compared with 43.4 per cent in England, 42.1 per cent in Scotland and 56.9 per cent in Wales.

The latest comparison for finalised annual figures (by calendar year) is shown in Figure 8, with further data available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-waste-data>

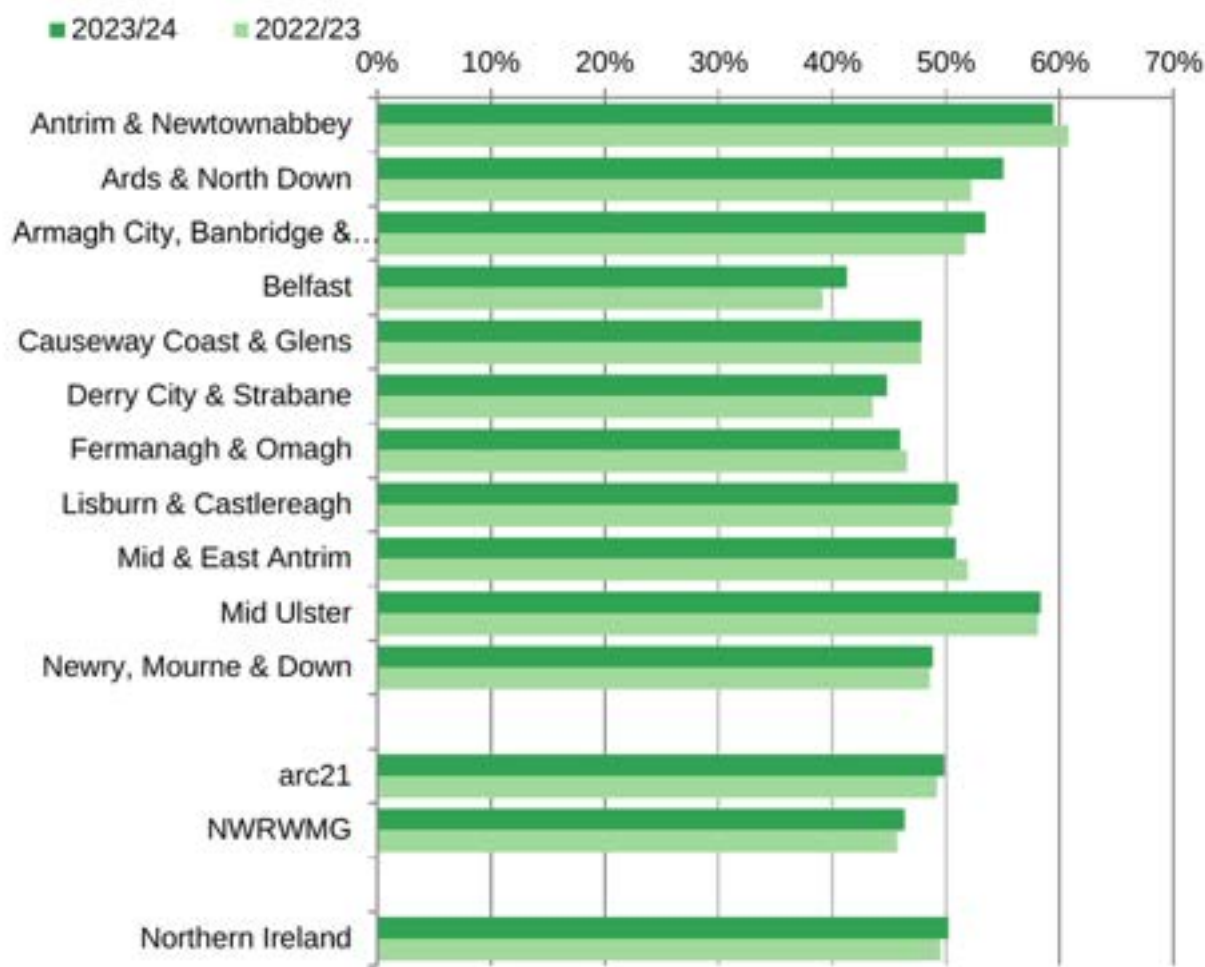
Figure 8: Waste from households recycling rate (including preparing for reuse and composting)
Comparison of UK Countries, 2022



The latest statistics available for waste from household in Northern Ireland are provided below and relate to the 2023/24 financial year.

In 2023/24 there were 421,332 tonnes of waste from households sent for recycling (including preparing for reuse and composting). The waste from households recycling rate was 50.2 per cent. This was an increase of 0.7 percentage points from the 49.5 per cent of waste from households sent for recycling in 2022/23.

Figure 9: Waste from households recycling rate (including preparing for reuse and composting)
Northern Ireland, 2022/23 and 2023/24



All figures for the recycling section can be found in the accompanying data tables spreadsheet and also in the [time series dataset](#).

- Tables 3 and 4 (Waste recycling)
- Tables 16 and 17 (Household waste recycling)
- Table 23 (Waste from household recycling)

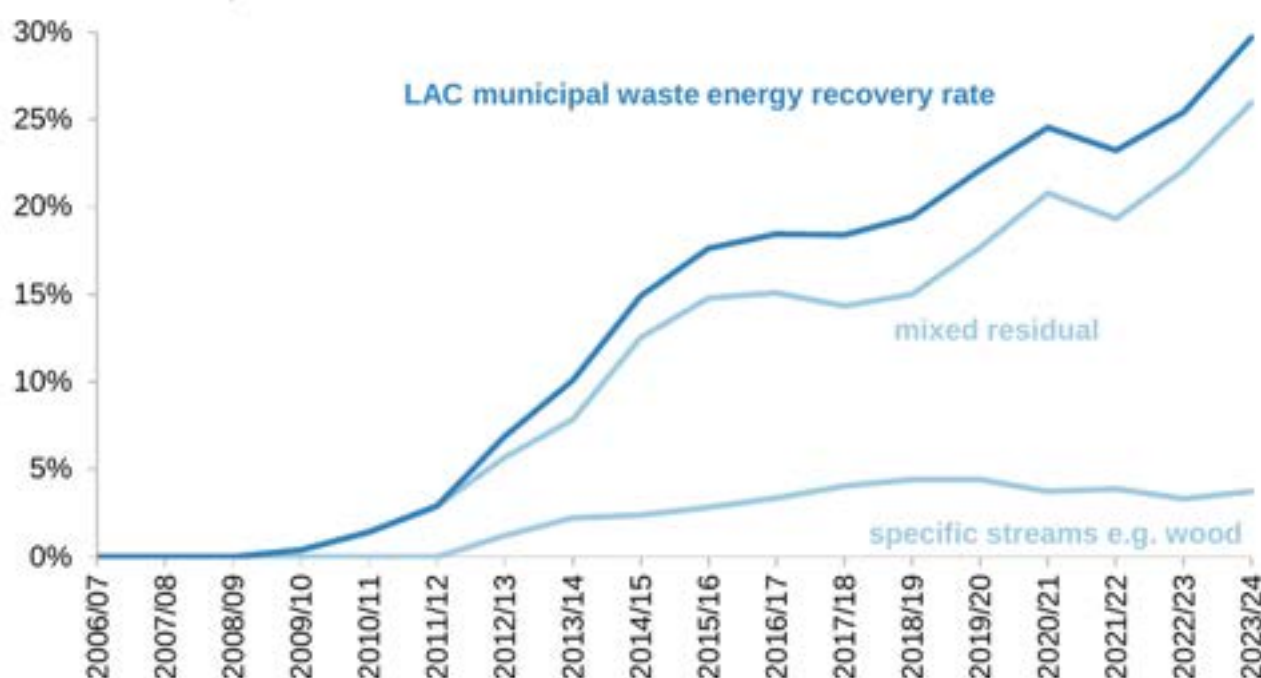
Energy recovery

This annual report includes figures on energy recovery, which is the term used when value is gained from waste products by converting them into energy. All energy recovery figures reported in this section are derived from material sent for energy recovery via incineration/gasification, although other technologies exist. Energy recovery via anaerobic digestion is not included in the figures below and is discussed in more detail at the end of the section.

In 2023/24, 297,262 tonnes of waste arisings were sent for energy recovery. This produced an energy recovery rate of 29.7 per cent, higher than the 25.4 per cent recorded in 2022/23. The majority of energy recovery is derived from mixed residual waste with a smaller proportion from specific streams, e.g. wood.

Figure 10: Waste sent for energy recovery via incineration

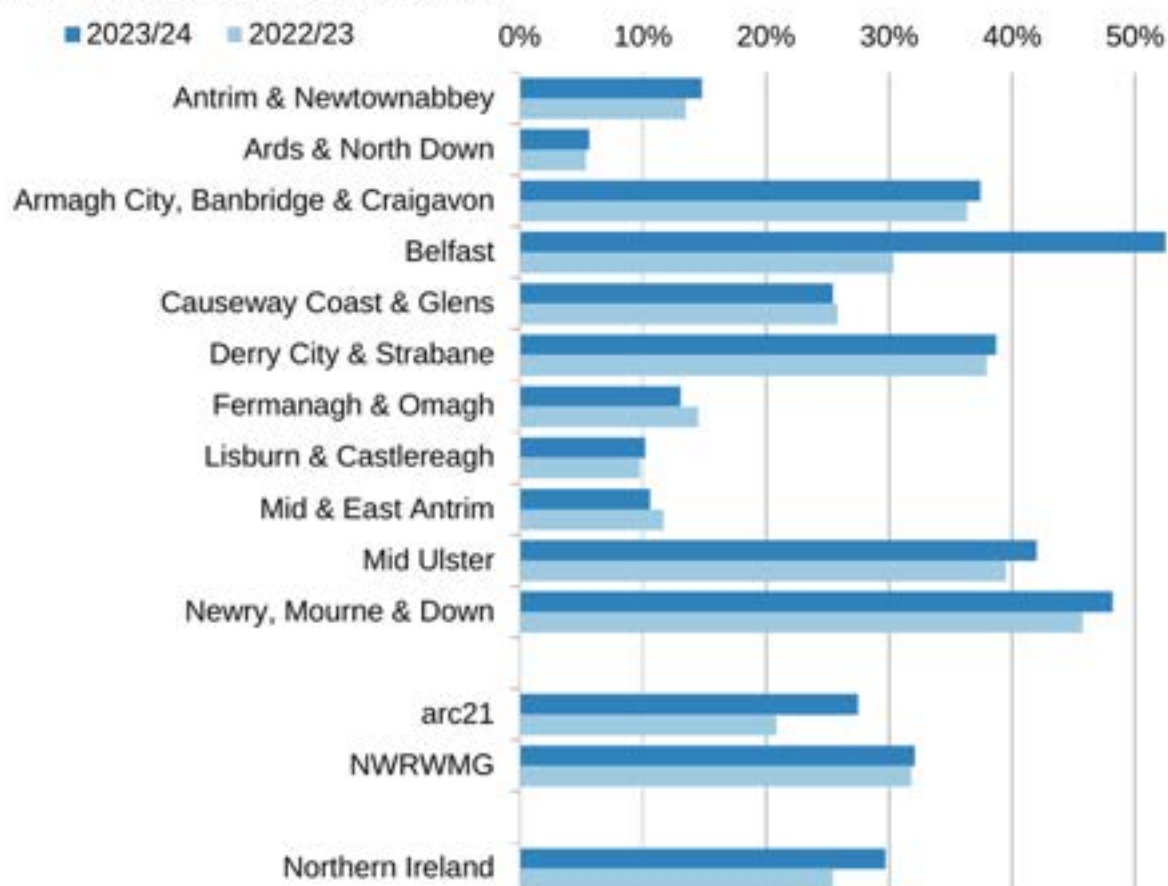
Northern Ireland, 2006/07 to 2023/24



There was zero, or very small quantities, of waste sent for energy recovery before 2009/10. Strong growth followed from 2010/11, with the energy recovery rate increasing from 0.4 per cent in 2009/10 to 29.7 per cent in 2023/24.

Mixed residual waste sent for energy recovery is combustible residual waste collected from the kerbside and from civic amenity sites and processed into refuse derived fuel at material recovery facilities. The specific streams element of energy recovery is mostly wood but also includes furniture, carpets and mattresses, mostly collected from civic amenity sites.

Figure 11: Waste energy recovery by council and waste management group
Northern Ireland, 2022/23 and 2023/24



Belfast and Newry, Mourne & Down had the highest energy recovery rates in 2023/24 at 52.5 per cent and 48.2 per cent respectively. The lowest energy recovery rate was 5.6 per cent recorded in Ards & North Down, similar to 2022/23.

Seven councils reported an increase in the energy recovery rate in 2023/24 compared to 2022/23, the largest of which was in Belfast at 22.1 percentage points, followed by Mid Ulster and Newry, Mourne & Down. Fermanagh & Omagh and Mid & East Antrim recorded small decreases in their energy recovery rates, whilst the remaining councils reported similar rates to the previous year.

Ards & North Down was the only council where energy recovery from specific streams accounted for a greater proportion of their total energy recovery than mixed residual waste. Antrim & Newtownabbey had the highest energy recovery rate for specific streams at 6.4 per cent while Belfast had the highest energy recovery rate for mixed residual waste at 50.6 per cent.

Energy Recovery via Anaerobic Digestion

The tonnages relating to energy recovery from material undergoing anaerobic digestion are still accounted for under the recycling section since the vast majority of the tonnage of waste undergoing this process eventually ends up as a compost (once the methane generated from the anaerobic digestion process has been collected). Table 13 in the data tables appendix shows the amount of food waste anaerobically treated to recover energy before ending up as a compost.

These figures can be found in Tables 3, 4 and 13 of the data tables appendix and in the [time series dataset](#).

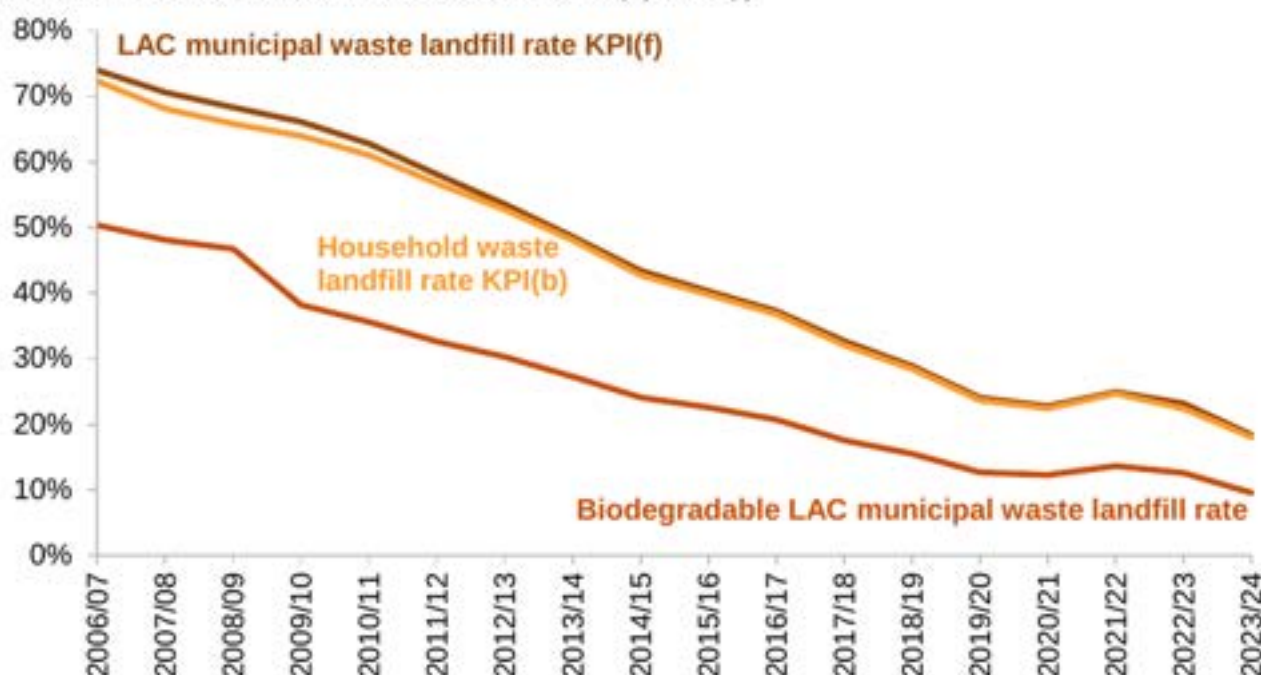
Landfill

The quantity of waste sent to landfill decreased by 18.3 per cent from 225,000 to 183,748 tonnes between 2022/23 and 2023/24. This produced a landfill rate of 18.4 per cent for 2023/24, 4.8 percentage points lower than the 23.1 per cent recorded in 2022/23 and the lowest rate ever recorded.

The landfill rate for household waste also recorded its lowest value in 2023/24 at 18.0 per cent, a decrease of 4.4 percentage points from 22.4 per cent in 2022/23.

Figure 12: Waste sent to landfill

Northern Ireland, 2006/07 to 2023/24, KPIs (b) and (f)

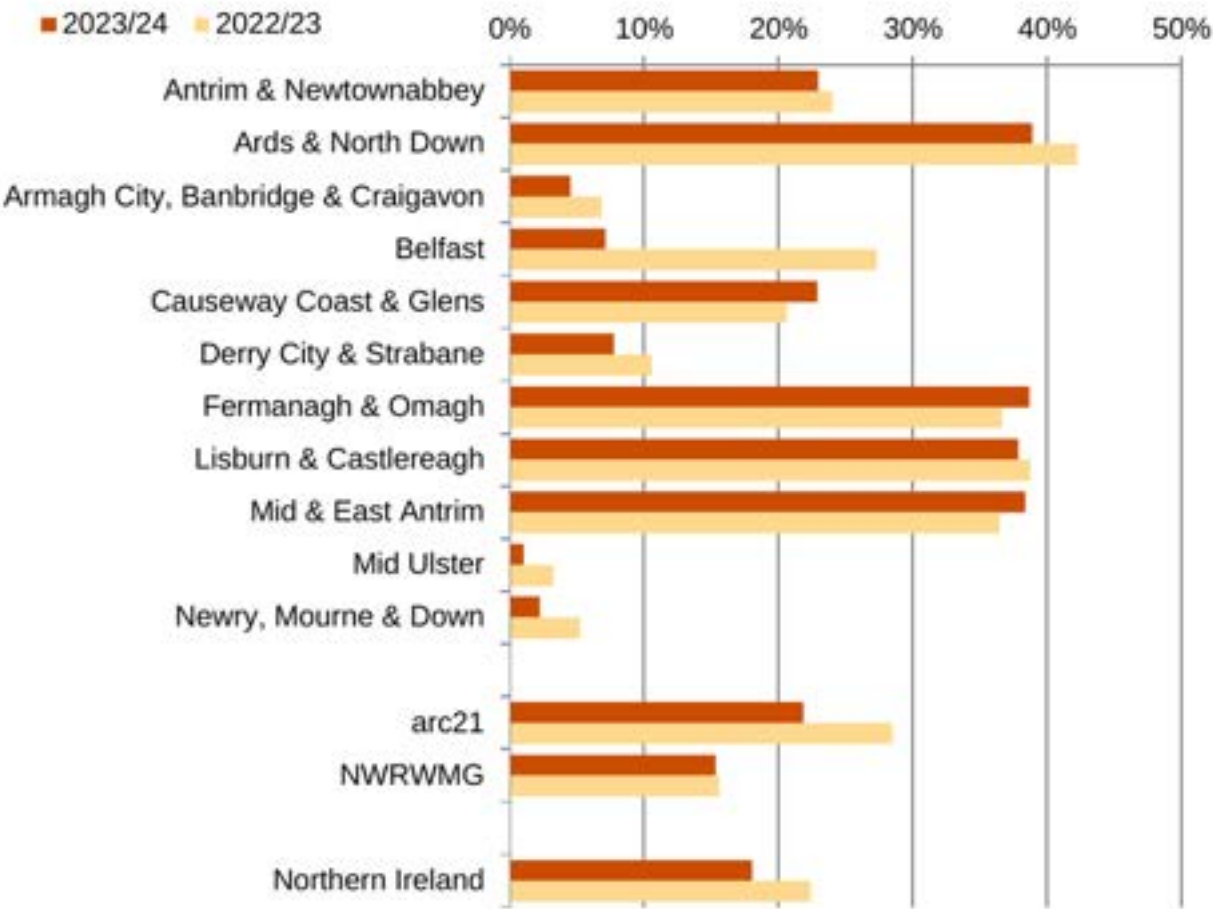


The long-term trend has seen the household waste landfill rate fall from 72.3 per cent in 2006/07 to a low of 18.0 per cent in 2023/24.

Increasing energy recovery rates, a tax on landfill and the statutory requirement for all councils in Northern Ireland to provide households with a container for food to enable its separate collection have all contributed to the long-term reduction in landfill rates. Material, mainly from residual waste treatment, can be sent for energy recovery in the form of refuse derived fuel (RDF) which diverts it from landfill.

Landfill Tax for household waste continues to be the main driver for local authorities to reduce landfill. Other considerations include a limit on the amount of biodegradable Waste as measured by KPI (g). Generating energy from waste by incineration is preferable to landfill, although recycling and reuse are preferable to both.

Figure 13: Household waste landfilled by council and waste management group
Northern Ireland, 2022/23 and 2023/24, KPI (b)



Eight councils recorded a decrease in their household landfill rate compared to last year with Belfast who engaged a new contractor within the reporting year recording the largest decrease of 20.2 percentage points. The household landfill rate increased in Causeway Coast & Glens, Fermanagh & Omagh and Mid & East Antrim by 2.3, 2.0 and 1.9 percentage points respectively.

Mid Ulster recorded the lowest household landfill rate at 1.0 per cent while Ards & North Down recorded the highest household landfill rate at 38.9 per cent.

The NWRWMG had a household landfill rate of 15.3 per cent, 2.7 percentage points lower than the Northern Ireland rate. Arc21's household landfill rate was higher than the Northern Ireland rate at 21.8 per cent. However, the landfill rate for Arc21 decreased 6.6 percentage points compared to 2022/23.

This data and more information including collection method can be found in the data tables appendix. Tables 3 and 4 cover all waste collected and Tables 16 and 17 cover household waste. The data are also available from the [time series dataset](#).

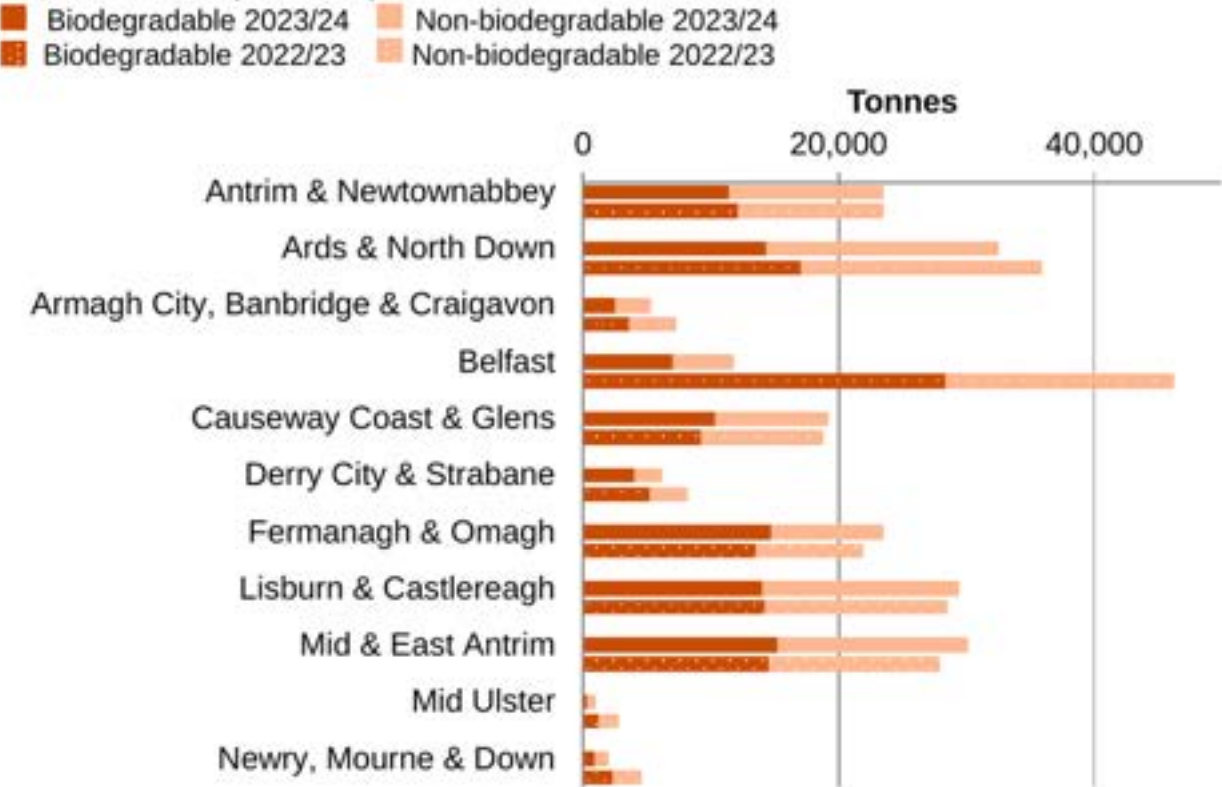
Biodegradable waste to landfill

The Landfill Allowance Scheme (NI) Regulations 2004 (as amended) placed a statutory responsibility on councils, in each scheme year, to landfill no more than the quantity of biodegradable waste for which they had allowances. The scheme concluded at the end of the 2019/20 financial year, however the continued monitoring of biodegradable waste is required for [existing target commitments](#) which specify that it must be reduced to 35 per cent of the total amount (by weight) of biodegradable municipal waste produced in 1995.

Northern Ireland's councils sent 95,425 tonnes of biodegradable waste to landfill during 2023/24, which was 51.9 per cent of all waste sent to landfill. During the previous year, 121,925 tonnes of biodegradable waste was sent to landfill, which was 54.2 per cent of all waste sent to landfill.

Figure 14 displays the tonnages of biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste sent to landfill by each council, comparing them with other councils and to the same quarter last year.

Figure 14: Biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste to landfill by council
Northern Ireland, 2023/24,



There is considerable variation between councils in the quantities of biodegradable waste sent to landfill, as well as the proportion of biodegradable waste in total landfill. In Derry City & Strabane and Fermanagh & Omagh over 60 per cent of all waste sent to landfill was biodegradable, whilst in Mid Ulster 41.2 per cent of all waste sent to landfill was biodegradable.

This data can be found in Table 21 of the data tables appendix and in the [time series dataset](#).

Northern Ireland Key Performance Indicators 2023/24

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are a set of measures used to gauge performance in terms of meeting waste strategy targets. They were originally defined in the Environment and Heritage Service (now the Northern Ireland Environment Agency) municipal waste data monitoring and reporting: interim guidelines, published in March 2003.

The table below has been included to help users find a specific KPI value or location in the report or data tables. Previously used key performance indicators KPIs (a) and (e) have been modified, in line with the rest of the UK, to include waste sent for preparing for reuse, and relabelled as KPI (a2) and (e2).

KPI	Performance during 2023/24	Section in report and Appendix Table
a2	51.1 per cent of household waste sent for recycling (including composting and preparing for reuse)	Recycling (pages 9-13) Data table 17a
b	18.0 per cent of household waste landfilled	Landfill (pages 16-18) Data table 17b
e2	50.5 per cent of waste sent for recycling (including composting and preparing for reuse)	Recycling (pages 9-13) Data table 4a
f	18.4 per cent of waste landfilled	Landfill (pages 16-18) Data table 4b
g	95,425 tonnes of biodegradable waste landfilled	Landfill (pages 16-18) Data table 21a
h	1,118 kg of household waste generated per household	Waste arisings (pages 5-8) Data table 18
j	1,000,681 tonnes of waste generated	Waste arisings (pages 5-8) Data table 1
m	See Tables 22i and 22ii for capture rates by primary waste category	Data tables 22i and 22ii
n	3.0 per cent increase in waste generated	Waste arisings (pages 5-8) Data table 2
p	458 kilogrammes of household waste generated per capita	Waste arisings (pages 5-8) Data table 18

The fully validated figures that are published in the annual report have undergone checks by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) and further validation by Statistics and Analytical Services Branch (SASB) in the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA). The annual validation acts as a check that all issues raised at the quarterly validation stage have been addressed. Additional validation checks incorporated later in the working year are then also applied backwards to all quarters in the reporting year via the annual validation.

The table below outlines the differences between finalised data in this annual report and the provisional twelve-month rolling figures and time series dataset for April 2023 to March 2024 presented in the data tables for the [January to March 2024 quarterly report](#).
(Data tables - Table 18)

Comparison of provisional and final figures for 2023/24 key performance indicators

KPI	Definition	2023/24 provisional	2023/24 finalised	difference
a2	Percentage of household waste sent for recycling (including composting and preparing for reuse)	51.1 per cent	51.1 per cent	0.0 percentage points
b	Percentage of household waste sent to landfill	18.0 per cent	18.0 per cent	0.0 percentage points
e2	Percentage of waste sent for recycling (including composting and preparing for reuse)	50.6 per cent	50.5 per cent	-0.1 percentage points
f	Percentage of waste landfilled	18.4 per cent	18.4 per cent	0.0 percentage points
g	Reported biodegradable waste sent to landfill	95,504	95,425	-79 tonnes (-0.08 per cent)
h	Annual household waste collected per household	1,117	1,118	1.0 kg (0.09 per cent)
j	Waste arisings	999,913	1,000,681	768 tonnes (0.08 per cent)
m	Capture rates	See Tables 22i and 22ii for capture rates by primary waste category		
n	Waste arisings growth rate	2.9 per cent	3.0 per cent	0.1 percentage points
p	Annual household waste collected per capita	458	458	0.4 kg per capita (0.09 per cent)

The differences between provisional and final figures are small but arise due to the additional validations carried out before the finalisation of this annual publication.

Progress against targets

Data contained in this release provide an indication of the progress towards achieving waste strategy targets. They allow for the assessment of the performance of the councils and waste management groups in Northern Ireland in managing waste arisings, recycling, composting and landfill.

Overview of progress against targets

Indicator	Source	Progress/ Outcome
To achieve a recycling rate of 45 per cent (including preparing for re-use) of household waste by 2015	Targets 1, 2 & 3 on p39 of the revised Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy	KPI (a2) Target first met in 2017/18 – 48.1 per cent Latest figures 2023/24 – 51.1 per cent
To achieve a recycling rate of 50 per cent (including preparing for re-use) of household waste by 2020	As above	KPI (a2) Target first met in 2018/19 – 50.0 per cent Latest figures 2023/24 – 51.1 per cent
To achieve a recycling rate of 60 per cent (including preparing for re-use) of LACMW by 2020	As above	KPI (e2) Progress in 2023/24 – 50.5 per cent

Delivering Resource Efficiency - The Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy 2013 has now formally concluded with its [Closure Report](#) published in June 2022.

Following the publication of the Closure Report DAERA are currently in the process of developing a new Waste Management Strategy.

[Waste management strategy | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs \(daera-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

Appendix 1: User Guidance

This statistical release is part of a regular data series presenting finalised information on local authority collected municipal waste managed in Northern Ireland.

Description of data

Local authority collected municipal waste (LACMW) data in Northern Ireland. This is municipal waste which is collected under arrangements made by a district council.

Main Uses of Data

Data contained in this release are published primarily to provide an indication of the progress towards achieving waste strategy targets. They allow for the assessment of the performance of the councils and waste management groups in Northern Ireland in managing waste arisings, recycling, composting and landfill. Targets are set for an annual period and performance against targets is considered in the Progress against targets section.

The revised Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy sets out targets for the management of local authority collected municipal waste.

- To achieve a recycling rate of 45 per cent (including preparing for re-use) of household waste by 2015.
- To achieve a recycling rate of 50 per cent (including preparing for re-use) of household waste by 2020.
- Proposals to achieve a recycling rate of 60 per cent (including preparing for re-use) of LACMW by 2020.

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/waste-management-strategy>

The Programme for Government Framework 2016-2021 contained the percentage of household waste that is reused, recycled or composted as a measure for indicator 36 under outcome 2: we live and work sustainably,

protecting the environment. It is also proposed as a population indicator in the next Programme for Government Framework.

The Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 came into operation on 28 September 2015. It contains three waste management indicators which correspond to KPIs (a2), (g) and (j) in this publication.

The Waste Framework Directive statutory target requires member states to recycle 50 per cent of waste from households by 2020.

The data are also used to assess performance against the Landfill Directive targets.

<http://www.ciwm.co.uk/ciwm/knowledge/landfill-directive.aspx>

This annual report provides final validated information on several key performance indicators (KPIs) used to assess progress towards achieving local authority collected municipal waste targets.

The waste data may help to inform particular lifestyle choices of the public, specifically decisions about how to treat their waste. This information feeds into Northern Ireland specific and UK wide research projects and articles carried out and published by Waste and Resource Action Programme (WRAP) – see the following web resources for more information:

<https://www.recyclenow.com/ni>
<http://www.wrap.org.uk/>
<http://laportal.wrap.org.uk/>

These projects are funded by each of the governments within the UK. The results of research by WRAP assist governments to devise strategies to deal with issues such as using resources sustainably, helping people to recycle more and to waste less

both at home and at work, offering economic as well as environmental benefits.

Additionally, waste management information is used to inform the media, special interest groups such as the Chartered Institute of Waste Management (CIWM) which is the professional body representing waste and resource professionals, academics, for example those who would have an interest and/or involvement in the WRAP research mentioned above, and by DAERA to respond to parliamentary / assembly questions and ad hoc queries from the public.

The NISRA Data Portal provides access to waste information with the aim of making it available to as wide an audience as possible by providing interactive tables and charts that enable the statistics to be interpreted conveniently.

<https://data.nisra.gov.uk/>

Local Government Reorganisation

The 26 councils covered by previous reports were reorganised into 11 new councils from 1 April 2015. Prior to this, we consulted with users of the report, the proposed changes and summary of responses are available on the Statistics and Analytical Services Branch (SASB) website <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/proposed-changes-northern-ireland-local-authority-collected-municipal-waste-management-statistics>

At that stage the opportunity was also taken to update the report using feedback from NISRA's peer review group.

Data Developments

Key Performance Indicators (a) and (e)

Prior to 2015/16, Northern Ireland recycling KPIs did not include waste sent for preparing for reuse, unlike the other UK devolved administrations. Waste sent

for preparing for reuse has been added to the calculations of these KPIs and they have been renamed KPI (a2) and KPI (e2). This change has been backdated to include data from 2012/13 onwards and allows comparisons across time to be made for these KPIs.

The difference this makes to the quantity of waste recycled is small. During 2023/24 this change added 2,514 tonnes of waste sent for preparing for reuse to the recycling total. This added approximately 0.3 percentage points to the KPI (a) and KPI (e) rates.

These measures are now more consistent with the rest of the UK and more consistent with the definition of the targets in the Waste Management Strategy 2020 and the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (NI) 2015, which include waste sent for preparing for reuse.

Waste from households recycling rate

In Northern Ireland, the household recycling rate is based on 'household waste' as defined in the Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997 (the 1997 Order) and Schedule to the Controlled Waste and Duty of Care Regulations (NI) 2013. The 'waste from households' recycling rate was introduced for statistical purposes to provide a harmonised UK indicator with a comparable calculation in each of the four UK countries.

This 'waste from households' measure has been added to the report and data tables to enable UK comparisons. However the main focus of this report is still the previous 'household waste' definition because it is the measure most directly related to current Northern Ireland policy targets. There are targets in the revised Waste Management Strategy and the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (NI) 2015 that reference the prior 'household waste' definition.

There is a difference between 'household waste' and 'waste from households'. The latter has a generally narrower definition than the former. There are a number of sources of waste that were considered under 'household waste' that are not considered by 'waste from households', for example waste from street recycling bins and street cleaning. More information is available from the 'waste from households' calculation guidance on the WDF website.

http://www.wastedataflow.org/documents/guidancenotes/NorthernIreland/OtherGuidanceNotes/WfHrecyclingguidanceNI_v2.pdf

Analysis using 2023/24 data has shown that the 'waste from households' rate is 0.9 percentage points lower than the 'household waste' recycling rate at the Northern Ireland level. However, the difference between these rates vary across councils, with the waste from households being between 0.2 percentage points higher and 3.4 percentage points lower than the household waste recycling rate. The time series file allows the difference in these rates to be compared over quarters and across councils.

Data Sources

Waste Management Data

The information presented in this report is taken from WasteDataFlow (WDF), a web based system for local authority collected municipal waste reporting by UK local authorities to central government. The data are based on returns made to WDF (relating to approximately 40 questions on local authority collected municipal waste management) by councils, within two months of the end of each quarter.

It is increasingly rare that residual waste may still be disposed of directly to landfill. Waste is collected by the councils directly from the kerbside and some civic amenity sites; third parties under contract to the council also collect from the remaining

civic amenity sites and almost all of the bring banks. Some larger councils use intermediate bulking up stations where the waste is weighed both coming into and leaving the transfer station. In all cases the waste is weighed on arrival at treatment sites for recovery e.g. Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs) and/or disposal e.g. landfill sites.

MRFs, which sort the co-mingled waste into different resource streams, almost always have more than one input source and so the weighed tonnages of each stream coming out of the plant are assigned pro-rata to each source i.e. based on their input tonnages as a percentage of all input tonnages for that period. Weighbridge dockets are generated which form the basis for statutory Waste Transfer Notes (WTNs) as the waste moves further down the treatment chain/onto reprocessors. These WTNs and/or internal reports (which also form the basis for invoices) are then sent to the council on a monthly basis. These are summarised on a quarterly basis and organised into the relevant WDF questions/categories and finally input by hand into the WDF web portal. Data providers (councils in Northern Ireland) are supplied with technical guidance documents outlining the methodologies that should be used in the collection, reporting and validation of the data returns. These documents can be accessed on the WDF website.

www.wastedataflow.org/html/datasets.aspx#NorthernIrelandGuidance

Population Data

Population data used to calculate KPI (p), household waste arisings per capita, was sourced from the 2022 Mid Year Population Estimates produced by NISRA and are the most up to date available at the time of publication.

Household Data

Household data used to calculate KPI (h), household waste arisings per household, are based on the Land and Property

Services (LPS) housing stock from April 2024. Note these household figures do not include caravans. An adjustment is made to account for the estimated number of vacant properties. A council-specific occupancy rate was calculated from 2021 Census data and is applied to the LPS data. The datasets can be accessed from the LPS website.

<https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-research/housing-stock-statistics>

<https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-research/new-dwelling-statistics>

Data Quality

The data are final and are based on, but supersede, previously published data from the four quarterly returns for the financial year. The data download from WDF were completed on 15 November 2024. At that time, all the district councils had made a return, giving a 100 per cent response rate.

Information contained in this report has been sourced from WasteDataFlow (WDF), which is the web based system for local authority collected municipal waste data reporting by UK local authorities to central government. The data in this report are based on returns made to WDF by district councils in Northern Ireland at the end of the 2023/24 financial year.

The fully validated figures that are published in this annual report have undergone audit by Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) and further validation by Statistics and Analytical Services Branch (SASB) beyond that which is done on a quarterly basis. The annual validation acts as a check that all issues raised at the quarterly validation stages have been addressed. Additional validation checks incorporated later in the working year are then also applied backwards to all quarters in the reporting year via the annual validation.

Strengths of Data

Data are derived from WDF with full coverage for all councils to support statutory NILAS diversion targets. As the data are derived from an administrative system, they provide a complete picture of council controlled waste activity in NI.

Validation

Various validation checks are carried out by both NIEA and SASB. Validations are conducted for each individual question, with additional global validations carried out to ensure that total tonnage of waste types is equal to the sum of the component parts. Comprehensive variance checks are employed as an integral part of the production process for all reports.

Any anomalies or discrepancies are subsequently queried with the relevant council. As WDF data can usually only be amended at council level, it is then necessary to 'reject' or release the data back to the waste management group and subsequently back to the council so that it might be corrected as appropriate.

Limitations of Data

Waste Management Data

Despite the intensive validation carried out on the data prior to publication, any administrative system involving manual data compilation will always be open to a degree of clerical error.

Unclassified waste

Unclassified waste is calculated as a residual amount of municipal waste after municipal waste sent to landfill, sent for recycling (including composting), sent for energy recovery and preparing for reuse have been accounted for, instead of being extracted directly from the WasteDataFlow system. The majority of the total unclassified tonnage can be attributed to moisture and/or gaseous losses. Small negative tonnages can arise in the unclassified column if more waste is sent for treatment in the quarter

than was actually collected as is more likely at councils operating transfer stations. Transfer stations move waste quickly but if a particular transfer occurs the day after arriving, which also happens to be the start of the next quarter, then a small inconsistency can arise.

Types of waste

There are many different forms of waste, including municipal solid waste, commercial and industrial waste, construction, demolition and excavation waste, hazardous waste, agricultural waste, and waste water and sludges. The latest report on construction, demolition and excavation waste arisings is for 2009/10:

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/construction-demolition-and-excavation-waste-arisings-use-and-disposal-northern-ireland>

Following on from the UK's agreement to revise its interpretation of 'municipal waste' to include much more commercial and industrial waste than previously; it should be noted that this report, as with all previous ones, reflects local authority collected municipal waste only.

Material Recovery Facilities

MRFs usually have more than one input source and the pro-rata assignment to each source based on their input tonnages can lead to a small over or under estimation of the actual tonnage being recovered from each individual source.

Capture Rates

Capture rates are no longer included in the body of the report but are still available in the data tables appendix. The calculations for capture rates are based on a Compositional Study undertaken in 2017 and may not accurately reflect the current situation. However, it is the best available estimation of the proportions of the primary waste categories contained within kerbside residual waste. Levels of

uncertainty around the results of the Compositional Study are discussed in the full report.

The accuracy of these estimates is expected to decrease over time as household recycling habits continue to change.

Waste Crime

Waste crime is the unauthorised management of waste, including illegal dumping. It can be difficult to quantify the impact of such activity upon these official figures as it is not always possible to determine the source, date and tonnage of illegally deposited waste. Where possible the extent and any implications of such activity will be communicated to users.

Energy Recovery via Anaerobic Digestion

The tonnages relating to energy recovery from material undergoing anaerobic digestion are still accounted for under the recycling section since the vast majority of the tonnage of waste undergoing this process eventually ends up as a compost (once the methane generated from the anaerobic digestion process has been collected).

Rounding and Summing

It should be noted that in some instances totals may not add up due to rounding. If tonnages work out to be less than 0.5 tonnes, they will be rounded to zero.

On occasion percentages work out to be less than 0.1 per cent or more than 99.9 per cent. Users should be aware that in such cases, the percentage is rounded to zero or 100 per cent respectively.

Whilst tonnages may be summed over councils and/or Waste Management Groups to give totals for higher level geographies, such totals may suffer from rounding errors when compared with any given totals.

However where fractions or proportions, such as recycling rates, waste arisings per capita etc are stated for councils or waste management groups, these indicators cannot be simply added or averaged to produce a rate for a higher level geography. Such information is often available in the data tables appendix, or otherwise may be available upon request.

Data for Northern Ireland and Waste Management Groups are only added to charts with rates and percentages to avoid distorting the scale of the charts.

Notation and Terminology

Please see the glossary (appendix 2) for clarification of key terms.

Guidance on using data

All figures in the report and the accompanying Excel tables are annual figures and refer to the stated period. These annual figures are the final, validated figures for the year and supersede those figures published in the quarterly reports for the period. Please note that any comparisons with prior year use the final validated figures as published in the annual report for that period. Very small increases or decreases in figures (<0.5 per cent or <0.5 percentage points) are not highlighted in the commentary and should be interpreted with care.

Waste Management information elsewhere in the United Kingdom and Europe

While it is our intention to direct users to waste management information elsewhere in the UK and Europe, users should be aware that local authority collected municipal waste statistics in other administrations are not always measured in a comparable manner to those in Northern Ireland. Details of waste management data published

elsewhere in the UK and Europe can be found at the following links.

England

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/waste-and-recycling-statistics>

Scotland

<http://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/waste/waste-data/waste-data-reporting/>

Wales

<https://gov.wales/local-authority-municipal-waste-management>

Ireland

<http://www.epa.ie/waste/municipal/>

European Union Member States

http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Municipal_waste_statistics

The basis of the data collection across the UK using WDF is broadly consistent, however there are some minor definitional differences such as Northern Ireland recycling KPIs do include material used as 'backfill' (using suitable waste material to refill an excavation instead of non-waste material) which is not directly comparable with the revised Waste Framework Directive recycling measurements.

The meetings of the WasteDataFlow Operational Group ensure a conscious effort to share waste management developments on a UK-wide basis with Northern Ireland representation on this group.

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Appendix 2: Glossary

Term	Explanation
Biodegradable waste	Any waste that is capable of undergoing anaerobic decomposition, such as food and garden waste, and paper and paperboard.
Bring site	An unmanned site with a container or a collection of containers for depositing recyclable waste.
Capture rate for household kerbside collected waste	The amount of 'available' material that is actually being collected for recycling through household kerbside collection schemes.
Civic amenity site	A manned site for depositing waste.
Composting	An aerobic, biological process in which organic wastes, such as garden and kitchen waste, are converted into a stable granular material which can be applied to land to improve soil structure and enrich the nutrient content of the soil.
Composting rate	The percentage of waste sent for composting. It excludes waste collected for composting that was rejected at collection or at the gate of the reprocessor.
Dry recycling	The recycling of dry materials such as paper, card, cans, plastic bottles, mixed plastic, glass.
Dry recycling rate	The percentage of waste sent for recycling. It excludes waste collected for recycling that was rejected at collection, during sorting or at the gate of the recycling reprocessor. It includes residual waste which was diverted for recycling but excludes waste sent for preparation for reuse.
Energy recovery rate	The percentage of waste sent for energy recovery. It includes mixed residual and specific sources components.
Household waste	Includes materials (except soil, rubble and plasterboard) collected directly from households (e.g. kerbside collections) or indirectly (e.g. bring sites, civic amenity sites, collected by private and voluntary organisations not included elsewhere or street sweepings).
Kerbside	A regular collection of waste from premises.
Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	A set of measures used to gauge performance in terms of meeting waste strategy targets.
LAC	Local Authority Collected, as in Waste.
Landfill sites	Any areas of land in which waste is deposited. Landfill sites are often located in disused mines or quarries. In areas where they are limited or no ready-made voids exist, the practice of landraising is sometimes carried out, where waste is deposited above ground and the landscape is contoured.
Local authority collected municipal waste	Waste which is collected under arrangements made by a district council.

Term	Explanation
Mixed dry recyclables	Waste streams intended for recycling found together with each other but separately from other waste.
Mixed residual waste sent for energy recovery	Combustible residual waste collected from the kerbside and civic amenity sites and processed into refuse derived fuel at material recovery facilities.
NILAS	Northern Ireland Landfill Allowance Scheme
Non household waste	Asbestos, beach cleansing, fly-tipped materials, gully emptyings, commercial and industrial, construction and demolition, grounds waste, highways waste, other collected waste and other.
Other household waste	Healthcare waste, bulky waste, street cleaning and other household.
Recycling	Any recovery operation by which waste materials are reprocessed into products, materials or substances whether for the original or other purposes. It does not include energy recovery and the reprocessing into materials that are used as fuels.
Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF)	Consists largely of organic components of municipal waste (such as plastics and biodegradable waste). This can then be used in a variety of ways to generate electricity, most commonly as an additional fuel used with coal in power stations or in cement kilns.
Regular residual household waste	Household regular kerbside collection.
Residual waste	Waste that is not sent for preparing for reuse, sent for recycling or composting.
Specific streams e.g. wood	Used in the context of Waste sent for energy recovery. It is mostly wood but also contains furniture, carpets and mattresses, mostly collected from civic amenity sites.
Waste arisings	The amount of waste collected in a given locality over a period of time.
Waste collected for disposal to landfill	Collected for disposal is residual waste that has not been sorted to separate out recyclable material from other waste before being presented to the Council for collection at various locations.
Waste from households	Not the same as 'household waste'. This is a narrower definition and includes material (except soil, rubble and plasterboard) collected only from households (e.g. kerbside collection, bring sites, civic amenity sites or community skips managed by councils).

Term	Explanation
Waste sent to landfill	The amount of waste sent to landfill. Excludes residual waste which was diverted for energy recovery, recycling or composting. Includes household waste collected for energy recovery, recycling or composting which was diverted to landfill.
Waste Transfer Note (WTN)	A note which must be created for any transfer of controlled waste. The exception to this is householders, who are not required to produce transfer notes.
WasteDataFlow	The web based system for local authority collected municipal waste data reporting by UK local authorities to government (www.wastedataflow.org).
Recycled material types	
Compostable (excluding wood)	Green waste only, green garden waste only, mixed garden and food waste, waste food only, other compostable waste (excluding wood).
Construction, Demolition and Excavation	Plasterboard, rubble, soil and aggregates.
Electrical Goods	Large and small domestic appliances, TVs and monitors, fluorescent tubes and other light bulbs, fridges and freezers, auto batteries and post consumer batteries.
Glass	Brown, clear, green and mixed glass.
Metal	Aluminium, mixed and steel cans, aluminium foil, bicycles, aerosols, gas bottles, fire extinguishers and other scrap metal. Metal from Incinerator Bottom Ash (IBA).
Paper and Card	Books, card, mixed paper and card, paper, yellow pages and cardboard beverage packaging.
Plastics	PET(1), HDPE(2), PVC(3), LDPE(4), PP(5), PS(6), other plastics(7), mixed plastic bottles, and plastics.
Textiles	Textiles and footwear, footwear only, textiles only and carpets.
Unclassified	Derived category including all other recycled material collected not included in the main categories.
WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment)	As electrical goods above but excluding auto batteries and post consumer batteries.
Wood	Wood, chipboard and MDF, composite wood materials and wood for composting.

Appendix 3: List of Acronyms

This is a list of commonly used acronyms in this report.

arc21	Regional waste management group in Northern Ireland
BLACMW	Biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste
CIWM	Chartered Institution of Wastes Management
DAERA	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LAC	Local Authority Collected
LACMW	Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste
LPS	Land and Property Services
MDR	Mixed Dry Recyclables
MRF	Materials Recovery Facility
NI	Northern Ireland
NIEA	Northern Ireland Environment Agency
NILAS	Northern Ireland Landfill Allowance Scheme
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
NWRWMG	North West Regional Waste Management Group
RDF	Refuse Derived Fuel
SASB	Statistics and Analytical Services Branch, DAERA
UK	United Kingdom
WDF	WasteDataFlow
WEEE	Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment
WRAP	Waste and Resource Action Programme

Appendix 4: Accredited Official Statistics

[Accredited Official Statistics](#) are official statistics that have been independently reviewed by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) and confirmed to comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#). Producers of accredited official statistics² are legally required to ensure they maintain compliance with the Code.

These accredited official statistics were independently reviewed by OSR in September 2013 in the [Assessment Report 263 Statistics on the Environment and Waste Management in Northern Ireland](#), with [accreditation confirmed](#) in January 2014. They comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice and should be labelled National Statistics (or 'accredited official statistics').

In October 2020, a [compliance check](#) was completed for the waste statistics produced by each of the UK regions and confirmed that the designation (or 'accredited official statistics' labelling) should continue. The trustworthiness, quality and value of the statistics, including the coherence of the data source, methods and quality assurance (QA) arrangements, and the presentation of the statistics were reviewed with a final outcome that the statistics can continue to be designated as National Statistics (or 'accredited official statistics').

Our [Statistics Charter](#) provides further details of how we apply the principles and practices of the Code in the production and publication of our official statistics.

Our statistical practice is regulated by OSR. They set the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics that all producers of official statistics should adhere to.

You are welcome to contact us directly with any comments about how we meet these standards.

Alternatively, you can contact OSR by emailing regulation@statistics.gov.uk or via the [OSR website](#).

² Accredited Official Statistics are called National Statistics in the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007

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