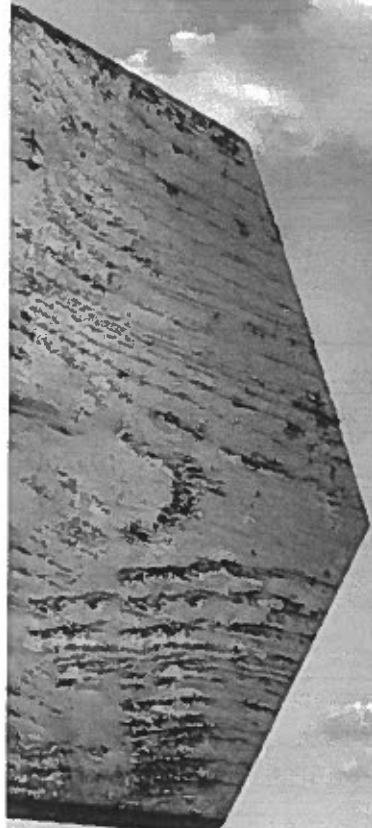




Ards and  
North Down  
Borough Council

# Roadmap to Sustainability





## 1.0 Background

### The Council and Sustainability

Over the years, the Council has made good progress in working to ensuring it, and the Borough as a whole, becomes more sustainable. The Council does however recognise that there remains much work to do due to the ever-increasing sustainability related challenges coming its way.

This Roadmap has been developed to formalise the Council's commitment to becoming more sustainable, in one document. The Council, through its implementation of other key strategies and partnerships, such as The Big Plan and ongoing initiatives to improve waste management practices within the Borough, has been steadily improving its sustainability performance.

This Roadmap is for the period 2021 to 2028. The Action Plan will undergo an Annual Review reported through the Corporate Committee to monitor progress and update on the status of each action. In the event of a target not being reached or progress not being made, this review will include reasons and the barriers for this. It is important that the Roadmap is flexible and adaptable as new imperatives emerge or become more critical.

The Council's sustainability commitments are being completed within other Council strategies and plans. The current main strategies contributing to the Council and Borough becoming more sustainable are:

1. The Big Plan 2017-32
2. The Corporate Plan 2020-24
3. The Integrated Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy 2018-2030

This document has been developed to present what sustainability benefits these main strategies will deliver, setting out the key strategic background. The accompanying action plan presented as Table 6.1 then sets out how the Roadmap's aspirations will be delivered.

Since the introduction of the Statutory Duty on Sustainable Development in 2006, as a result of the Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006 (Section 25), councils have a statutory duty to carry out their functions in a way that contributes to sustainable development.

The Council also has a Sustainability and Environmental Policy, which was introduced in 2015. The Policy outlines the Council's commitment to integrate sustainability throughout its activities.

The Council has developed key strategies in recent years and is developing and is currently updating several of its other key strategy documents. It has recognised the need for a Sustainability Roadmap to be developed to formally outline how it aims to progress towards the goal of becoming more sustainable. This Roadmap document is therefore regarded as a key enabler for a more sustainable Borough.

The key sustainability content of each of the main strategies has been summarised in Section 2.0 of this Roadmap, with other sustainability related content, within other thematic strategies and plans, also presented in Section 3.0.

The Council recognises that there can be no more 'business as usual' and must fundamentally change the way it plans, manages and operates so that both the Council and the Borough as a whole can become more sustainable.

The Council's main aspiration for this Roadmap is to enable the Borough to become an exemplar in sustainability. For this to be achieved, the Council recognises that improvements need to be made on the implementation of actions associated with its strategies.

**The prevailing Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted, as never before in recent times, the critical need for a sustainable approach to how we move forward as a society both locally and globally.**

## Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill

In December 2020 the Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs launched a discussion document for a future Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill:

'The aim of a proposed Climate Change Bill will be to establish a long-term structure to drive greater efforts and actions to reduce GHG emissions and to manage the just transition towards a low carbon Northern Ireland whilst helping to ensure that Northern Ireland is better prepared to adapt to the impacts of unavoidable climate change.'

Northern Ireland Climate Change legislation would:

- be a cornerstone to a response to the declarations of a climate emergency by the UK and Northern Ireland;
- legally underpin requirements for delivering international agreements and policies (e.g. Paris Agreement);
- deliver requirements of the New Decade New Approach agreement in regard to climate change legislation;—
- be an incremental legal tool in building climate change resilience within Northern Ireland;
- underpin the Northern Ireland Executive's Green Growth Strategy and delivery Framework; and
- drive forward a local low carbon, circular economy.

## United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future.

At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership.

They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.

These 17 SDGs are presented in **Figure 1**.

The UN states that these goals are '...the world's best plan to build a better world for people and our planet.' They are a call of action to promote prosperity while protecting the environment.

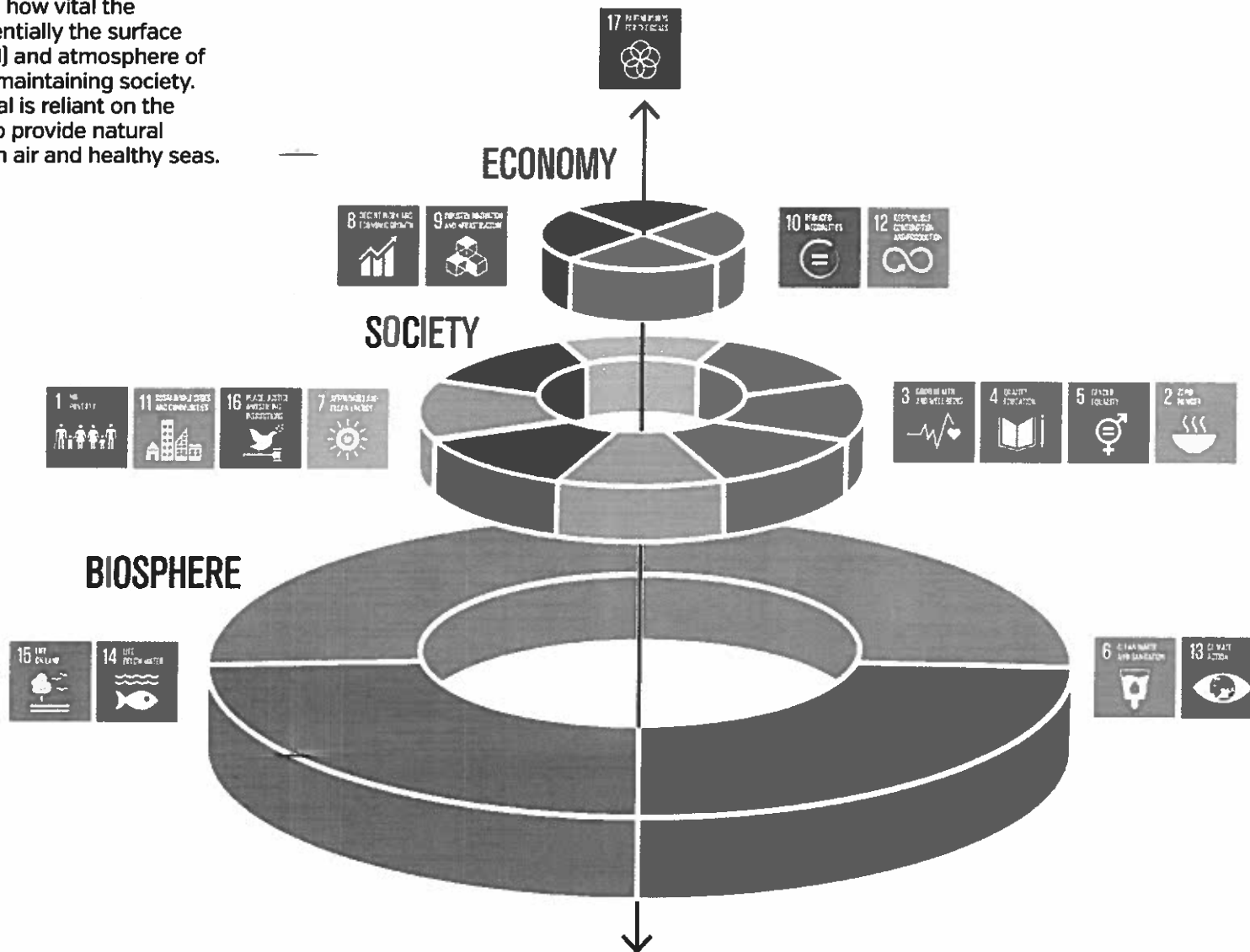
The Council's sustainability efforts are being shaped around the most relevant SDGs and indeed these SDGs are being referenced throughout this Roadmap.

These goals can be divided into three key tiers. **Figure 2** presents these as a 'wedding cake' diagram which illustrates the dependence of human society and the economy on the natural environment (these are also widely known as the three pillars of sustainability).



Figure 1

**Figure 2** shows how vital the biosphere (essentially the surface (water and land) and atmosphere of the earth) is in maintaining society. Our very survival is reliant on the earth's ability to provide natural resources, clean air and healthy seas.



**Figure 2**



## **Economic sustainability**

*'the ability of an economy to support a defined level of economic production indefinitely.'*

Alternative terminology –  
fair, equitable and 'just', resilient, efficient, green economy

## **Social sustainability**

*'a process for creating sustainable successful places that promote wellbeing, by understanding what people need from the places they live and work. Social sustainability combines design of the physical realm with design of the social world – infrastructure to support social and cultural life, social amenities, systems for citizen engagement, and space for people and places to evolve.'*

Alternative terminology –  
social equity, liveability, health equity, community development, social capital, social support, human rights, labour rights, placemaking, social responsibility, social justice, cultural competence, community resilience and human adaptation.

## **Environmental Sustainability**

*'the capacity to improve the quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of the earth's supporting ecosystems.'*

Alternative terminology –  
environmental protection, adaptation, resource management, ecological protection, natural capital, biodiversity, decarbonisation, resilience, zero carbon.

## **Environment/Biosphere as the foundation for sustaining life**

We live on a planet with finite natural resources and a finite capacity to cope with pollution and waste. As such, we cannot continue to consume at current levels and therefore need to drastically change the resources we use and the way they are used.

Meeting growing demands for food, water, energy and avoiding dangerous levels of climate change will require a step change in the way we use resources.

Whilst economic growth is important, we cannot grow the economy at the expense of the environment, or people's health and wellbeing. Getting the right balance between these elements is the key to becoming sustainable.

For the Council to operate and deliver its activities in a sustainable manner, it must therefore consider social, economic and environmental factors in everything it does.

Key areas/themes the Council considers include:

- Natural asset protection and enhancement;
- Health, safety and wellbeing;
- Delivering a sustainable economy through economic development support for the Council area;
- High quality shared spaces;
- Climate change adaptation and mitigation/carbon emissions reduction;
- Sustainable development of the Council's physical infrastructure and shared spaces;
- Resident employability, education and employment provision and support; and
- Community resilience.

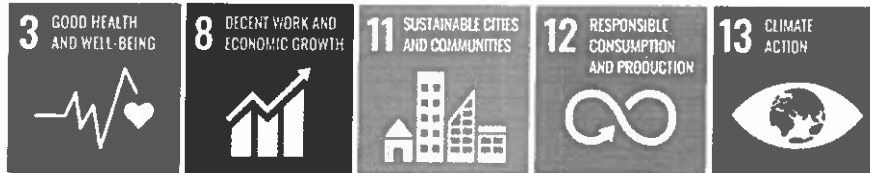
In relation to the SDGs, the Council focuses its sustainability efforts on six key goals, five core goals and one overarching goal.

The Council believes that these SDGs are where it should focus its efforts to deliver the greatest impact and benefit to the Borough.

The Council also develops strategies and implements associated actions and initiatives related to other SDGs.

The five core goals are:

- Goal 3 Good Health and Wellbeing
  - > Ensuring healthy lives and promoting wellbeing for everyone
- Goal 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth
  - > Promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- Goal 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities
  - > Making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- Goal 12 Responsible Consumption and Production
  - > Ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Goal 13 Climate Action
  - > Taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts



The sixth overarching goal is perhaps the most important and relates to the need to collaborate to ensure the successful implementation of the goals:

- Goal 17 Partnerships for the Goals
  - > Strengthening the means of implementation and revitalising the global partnership for sustainable development

Goal 17 will be vital for the Council and Borough for it to become an exemplar in sustainability. It is critical that effective partnerships are established both 'internally' (across the Council's workforce- and Elected Members) and 'externally' (amongst key stakeholders- community groups, government bodies/departments, residents and businesses).

Internally, it is vital that there is cross departmental working with everyone pulling in the right direction in order to achieve the common goal.

For the Roadmap to be effectively realised, it therefore needs to be successfully implemented through a joined-up approach, with the cessation of any silo working amongst all its stakeholders of critical importance.

What is needed is a change of mindset amongst all internal and external stakeholders. The successful delivery of this Roadmap will only happen if mindsets change and collaborative working comes to the fore.



## 2.0 Introduction to Council Strategy

The Council's main, high level strategies contain commitments and actions that will contribute to the Council becoming more sustainable in terms of its own operations, but also in terms of the wider Borough as a whole. Examples of commitments and actions include:

- Making improvements to public parks and open spaces;
- Making improvements to community buildings and facilities;
- Developing and delivering support programmes for residents and business in areas including economic/business development, health and wellbeing, safety and security, community resilience and employability;
- Environmental protection/carbon reduction and climate change adaptation; and
- Sustainable job creation.

The following sections summarise the key sustainability content and the benefits which will be realised from the successful implementation of the various integrated Council strategies and Plans either currently in place or under development.

## 2.1 Growing Better Together - The Corporate Plan for Ards and North Down Borough Council 2020-2024

The Corporate Plan sets out the Council's direction for the four-year period. Contained within the Plan are several key references to sustainability. Examples include:

*'We are committed to a sustainable future, ensuring that the activities and decisions taken forward within this plan advance the economic, social and environmental needs of future generations and make them proud of what we achieve'*

*'The most pressing issue that rapidly rose to prominence during the last Corporate Plan is sustainability. Economically, we need to improve the prosperity of our businesses and residents. Environmentally, within the context of a growing global emergency we are determined to help navigate a way forward for our residents, businesses and visitors and to lead by example. The overwhelming evidence of our changing climate led to Ards and North Down being the first Council to declare a Climate Emergency. Sustainability, climate change and reducing our greenhouse gas emissions have therefore been at the forefront in developing this new Corporate Plan. Our Growing Better Together Corporate Plan will be implemented with sustainability at its core.'*

*'We recognise that in order to grow a sustainable economy and create more and better-quality jobs in Ards and North Down, we also need to consider all the reasons why businesses and people would want to locate here. Growing a clean, green, and safe environment is as important to business growth as improving digital connectivity and creating new business units. Sustainability will be at the fore of how the Council's priorities will be delivered.'*

A viable economy depends on a healthy society, both of which rely on a sustainable environment. Sustainability occurs when all three work in balance with each other.

The Corporate Plan also outlines the key sustainability related challenges the Council and Borough faces, including:

1. Economic challenges, with the Borough's economy seeing low growth in recent years, creating financial pressure on local businesses. This also results in low growth in the available pool of business ratepayers – putting greater pressure on existing businesses and householders to share the rates burden. The result is a stagnant income from rates, which puts pressures on the sustainability of Council services, resources and investment in the Borough;
2. Social changes including increasing demands on services and local challenges such as demographic changes as our population ages and also local pockets of deprivation; and
3. Increased awareness and focus, globally and locally, on environmental sustainability including climate change, carbon footprint and the impact of waste.

The Council sees these not only as challenges but also as opportunities. By addressing these, the Council and Borough will benefit in many ways, for example through:

- reduced running costs through the implementation of an effective carbon reduction and resource efficiency programme;
- improved health and wellbeing amongst Council staff and residents through the introduction of effective support strategies and initiatives; and
- improved employability in the Borough through the introduction of effective employability, business start and innovation programmes.

Delivering the Corporate Plan will result in:

- More people in quality, local jobs working within more sustainable businesses;
- Increasing business growth – in number and size – leading to reduced pressure on business rates and providing further opportunities for investment in the local economy, environment, community and supporting Council services and facilities;
- Reduced commuting due to a stronger local economy with local job opportunities, also reducing our carbon footprint and growing local skills;

- Improved environmental practices including waste reduction, increased recycling, improved energy efficiency and a reduced carbon footprint;
- Happy and healthy residents investing in their physical and mental wellbeing;
- Safe, secure, happy communities who take pride in their area and their neighbours
- Lifelong learning including skills for employment and life; and
- A great place to grow older with opportunities, services and facilities for all ages.

All of these benefits from the effective delivery of the Corporate Plan will also result in the Borough becoming more sustainable.

The Corporate Plan has six related priorities, all of which will contribute to the Council and Borough becoming more sustainable. **Figure 3** is taken from the Corporate Plan. An additional column has been added to identify within which of the three sustainability tiers/pillars each priority supports.

It should be noted that the Council views sustainability from both an 'external' and 'internal' viewpoint.

The first five priorities relate to 'external' sustainability i.e., that which benefits the Borough as a whole.

ANDBC Priority	Description	Big Plan Outcome [All People...]	The Council's role	Contribution to sustainability in the Borough
<b>Prosperity</b>	Sustaining and Growing our local economy where possible and assisting the sector to change when new models are developed	Benefit from a prosperous economy	Creating the conditions for businesses to start, grow and sustain; and providing opportunities for employment and prosperous communities	Economic sustainability
<b>Environment</b>	Growing a cleaner, greener local and global environment	Feel pride from having access to a well-managed sustainable environment	Providing for a clean, attractive, environmentally responsible place, including our towns, villages, countryside and coast	Environmental and economic sustainability
<b>Opportunity</b>	Growing the lifelong potential of our community	Fulfil their lifelong potential	Working with partners to develop the potential of our residents, young and old – including skills development	Social sustainability
<b>Pride</b>	Growing empowerment, respect and safety of our community	Live in communities where they are respected, are safe and feel secure	Partnering with our community to develop positive relationships, community pride, respect and safety	Social sustainability
<b>Life</b>	Growing the health and wellbeing of our residents	Enjoy good health and wellbeing	Supporting the physical and mental wellbeing of our residents through our services, facilities and partnerships	Social sustainability
<b>Excellence</b>	Growing a high-performing Council	Enabling all other outcomes	Working to be an effective and efficient organisation, innovating and partnering to make a sustainable, positive difference for our Borough	Social, economic and environmental sustainability

**Figure 3**

The sixth priority relates to 'internal' sustainability, which focuses on how the Council operates. Examples of the key sustainability considerations the Council is working on within the 'Excellence' priority, across the three tiers, include:

### **Economic sustainability**

Reducing unnecessary resource use (both physical and human) by being more efficient e.g. energy consumption reduction and introducing enhanced sustainable procurement practices

### **Social sustainability**

Enhancing the terms and conditions of staff members through health and wellbeing initiatives, volunteering programmes etc.

Improving customer focus in the delivery of services to residents, visitors and businesses.

### **Environmental Sustainability**

Reducing internal waste generated, energy consumed, and carbon emissions generated across the Council Estate to reduce costs and the Council's environmental impact.

Through its efforts internally, the Council wishes to become an exemplar for sustainable operations. This will allow it to become a reference for the Borough's residents and businesses to allow them to adapt to becoming more sustainable. The Council wishes to 'walk the talk' of this Roadmap to demonstrate sustainability leadership to the Borough's residents and businesses.

The Council also needs to ensure that it effectively communicates what sustainability means to the Borough, its residents and businesses. This Roadmap goes some way to assist with this.

A communications programme is being developed as part of this Roadmap to enhance sustainability awareness amongst staff, elected members, visitors, residents and businesses.

## Creating positive outcomes for everyone



for Ards and  
North Down

# THE BIG PLAN

## 2.2 The Big Plan 2017 to 2032

The Big Plan is the Borough's community plan and is one of the key sustainability enablers for the Council.

The Department for Communities states that community planning *'... aims to improve the connection between all the tiers of Government and wider society work through partnership working to jointly deliver better outcomes for everyone. Community plans identify long-term priorities for improving the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of districts and the people who live there.'*

Clearly this means making districts/council areas more sustainable. Examples of sustainability references within the Big Plan include:

'A viable economy depends on a healthy society, both of which rely on a sustainable environment. Sustainability occurs when all three work in balance with each other.'

'Creating positive outcomes for everyone by empowering individuals and communities to be more resilient; reducing inequality; promoting good relations and sustainability; while at the same time improving the quality and accessibility of all public services is at the heart of the Big Plan.'

### The Big Plan Outcomes

The Big Plan is focused around five outcomes which will be achieved by community planning partners, including the Council, integrating the Big Plan outcomes within their own strategies and work priorities. Since publication of the Big Plan, collaborative priorities that will demonstrate where community planning provides added value have been identified.

While the collaborative priorities have been aligned with a specific Big Plan outcome, they cut across all outcomes and demonstrate the interactions, and interdependencies, between the three pillars of sustainability.

Living and working in a more sustainable Council and Borough is essential to achieving these outcomes.

Big Plan Outcome All people in Ards and North Down	Big Plan Collaborative Priority	Sustainability Focus
Outcome 1 <b>Fulfill their lifelong potential</b> by addressing social issues making Ards and North Down a great place to grow older and empowering citizens.	P1. Resilience, democracy and empowerment	Big Conversation Panel (engagement with our citizens)
	P2. Infrastructure and the public estate	Sustainable use of public infrastructure
Outcome 2 <b>Enjoy good health and wellbeing</b> by helping people to take care of their own wellbeing	P3. Emotional health and wellbeing	Five ways to wellbeing model to help people connect, give, learn, be active and take notice
	P4. Obesity	Whole system approach to obesity recognising the need for social, economic and environmental interventions
Outcome 3 <b>Live in communities where they are respected, are safe and feel secure</b> by creating shared spaces and welcoming living environments	P5. Welcoming to everyone	Making AND a great place for people to grow older. Creating social connections to reduce social isolation
	P6. Vulnerable people	Joined up services via a Support Hub to identify appropriate help
Outcome 4 <b>Benefit from a prosperous economy</b> by supporting business innovation, skills programmes, and nurturing entrepreneurs	P7. Better Jobs and skills	Skills and employability Forum
	P8. Inequalities [economic]	To react to an ever-changing marketplace  To support businesses that need to change to survive  Poverty Forum – food, fuel, digital and income poverty
Outcome 5 <b>Feel pride from having access to a well-managed sustainable environment</b> by increasing our understanding of environmental systems and the benefits it brings us when sustainably managed	P9. Sustainability	Carbon reduction, food security and green transport, and sustainable 'lifetime' buildings initiatives
	P10. Valuing the environment	Outdoor learning environment and the Outdoor Partnership initiative

### 2.3 Integrated Strategy for Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development 2018 to 2030

The Integrated Strategy for Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development presents a coherent vision for the pursuit of prosperity in the Borough.

It notes that the Borough has three particular strengths within its natural landscape: the sea, loughs and land – a blue green space.

The natural environment is therefore seen as a key resource within the Borough, which must be protected. The need for sustainable tourism, regeneration and economic development is therefore at the heart of this strategy.

The strategy is entitled 'Blue Green, Creatively Connected' and has been developed to promote and implement sustainable economic growth within the Borough following increased concern globally on the need to protect the environment and combat climate change.

The strategy has been developed to maximise the adoption of sustainable economic development using the Blue and Green Economy approaches.

The following definitions are taken directly from the Integrated Strategy document.

'The Blue Economy is defined by the World Bank as "...the range of economic sectors and related policies that together determine whether the use of oceanic resources is sustainable."

In their 2017 report authored with the UN, they explain that "the Blue Economy concept seeks to promote economic growth, social inclusion, and the preservation or improvement of livelihoods while at the same time ensuring environmental sustainability of the oceans and coastal areas"

'The United Nations Environment Programme defines a Green Economy as "... one that results in improved human well-being and social equity" and is linked to the concept of a Circular Economy that seeks to minimise waste and harmful emissions through innovative approaches to how we use and re-use finite resources.'

The Integrated Strategy also requires the sustainable regeneration of the Borough and that economic growth is managed carefully so that prosperity is brought to the Borough and its people without negatively impacting upon the environment.

Sustainable Planning and Design is a crucial element within the strategy, with the strategy emphasising the need to embrace the principles of sustainable planning and design, from regional planning decisions regarding the distribution of development and infrastructure right through to the specification of building materials by effective regulation of high performing new buildings and retrofitted energy efficiency measures.

The strategy outlines the following key Sustainable Planning and Design principles for the Borough:

- Contributing positively to local ecosystems;
- Harnessing existing assets, including natural and built heritage;
- Committing to sustainable sources of energy and forms of transportation;
- Developing appropriate urban densities, reducing sprawl and increasing walkability;
- Integrating green technologies and systems at every stage of development;
- Designing with longevity and flexibility in mind; and
- Embracing new development partnerships and opportunities.

The strategy commits to safeguarding the Borough's natural assets, with conservation and restoration of natural habitats (sea, lough and land) at its heart.

Sustainability related improvement projects within the strategy include:

**A Blue Green Action Initiative**, which will provide everyone in the Borough with the opportunity to actively participate in caring for their environment.

It will comprise a series of carefully devised wildlife habitat improvement projects located across the Borough. These will provide the opportunity for local residents, community groups, employees and business owners, as well as visitors, to get a hands-on experience of improving the natural landscape.

It will be facilitated through the continued delivery of the Council's Biodiversity Action Plan.

In addition to the obvious environmental benefits, the initiative will also result in many additional wider benefits, including opportunities for skills development, social cohesion and destination awareness which contribute to social sustainability.

**A Carbon Reduction Strategy**, to reduce the impact of harmful carbon emissions upon our environment, is proposed.

Climate change is one of the major challenges of our time. The impacts of global warming and poor air quality are extensive, from threatening coastal communities with increased erosion and flooding, to damaging the cardiovascular and respiratory health of entire populations.

To grow its economy sustainably, Ards and North Down must therefore ensure that it does so without cost to its valuable Blue Green environment, nor the livelihoods of its current and future residents.

The Council will pursue an ambitious programme to reduce the carbon emissions resulting from its operations and encourage businesses and residents to reduce their emissions.

It will involve the identification and implementation of measures that can demonstrably lower emissions within the Borough. Target areas are likely to include;

- switching where possible to renewable energy sources;
- taking further steps to conserve energy through building insulation and updated technologies; and

- Reducing transportation related carbon emissions by encouraging increased walking and cycling, while promoting greater use of hybrid and electric vehicles.

This carbon reduction strategy will contribute to improving the health of the local, as well as global environment. It should also increase local awareness and help attract environmentally conscious investors to the Borough.

## 2.4 Local Development Plan

The Local Development Plan will apply regional policies at the local level and inform the general public, statutory authorities, developers and other interested bodies of the policy framework and land use proposals that will guide development decisions within Ards and North Down.

The Ards and North Down LDP will:

- provide a 15-year plan framework to support the economic and social needs of a council's district in line with regional strategies and policies, while providing for the delivery of sustainable development;
- facilitate sustainable growth by co-ordinating public and private investment to encourage development where it can be of most benefit to the well-being of the community;
- allocate sufficient land to meet society's needs;
- provide an opportunity for all stakeholders, including the public, to have a say about where and how development within their local area should take place;
- provide a plan-led framework for rational and consistent decision-making by the public, private and community sectors and those affected by development proposals; and
- deliver the spatial aspects of The Big Plan.

The Planning Act (NI) 2011 provides for the plan-led system. It states that where, in making any determination under the 2011 Act, regard is to be had to the local development plan, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Under the plan-led system, the LDP will be the prime consideration in the determination of planning applications for the development or use of land.





## 2.5 StAND for Sustainability

Ards and North Down Borough Council launched the StAND for Sustainability campaign on Monday 17 September 2018, in a bid to reduce the reliance on single-use plastics within the Borough and help address the global plastic waste pandemic that is having such a negative impact on our planet, oceans and wildlife.

As part of this new campaign, all Council staff were encouraged to consider alternatives to single-use plastics across both their working and personal lives through involvement with 'Plastic Pledge Week.' Additionally, single-use plastics will be eradicated where possible from Council-led premises and events. This message is also being filtered across the Council's supply chain, to our stakeholders, residents, the business community and other organisations.

## 2.6 Nature Based Solutions

Nature-based solutions are the ways that nature can help solve social or economic problems. These include improving mental and physical health through the provision of quality green space and engagement with nature, improving water and air quality or storing carbon from the atmosphere to help mitigate climate change.

"actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural or modified ecosystems, that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits" (IUCN 2020).

"Nature-based solutions with safeguards are estimated to provide 37 per cent of climate change mitigation until 2030 needed to meet the goal of keeping climate warming below 2°C, with likely co-benefits for biodiversity"

-IPBES Global Assessment Report

## Habitat Creation

Ards and North Down Borough Council previous Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) (2013-2017) involved a desk-based biodiversity audit of the local area. This along with stakeholder consultations allowed the steering group to develop local habitat and species action plans. The valuable work carried out by local groups and partnerships to address these actions have helped to ensure that some of our most locally important species and habitats have been maintained and enhanced. However recent reports show that the protection of relatively small, isolated sites and specific local actions alone have not prevented continued biodiversity declines. The State of Nature Report, 2019, revealed of the 2,450 species found in Northern Ireland, 272 (11%) are currently threatened with extinction from Ireland as a whole. The NI section of the report also revealed a 43% decline in the abundance of nine butterfly species recorded since 2006.

It is clear priority habitats and species cannot be managed alone and in isolation. We need to think bigger, better, and more joined up.

We want the revised edition of our LBAP to reflect changes in the national and international approach to conservation and move towards a Nature Recovery Approach of protecting and enhancing our local biodiversity.

The councils fragmented collection of designations and priority habitats do not represent a coherent and resilient nature network capable of responding to the challenges of climate change and other pressures. Establishing coherent and resilient nature networks will not only help wildlife to cope with change, but it will also improve the ability of the natural environment to provide services for us such as pollination, soil retention, flood water storage, water filtration and of course daily access to nature. To establish our networks, we need a strategic overview of where the councils natural assets are located and where opportunities exist to enhance those assets. Nature Network Maps can help identify concentrations of core areas of high-quality habitat which contain rare or important habitats or species, as well as those which are isolated at a landscape scale. This can then be used to focus effort and target limited resources to restore areas and create corridors and stepping stones where it will make the most difference. Maps like this could be used by, and developed with, farmers, housing developers, planners, conservation groups to guide habitat creation.

The results of this type of Nature Recovery study would provide us with a comprehensive picture of our habitats within our Borough and allow us to work closely with stakeholders to produce actions not only at a local scale but also a landscape scale within our LBAP.

The Ulster Wildlife Trust (UWT) and their partners were awarded Heritage Lottery Funding to carry out a Northern Ireland wide Nature Recovery Study . After learning of our plans to revise our LBAP and our expression of interest in taking a nature recovery approach UWT confirmed they would be interested in piloting the study within our Council area. Heritage lottery funding was awarded to UWT in March 2020 and the new Nature Recovery project manager started at the end of September 2020. With the help of a consultant we hope to our produce our LBAP alongside this study.

### **Tree Planting**

- Woodland represents 8% of Northern Ireland land area
- 'Forests for our Future', aiming to plant 18 million trees within the next ten years which requires an annual afforestation rate of 1700ha per year. Current planting rates is 200ha per year.

When planting we must:

- Plant the right trees in the right place
- Prioritise native species
- Correctly manage the woodlands we have
- Have a strategic approach to woodland creation integrated into other land use considerations
- Put local people at the heart of tree planting projects
- Maximise biodiversity recovery to meet multiple goals
- Make sure trees are resilient and can adapt to a changing climate

### **Rewilding**

The provision of biodiversity is a statutory requirement under the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

Biodiversity defined as the variety of life on earth. Moreover, it is the variety of flora and fauna and the functions that exist between them. Once such function is the interaction between the natural environment and recreational value of open spaces.

Rewilding is about the restoration of ecosystems where nature can take care of itself and encourages a balance between people and the rest of nature where each can thrive.

Rewilding is based on four principles:

- People and Communities
- Rewilding is a choice of land management and gives people the opportunity to experience an alternative type of green space management
- Outcomes are driven by natural process
- The process of rewilding is not necessarily heavily managed but goes where nature takes it.
- It works at natures scale
- Rewilding requires land managers to reduce the intensity and frequency of management to allow nature to adapt.
- Benefits are for the long term
- Rewilding is an opportunity to have a significant impact on the wildlife potential for open spaces at present but can leave a significant legacy for future generations if it secured for the long term.

Rewilding is not something that is focused solely on rural landscapes. The creation and maintenance of meadow grasslands is taking place in public open spaces across the UK.

In 2018 an audit of our grassland mowing regime across the Borough was undertaken by the Councils Biodiversity and Horticultural Officers, in collaboration with Parks Maintenance staff and it found significant potential for rewilding some areas of our existing open space portfolio.

By altering and reducing our mowing practices we have converted large areas of closely mown, species-poor amenity grasslands to grassland habitats capable of supporting a much more diverse range of floral species, pollinators and insects. We hope to continue to increase our rewilding portfolio across council owned lands. As well as the biodiversity benefits studies have shown that conversion from species-poor to species-rich grassland can significantly increase the soil carbon sequestration rate. In addition, a significant reduction in CO2 emissions as a result of a reduction in grass cutting frequency reduces the Councils carbon footprint.

As well as altering our grassland management regime under the rewilding scheme we have also taken substantial steps towards more sustainable annual planting schedule. The move towards this type of planting has expanded significantly since 2018, the use of direct sowing annual flowers throughout the Boroughs flower beds have proved a great success. Annual wildflower planting is significantly less expensive and produces displays of greater impact with greater longevity. Species in these mixes are specifically chose for their pollinator friendly flowers. With careful planning and consideration officers hope to build on what has already been achieved and extend sustainable annual planting to include additional areas.

## **Green Recovery**

By building back through a Green Recovery, we should:

- Stimulate the economy by spending and investing more widely and strategically
- Invest in large scale nature restoration
  - > Which in turn will create jobs, tackle the climate and nature crisis, and create better conditions for well-being and prosperity

Nature based interventions can deliver carbon reductions at a fraction of the cost of engineered solutions and when delivered effectively can enhance the stocks of natural assets and the ecosystem services they provide [UK Natural Capital Committee, April 2020]

Ards and North Down Borough Council have a number of plans in place or in the pipeline that follow good practice:

1. A Tree and Woodland Strategy has been drafted and will be presented to Council when finalised. The document includes engaging to actively collaborate with the community and others in valuing trees as a vital community asset. (Action 5)
2. Develop a Community Food Growing Strategy ('Lets Grow Together') [Action 13]
3. Take a Natural Capital approach to new infrastructure and decision making. (Action 16)
4. Development of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan with nature recovery approach (Action 10)
5. Integrated Weed Control Approach to reduce heavy reliance on herbicides (Action 11).

### 3.0 Supporting thematic Strategies and Plans

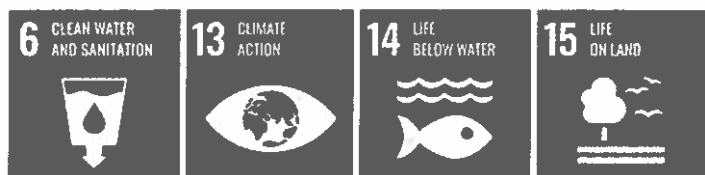
The previous strategies and plans are holistic in nature i.e. they contribute to overall sustainability within the Council area.

Other thematic strategies and plans either in place or under development will also impact positively towards the Council and wider Borough becoming more sustainable. They will complement and assist in delivering the aims and objectives of the holistic strategies and plans outlined in Section 2.0.

The thematic strategies and plans have been grouped within the three sustainability tiers/pillars.

#### Biosphere (Environment)

Key SDGs in this tier include:



Council Thematic Strategies and Plans within these goal areas include:

- **Strategic Energy Management Strategy and Action Plan** – this will outline how the Council will reduce energy consumption and reduce carbon emissions. It will involve the identification and implementation of measures that can demonstrably lower energy consumption and carbon emissions within the Council.
- **Sustainable Waste Resource Strategy (Phase 2)** – this outlines how the Council can further encourage our residents and businesses to reduce, reuse and recycle
- **Parks and Open Spaces Strategy** – which outlines how we will better utilise our parks and open spaces. The main aim of the Strategy is to develop a shared, strategic approach to maximise its potential to;
  - > contribute to a more inclusive and sustainable future;
  - > improve physical and social inclusion, including accessibility; and
  - > protect and enhance biodiversity and ecological habitats.

- **Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP)** – The Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (the WANE Act) places a statutory duty on public bodies (called the Biodiversity Duty) to further the conservation of biological diversity when carrying out their functions. Examples of key objectives within the LBAP include:
  - > Improving our knowledge of what habitats and species we have, their current condition, extent and population;
  - > Identifying threats to habitats and species within the Borough;
  - > Working in partnership alongside governmental and non-governmental partner organisations to develop actions and targets to protect and enhance priority habitats and species within the Borough; and
  - > Promoting the long-term protection and enhancement of biodiversity;

#### Society

Key SDGs in this tier include:



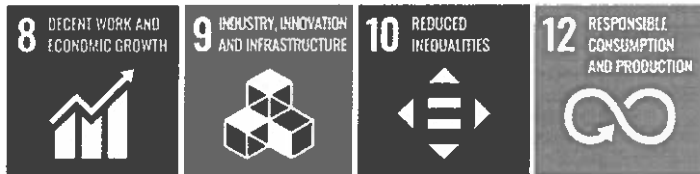
Council Strategies within these goal areas include:

- **Parks and Open Spaces Strategy** – this will outline how we will better utilise our parks and open spaces. The main aim of the Strategy is to develop a shared, strategic approach to maximise its potential to;
  - > contribute to a more inclusive and sustainable future;
  - > improve physical and social inclusion, including accessibility; and
  - > protect and enhance biodiversity and ecological habitats.

- **Borough Events Strategy** – outlining how events can play a role in supporting the local economy, including Council owned events and others to bring people together.
- **Skills, Apprenticeship and Volunteering Programme** – to complement existing NI wide initiatives to provide a link between education providers and employers in the Borough, while also facilitating further opportunities for high quality voluntary activity to ensure that the productive and volunteering capacity of the local population is maximised where possible.
- **Town and Village Public Realm** – within the Integrated Strategy-strategy to invest in the quality and vitality of the public realm (streets and spaces) to make them more appealing to visitors, residents, businesses and investors.
- **Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan 2019-2022** – working with partners in an Age Friendly Alliance, the Council aims to make the Borough a great place to grow older and an area in which everyone, regardless of age, is valued and respected. This will include issues such as outdoor spaces and buildings, transport, housing, social participation, respect and inclusion, civic participation, communication and information and community and health.
- **Estate Strategy 2020-2025** – this will impact on current and proposed estate assets. The extent of impact will depend on the subsequent Estates Plan though adopted principles include taking a “whole Borough” approach, partnering with other sectors, maximising efficiency and sustainable, strategic investment.

## Economy

Key SDGs in this tier include:



Council Strategies within these goal areas include:

- **Belfast Region City Deal** – this is an investment package of over £1 billion for the wider ‘Belfast city region’ – working across six partner Councils, supported by investment from Treasury, NI Executive, Queen’s University and Ulster University and the private sector. This will seek to create up to 20,000 new and better jobs alongside delivering a 10-year programme of inclusive economic growth – including an increase of £470m Gross Value Added (GVA) across the Belfast Region.
- **Borough Events Strategy** – this will outline how events can play a role in supporting the local economy, including Council owned events and others
- **Strategic Energy Management Strategy and Action Plan** – this will outline how the Council will reduce energy consumption and reduce carbon emissions. It will involve the identification and implementation of measures that can demonstrably lower consumption and carbon emissions within the Council.
- **Sustainable Waste Resource Strategy (Phase 2)** – this outlines how the Council can further encourage our residents and businesses to reduce, reuse and recycle
- **Procurement Policy and Guidelines** – which include sustainable procurement considerations
- **Estates Strategy 2020-2025** – this will impact on current and proposed estate assets. The extent of impact will depend on the subsequent Estates Plan though adopted principles include taking a “whole Borough” approach, partnering with other sectors, maximising efficiency and sustainable, strategic investment.

## 4.0 Service Unit Plans

Additional council wide sustainability commitments are also implemented within annual plans developed by the Council's Service Units.

These Service Unit Plans will assist in the delivery of sustainability actions and initiatives. As a result, they will be key to assisting with the successful implementation of this Roadmap and as a result help improve the Council's sustainability standing.

## 5.0 What is expected of me?

This section outlines the steps to be taken to assist with the successful implementation of the actions within, and the objectives of, this Roadmap.

### 5.1 As a Council employee

As a collective, employees of the Council at all levels must collaborate to ensure that the Roadmap is successfully implemented and delivered. Silo thinking/approaches within directorates and service area must cease. This must be led from the very top with the chief executive, directors and heads of service 'walking the talk', demonstrating leadership and making this requirement abundantly clear.

Individually, employees must integrate sustainable thinking, practices and behaviours within their day-to-day work. The Council will be developing and delivering awareness training for all staff that will outline what these practices and behaviours are (e.g. within the areas of energy and water conservation/efficiency, waste reduction, safer working practices, stress management, responsible procurement and consumption, respect for fellow colleagues). Employees must adopt these practices and behaviours.

A number of Sustainability Champions within the council will be established and a representative should sit on all capital projects' meetings (present and future) and their comments recorded and reported back to the Project Boards.

### 5.2 As an Elected Member

Elected Members must demonstrate leadership as representatives of the Borough's residents by both promoting and living the principles of this Roadmap. They should also actively encourage residents and businesses within the Borough to adopt sustainable behaviors as part of their everyday lives.

### 5.3 As a business owner within the Borough

Follow any relevant guidelines and awareness being developed and communicated by the Council on how to operate more sustainably. Engage with the Council's sustainability initiatives being developed.

### 5.4 As a developer within the Borough

Follow any relevant guidelines and awareness being developed and communicated by the Council on how to operate more sustainably.

Engage with the Council's sustainability initiatives being developed.

The Council aims to set the bar high with any new or refurbishment projects. Innovation and future proofing will be key to any new projects to support the Council in meeting its aim of being an exemplar in sustainability.

### 5.5 As a resident within the Borough

Residents will play a crucial role in making the Borough more sustainable.

Residents will be expected to participate in the Council's various sustainability related initiatives to improve and encourage sustainable living. Key areas may include sustainable food provision, waste reduction, water and energy conservation, reducing litter and dog fouling, staying safe, respecting your neighbours, preserving Borough facilities for the enjoyment of all, reducing vandalism and crime and supporting/participating in economic development activity.

The Council will be developing and communicating a sustainable living programme to encourage and promote the adoption of sustainable behaviours within the Borough.

## 6.0 Action Plan

The Council's Sustainability Roadmap is for the period 2021 to 2028 – running alongside 2 Corporate Plan phases.

This Action Plan presents the main sustainability actions currently proposed. It should be noted that there are many other sustainability related actions and initiatives planned within various other Council strategies and plans that have not been specifically referenced in the Roadmap.

The Action Plan will undergo an Annual Review reported through the Corporate Committee to monitor progress and update on the status of each action. In the event of a target not being reached or progress not being made, this review will include reasons and the barriers for this. It is important that the Roadmap is flexible and adaptable as new imperatives emerge or become more critical.

### Prioritising actions for implementation

The actions that will be implemented/worked on within the Roadmap have been prioritised based on;

1. The prime importance placed on the Environment by residents. The Environment was the top priority for residents during the stakeholder consultations held during the development of the latest Corporate Plan.
2. Any gaps identified in plans/arrangements currently in place within the Council.
3. The current status of operation following COVID-19. The action plan has been categorised as urgent, short and medium term defined as follows:
  - Urgent – within the first 6 months of the Roadmap
  - Short Term – within the first two years of the Roadmap
  - Medium Term – within the first 8 years of the Roadmap

These actions are presented as a high-level summary table below (Table 6.1).

Many of these actions may require additional resourcing which will be assessed in the development of any further planning. Appropriate businesses cases will be made if necessary, staff resourcing checked, alternative sources of funding investigated, and full life cycle costings considered so that any savings to be made can be calculated into any capital expenses.

All actions have been cross referenced against the Corporate Plan (draft) priorities, the 3 Sustainable Development Pillars (Economic, Environmental and Social) and 6 Council focused Sustainable Development Goals:







<p><b>3</b> GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING</p> 	<p>Ensuring healthy lives and promoting wellbeing for everyone</p>	<p><b>8</b> DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH</p> 	<p>Promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all</p>
<p><b>11</b> SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES</p> 	<p>Making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable</p>	<p><b>12</b> RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION</p> 	<p>Ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns</p>
<p><b>13</b> CLIMATE ACTION</p> 	<p>Taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts</p>	<p><b>17</b> PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS</p> 	<p>Strengthening the means of implementation and revitalising the global partnership for sustainable development</p>
<p>Need to collaborate to ensure the successful implementation of the goals</p>			

Table 6.1: Summary of Actions

	<b>Urgent Actions</b> 6 months • January 2021 – July 2021	Corporate Priorities met	Sustainability tier/pillar met	Sustainable Development Goals met	To be action by [HoS lead]	Timescales
<b>1</b>	Rethink the Council model of working – complete a strategic review of the existing staff working of flexible home working arrangements, working hours/contracted hours of 9-5 to avoid high overtime and toil for those working 'out of hours' and office accommodation requirements following the Covid 19 pandemic. What became apparent was the ability of council staff to be flexible in how and where they worked. As a result, transport, pollution and carbon emissions decreased. Flexible working can also benefit through reducing office space requirements. This could also potentially benefit the Council through the closure of inefficient office accommodation and the use of effective space planning through, for example, hot desking arrangements. Review contractual working arrangements to reflect service needs, reducing OT and TOIL for weekend working where this is the norm, not the exception.	Environment Opportunity Life Excellence	Ec, Env, So	3 8 11 13	HoS Human Resources [all Service Units to contribute]	underway by July 2021/completed by April 2022
<b>2</b>	Review of existing, funded projects, e.g., Belfast Region City Deal – how can these now be completed with Sustainability at their core and particularly with renewables and energy efficiency and social value as a priority. Ensure that Sustainability Champions (see action 4) are at all capital or regeneration projects meeting.	Prosperity Environment Opportunity Excellence	Ec, Env, So	11 12 13 17	HoS Strategic Capital Development	Underway by March 2021/ ongoing
<b>3</b>	Train all staff on Sustainability awareness and Climate Change.  In addition, train a small team of officers/managers as Sustainability Champions utilising Sustainable NI – these champions will be selected by the Roadmap Working Group and approved by relevant line managers. The Sustainability Champions will act as 'leads' on Sustainability to work across all service areas to sense check and challenge where sustainability should be considered. They will not be 'experts' but trained to a level that they are competent and confident to questions decisions made and perhaps refer back to the Compliance Officer - Sustainability for wider consideration and guidance.	Environment Pride Life Excellence	Ec, Env, So	11 12 13	HoS Administration	June 2021
<b>4</b>	Develop a Sustainable Food Strategy for the Council and Borough  Following the Sustainable Food Places approach, key deliverables may include: 1. Establishing a food partnership to lead on the development of the strategy 2. Development of the Sustainable Food Strategy  Establishing 'Revive and Refresh' arrangements to ensure that the partnership and strategy is working and being implemented effectively.	Prosperity Environment Opportunity Life Excellence	Env, So	3 11 12 13 17	HoS Administration	underway by June 2021/ongoing



Table 6.1: Summary of Actions (cont'd)

	<b>Urgent Actions</b> 6 months • January 2021 – July 2021	Corporate Priorities met	Sustainability tier/pillar met	Sustainable Development Goals met	To be action by (HoS lead)	Timescales
<b>5</b>	<p>Develop a Tree and Woodland Strategy for the Borough.</p> <p>Key deliverables/steps may include:</p> <p>The document will have three main aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaging - to actively engage and collaborate with the community and others in valuing trees as a vital community asset.</li> <li>Increase Accessibility i.e. % of population with access to a 2ha+ wood within 500m. Move towards the NI Average of 10.3% cover from present 7% position by 2025 and UK average of 21.1% by 2030.</li> <li>Planting Woodland % population requiring new woodland to be able to access a 20ha+ wood within 4km. Move towards the NI Average of 31.4% access from present 33.9% position by 2025 and UK average of 12.1% by 2030.</li> <li>Managing to ensure good tree care, through sustainable management of the tree population and reducing risk.</li> </ul> <p>Document will link directly to the DAERA initiative 'Forests for our Future'.</p>	<p>Environment</p> <p>Pride</p> <p>Life</p> <p>Excellence</p>	Ec, Env, Soc	13	<p>HoS</p> <p>Leisure and Amenities</p>	<p>March 2021</p> <p>[strategy developed by – work ongoing beyond March 2021]</p>
<b>6</b>	<p>Review and update the Council's Sustainability and Environmental Policy including current topics such as climate change and social value in procurement.</p> <p>The Policy was introduced in 2015 and is therefore somewhat dated. It currently does not reference important sustainability issues such as climate change and the need for carbon emissions reduction. With particular emphasis on impacts on "designated" areas of the borough i.e., ASSIs, AONB</p>	<p>Environment</p> <p>Excellence</p>	Ec, Env, So	<p>11</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p> <p>17</p>	<p>HoS</p> <p>Administration</p>	Mar 2021
<b>7</b>	<p>Develop a Sustainable Energy Management Strategy and Action Plan</p> <p>The Council will develop a strategy for maximising the sustainability of its energy usage, looking at minimising the amount of energy we use to run our estate and deliver our services as well as maximising opportunities to incorporate renewable energy supplies where possible. An action plan will be produced to identify what we can do at each of our properties to deliver on the strategy and allow us to prioritise our interventions in a way that helps us to get most gain as quickly as possible.</p> <p>All of the council's energy is supplied through a 'green energy' contract with Electric Ireland for the next 2 years.</p>	<p>Environment</p> <p>Prosperity</p>	Ec, Env	<p>11</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p>	<p>Head of Assets and Property Services</p>	Underway by April 2021

**Table 6.1: Summary of Actions (cont'd)**

	<b>Urgent Actions</b> 6 months - January 2021 - July 2021	Corporate Priorities met	Sustainability tier/pillar met	Sustainable Development Goals met	To be action by (HoS lead)	Timescales
<b>8</b>	<b>Develop a Car Park Strategy -</b>  A Car Park Strategy has been drafted and is currently being finalised. This will aim to ensure that the Council's public car park estate works in the best possible way for sustainable development of the Borough - in particular the main town centres. The Strategy will promote a shift towards more sustainable forms of transport - including cycling, public transport and electric vehicle uptake.	Environment  Life  Prosperity	Ec, Env, Soc	11 12 13 17	Head of Regulatory Services	Underway by  April 2021
<b>9</b>	Ongoing review and implementation of Council's Sustainable Waste Resource Management Strategy to ensure sustained progress in maximising the achievement of Circular Economy goals.	Environment  Prosperity	Ec, Env, So	8 12 13	HoS  Waste and Cleasning Services	Underway/ Ongoing  To 2030
<b>10</b>	Development of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan with nature recovery approach	Environment  Excellence	Ec, Env, So	3 11 13 17	HoS  Leisure	Underway  By April 2021
<b>11</b>	Integrated Weed Control Approach to reduce heavy reliance on herbicides.	Environment  Excellence	Ec, Env	11	HoS  Leisure	Underway  By April 2021

Table 6.1: Summary of Actions (cont'd)

	Short Term Actions August 2021 - July 2023	Corporate Priority	Sustainability tier	Sustainable Development Goals met	To be action by [HoS lead]	Completion date
12	<p>Develop Sustainable Construction guidance for the future redevelopment of the Council's buildings and spaces.</p> <p>Key deliverables/steps may include: Completing a review of existing arrangements in commitments for building/area refurbishment and new builds to ensure that new building construction and upgraded existing building fabric reach effective standards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop sustainable construction considerations for different construction projects i.e. from low project cost refurbishment of public realm spaces and buildings to the construction of new Council buildings and spaces</li> <li>Ensure relevant refurbishment and new builds which have used sustainable construction practices and materials are promoted through the use of educational and awareness signage e.g., for new builds, awareness and education signage in the main reception area(s) outlining the key practices used. This will benefit both the Council through positive PR and also building users and visitors to the building through education and awareness.</li> </ul>	Prosperity Excellence	Ec, Env	8 11 12 13 17	HoS Strategic Capital Development	Dec 2021
13	<p>Develop an awareness campaign and supporting materials to promote sustainable working and living within the Council and wider Borough.</p> <p>The campaign may focus on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a sustainable working and living programme to encourage and promote the adoption of sustainable behaviours within the Council and Borough.</li> <li>An introductory communications programme to outline the Council's sustainability Roadmap and explain what sustainability means to the Council and Borough</li> <li>Awareness training for all staff to outline what key sustainable working practices and behaviours are to be adopted e.g. energy and water conservation/efficiency, waste reduction, safer working practices, responsible procurement and consumption, respect for fellow colleagues</li> </ul> <p>Awareness communications and campaigns for sustainable living and working to encourage and promote the adoption of sustainable behaviours within the Borough for business owners and residents. Content may include sustainable food provision, waste reduction, water and energy conservation, reducing litter and dog fouling, staying safe, respecting your neighbours, preserving Borough facilities for the enjoyment of all, reducing vandalism and crime, supporting and participating in economic development activity.</p>	Environment Opportunity Pride Life Excellence	Ec, Env, So	3 11 12 13 17	HoS Administration/ supported by Corporate Communications	Underway by Dec 2021/ ongoing

Table 6.1: Summary of Actions (cont'd)

	<b>Short Term Actions</b> August 2021 – July 2023	Corporate Priority	Sustainability tier	Sustainable Development Goals met	To be action by [HoS lead]	Completion date
<b>14</b>	<p>Set up a central group for funding so as to better capitalise and co-ordinate what the Council applies for.</p> <p>The group could also enhance value through joint projects rather than standalone funding projects/applications.</p>	<p>Environment</p> <p>Opportunity</p> <p>Excellence</p>	Ec, Env	<p>11</p> <p>13</p> <p>17</p>	<p>HoS</p> <p>Administration</p>	March 2022
<b>15</b>	<p>Develop a Community Food Growing Strategy Strategy</p> <p>Key deliverables to include:</p> <p>Develop borough opportunities for our citizens to grow food in a variety of community setting including Community Gardens and Allotments.</p>	<p>Environment</p> <p>Opportunity</p> <p>Pride</p> <p>Life</p>	Env, So	<p>3</p> <p>11</p> <p>13</p> <p>17</p>	<p>HoS</p> <p>Leisure and Amenities</p>	Sept 2021
<b>16</b>	<p>Develop an overarching Climate Change Mitigation/Carbon Reduction Strategy for the Council</p> <p>Key deliverables/content might include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establishing the Council's operational carbon footprint which may include:                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. scope 1 and 2 emissions sources (e.g. electricity, gas, oil, diesel, petrol)</li> <li>b. additional sources under scope 3 emissions (e.g. water consumption, waste generation, business travel) to encompass the Council's wider environmental impact</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Set an agreed net zero carbon target and timescale</li> <li>3. Complete a strategic energy review of the Council and develop an accompanying action plan to improve efficiency and reduce emissions.                             <p>Key tasks may include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Review of consumption data, completing targeted half hourly consumption profiling of high consuming buildings.</li> <li>b. Completion of energy audits of targeted buildings to identify current energy management arrangements and opportunities to improve performance through consumption reduction and the use of low/zero carbon technologies.</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Assess the potential for the Council to achieve net zero carbon emissions.</li> </ol> <p>Complete a review of the Council's owned fleet of vehicles and develop a sustainable fleet management strategy to optimise fuel consumption and reduce carbon emission.</p> <p>Review how mileage policy is interpreted to reduce total actual miles covered by the non-Council owned fleet.</p>	<p>Environment</p> <p>Opportunity</p>	Ec, Env	<p>11</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p> <p>17</p>	<p>HoS</p> <p>Assets and Property</p>	<p>Underway by</p> <p>September 2021</p>

Table 6.1: Summary of Actions (cont'd)

	Short Term Actions August 2021 – July 2023	Corporate Priority	Sustainability tier	Sustainable Development Goals met	To be action by (HoS lead)	Completion date
17	<p>Develop a Climate Adaptation Plan for the Council and Borough</p> <p>Key deliverables to include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the creation of a Council wide working Group for Climate Change with the initial focus on Adaptation</li> <li>2. development of the Adaptation Plan with support from Climate NI</li> <li>3. Invest in nature-based solutions to climate change that can deliver for jobs, nature and the economy.</li> </ol>	<p>Prosperity</p> <p>Environment</p> <p>Opportunity</p> <p>Excellence</p>	Ec, Env, So	<p>11</p> <p>13</p> <p>17</p>	<p>HoS</p> <p>Administration</p>	Mar 2023
18	<p>Take a Natural Capital approach to new infrastructure and decision making.</p> <p>Natural Capital involves understanding the environment in terms of the value and benefits it provides to people. It can be defined as "The elements of nature that directly and indirectly produce value or benefits to people, including ecosystems, species, fresh- water, land, minerals, the air and oceans, as well as natural processes and functions." (Natural Capital Committee, 2014)</p> <p>Key deliverables to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a Natural Capital Asset Register to determine the economic value of our natural assets and therefore their protection.</li> <li>• Implement a landscape-led approach to planning all new developments</li> <li>• Develop a green infrastructure strategy that sets standards for quantity, quality, and accessibility of green infrastructure, including parks and green spaces, including measures of equity ensuring the needs of local communities are at the heart of their design.</li> <li>• Prioritise green infrastructure investment, especially parks and green spaces, in those places which have the greatest need and exhibit the greatest inequalities. And provide improvement support to local places that helps secure the benefits that flow from good quality green infrastructure</li> </ul>	<p>Prosperity</p> <p>Environment</p> <p>Opportunity</p> <p>Excellence</p>	Ec, Env, So	<p>8</p> <p>11</p> <p>13</p> <p>17</p>	<p>HoS</p> <p>Leisure and Amenities</p>	Underway by Dec 2021
19	Review of Use of Lands by a Third-Party documentation	<p>Environment</p> <p>Opportunity</p> <p>Excellence</p>	Env	<p>11</p> <p>13</p> <p>17</p>	<p>HoS</p> <p>Administration</p>	December 2022
20	Use existing community planning infrastructure to work with partners to join up, and expand on, health and wellbeing programmes such as active ageing, Mind Body and Business, The Early Treatment Centre etc.	<p>Opportunity</p> <p>Life</p> <p>Excellence</p>	Soc	<p>3</p> <p>11</p> <p>17</p>	<p>Community Planning Manager</p>	September 2021/ underway

Table 6.1: Summary of Actions (cont'd)

	<b>Short Term Actions</b> August 2021 – July 2023	Corporate Priority	Sustainability tier	Sustainable Development Goals met	To be action by [HoS lead]	Completion date
21	Work with AND Poverty Forum and community planning partners to develop a borough wide poverty action plan	Opportunity Life Excellence	Soc	3 11 17	Community Planning Manager	September 2021/ underway
22	Skills and Employability Forum  A collaborative network of businesses and education providers to match skills provision with business needs.	Prosperity Opportunity Life Excellence	Ec, Soc	8 11 17	Head of Economic Development	
23	Pilot the Big Conversation Panel for 12 months to encourage increased level of community engagement. A series of three surveys to encourage sustained public engagement with Council and Community Planning Partner's activities. A way to demonstrate the public sector is listening to its stakeholders by directly communicating with Panel Members how the information they provide via each survey is used to make better decisions regarding the services provided.	Opportunity Life Excellence	Soc	8 11 17	Community Planning Manager	Started September 2020 (1st survey)  3rd survey scheduled for June 2021
24	Reflect on the SD goals within the review of the Big Plan (Community Plan).  Part of the 'golden thread' running through the community planning is being able to demonstrate how the performance monitoring links across actions plans, Community Plan indicators and the Programme for Government. Ards and North Down's action plans for each Big Plan priority also include reference to the relevant SD goals demonstrating how sustainable development is integrated in the delivery actions.	Prosperity Environment Opportunity Life Excellence	Ec, Env, So	3 8 11 12 13 17	Community Planning Manager	September 2021/ underway

**Table 6.1: Summary of Actions (cont'd)**

	<b>Medium Term Actions</b> July 2023 – June 2029	Corporate Priority	Sustainability tier	Sustainable Development Goals met	To be action by (HoS lead)	Completion date
<b>25</b>	Develop partnerships with other agencies to promote health and wellbeing and empower people to take control of their own wellbeing.	Opportunity Pride Life	So	3 8 11 17	HoS Environmental Health, Protection and Development	March 2028
<b>26</b>	Develop Sustainable Planning and Design arrangements to support the Integrated Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy  Key Sustainable Planning and Design principles for the Borough which may need to be considered for inclusion within the arrangements include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributing positively to local ecosystems</li> <li>• Harnessing existing assets, including natural and built heritage</li> <li>• Committing to sustainable sources of energy and forms of transportation</li> <li>• Developing appropriate urban densities, reducing sprawl and increasing walkability</li> <li>• Integrating green technologies and systems at every stage of development</li> <li>• Designing with longevity and flexibility in mind</li> <li>• Embracing new development partnerships and opportunities</li> </ul>	Prosperity Environment Opportunity Excellence	Ec, Env, So	11 13 17	HoS Planning	March 2025
<b>27</b>	Seek external accreditation, frameworks such as Customer Service Excellence and Investor in People or develop good practice frameworks.	Excellence	So	3 8 11	HoS Administration	March 2024/ ongoing
<b>28</b>	Invest in talent development through mentoring and coaching staff and continued learning and development	Excellence	Ec, Env, So	3 8 11	HoS Human Resources	March 2028/ ongoing
<b>29</b>	Review employee recognition to encourage consistency and a clearer link to performance	Excellence	Ec, So	3 8 11	HoS Human Resources	March 2028/ ongoing

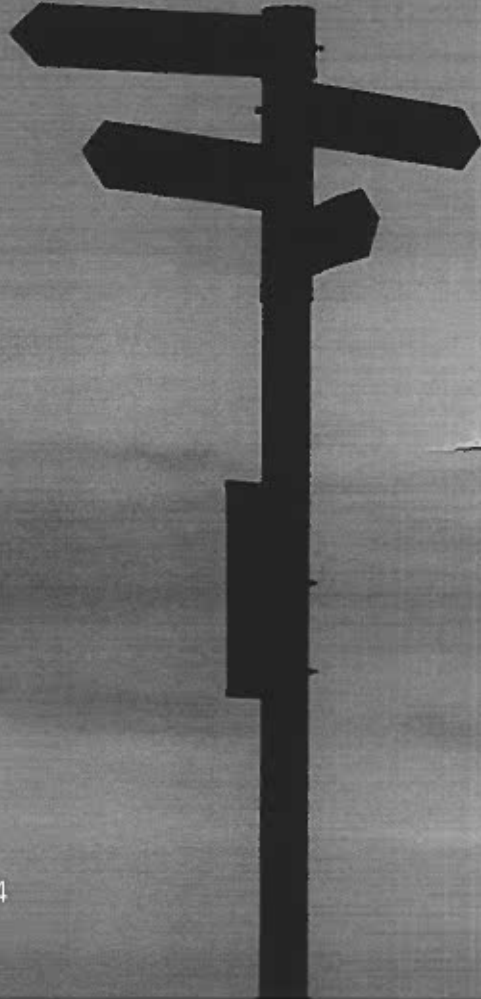
Table 6.1: Summary of Actions (cont'd)

	<b>Medium Term Actions</b> July 2023 – June 2029	Corporate Priority	Sustainability tier	Sustainable Development Goals met	To be action by (HoS lead)	Completion date
<b>30</b>	Promote and support local enterprise including start-up, incubation, business development programmes and Sustainable Procurement information within any training to local SMEs.	Prosperity Opportunity	Ec, Env, So	8 11 17	HoS Economic Development	March 2024
<b>31</b>	Ensure that actions included within the Integrated Strategy for Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development 2018-2030, such as protecting our Built Heritage, Sustainable Transport Strategy and Continuous Coastal Route are facilitated through other plans and strategies such as the Council's Biodiversity Action Plan.	Environment Opportunity Excellence	Env, So	3 11 13 17	HoS Jointly Regeneration, Economic Development, Tourism and Leisure and Amenities	March 2024
<b>32</b>	Setting up a council 'Select Committee' on Sustainability – to monitor/ review the sustainability of major policy/project proposals. To comprise of senior officers/managers/elected members and possibly relevant external stakeholders – suggested external members should include but not limited to Sustainable NI and other key members of the Councils Community Planning Partnership. The aim of this group would be to scrutinise all policies, strategies, projects, funding etc at the very highest level.	Environment Opportunity Excellence	Ec, Env, So	3 8 11 12 13 17	HoS Strategic Transformation and Performance	Dec 2023
<b>33</b>	Develop a Borough Marketing and Communications strategy attract investment, visitors and new residents.	Prosperity Opportunity Excellence	Ec, So	8 11 17	HoS Regeneration, Economic Development, Tourism	Dec 2023
<b>34</b>	Introduce a citizen's assembly - Consider better ways to gather feedback from AND residents by direct engagement via a Citizens Assembly with membership across all demographics.	Environment Opportunity Pride Life Excellence	Ec, Env, So	3 8 11 12 13 17	HoS Administration and Community Planning Manager	Dec 2023
<b>35</b>	Incentivise behaviour change through a revised Recycling Community Investment Fund.	Environment Opportunity Pride Life Excellence	Ec, Env, So	11 13 17	HoS Regulatory Services	Dec 2023



Table 6.1: Summary of Actions (cont'd)

	<b>Medium Term Actions</b> July 2023 – June 2029	Corporate Priority	Sustainability tier	Sustainable Development Goals met	To be action by (HoS lead)	Completion date
<b>36</b>	<b>Develop a Community Empowerment/Resilience Programme.</b>	Opportunity Pride Life	Ec, Env, So	3 8 11 12 13 17	HoS Regulatory Services	Mar 2025
<b>37</b>	<b>Develop customer service including enhancement of online/mobile service offering.</b>	Excellence	So	11 17	HoS Administration	Dec 2023
<b>38</b>	<b>Invest in technology to support paperless office.</b>	Environment Excellence	Ec, Env, So	3 8 11 13 17	HoS Administration	Dec 2023/ongoing
<b>39</b>	<b>Develop and promote volunteering opportunities within Council (including staff) and with partner organisations.</b>	Environment Opportunity Pride Life	Ec, So	3 11 17	HoS Human Resources	March 2028
<b>40</b>	<b>Develop approaches to promote cross-council working.</b>	Prosperity Environment Opportunity Pride Life Excellence	Ec, Env, So	11 13 17	HoS Administration	March 2028



## 7.0 Conclusion

The Council has the abilities, knowledge and skills to achieve so much more than what is being done currently and as such this Roadmap has set the bar high.

Innovation and building resilience will be key to moving forward to achieve real, long term sustainability.

This progression must be a 'just transition' – ensuring that a climate-neutral economy happens in a fair way, leaving no one behind.

The Council has developed sound strategies which although not specifically labelled as sustainability strategies, collectively do outline what the Council has planned so that it and the wider Borough will become more sustainable.

For the Council to effectively introduce the actions and initiatives detailed within the strategies and plans it is vital that a new collaborative, partnership-based approach is adopted by all. All the main strategies and plans highlighted in this Roadmap have been developed by gathering input from key stakeholders.

This will mean that those stakeholders are more likely to engage with the implementation of the associated initiatives and, as a consequence, lead to a more successful delivery of this Roadmap.

The Council is aware that there are gaps in how consistently initiatives are being implemented within its operations and service provision and it is committed to working to address these.

The Council also recognises that it must fundamentally change how it operates. It also needs to ensure that the outputs of its strategies and plans are effectively implemented.

In addition, all policy, strategy and investment decisions must be evaluated/sense checked to ensure the Council isn't being 'locked in' to unsustainable choices that will affect the council and its residents over several decades.

As we enter a period of recovery from the COVID 19 pandemic the opportunity presents itself for a Green Recovery – 'now is not the time to simply build back, we must build back better' (RSPB – Recovery Together blog).

"If one virus can wipe out the entire economy in a matter of weeks and shut down societies, then that is a proof that our societies are not very resilient. It also shows that once we are in an emergency, we can act and we can change our behaviour quickly," Greta Thunberg.

As a Climate Emergency has been declared in the borough, climate change and sustainability must remain high on the Council's agenda. They must be front and centre to all aspects of Council services from this point forward.

For this Roadmap to be effectively realised, it needs to be successfully implemented through collaborative working, with the cessation of any silo working amongst all its stakeholders of critical importance.

What is needed is a change of mindset amongst all internal and external stakeholders. The successful delivery of this Roadmap will only happen if mindsets change and collaborative working comes to the fore.

This Roadmap 'draws a line'. As the Council moves forward making sustainable improvements to facilities, services and support programmes for the Borough, its actions will now be on a par with its words.

Effective mobilisation of the strategies and plans outlined in this Roadmap is critical to ensure that they are successfully delivered.

This will result in the Council and Borough becoming an exemplar in sustainability.