

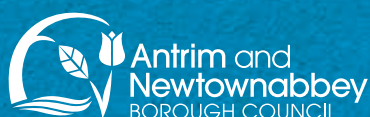


Community Plan

STATEMENT OF PROGRESS

ANTRIM AND NEWTOWNABBEY BOROUGH COUNCIL
JANUARY 2024 - APRIL 2026

Facilitated by



ON THE ROAD TO A BETTER BOROUGH



Vibrant Places

Prosperity

Sustainability

Innovation

Education

Achieving potential

Healthcare

Travel

Lifelong Learning

Volunteering

Community Life

Business

Wellbeing

Entrepreneurship

Transport

Leisure

foreword

MAYOR

As Mayor of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, I am pleased to present this Statement of Progress on the Love Living Here Community Plan for 2025. This document reflects the collective effort of the Council, statutory partners, the community and voluntary sector and residents working together to improve outcomes across the Borough.

Throughout 2025, partnership working, compassion and prevention have remained central to our approach. By listening to communities and responding to need, we continue to deliver meaningful support that improves quality of life and strengthens our Borough.

**Mayor of Antrim and Newtownabbey
Councillor Leah Kirkpatrick**



COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP CHAIR

As Chair of the Community Planning Partnership, I welcome this Statement of Progress which sets out delivery against the Love Living Here Community Plan during 2025. The progress outlined demonstrates how partners are working collaboratively to address complex challenges, including the cost of living and environmental sustainability.

This report groups progress under the four Community Plan pillars and demonstrates how collective action is delivering real impact for people and communities.

Councillor Stewart Wilson

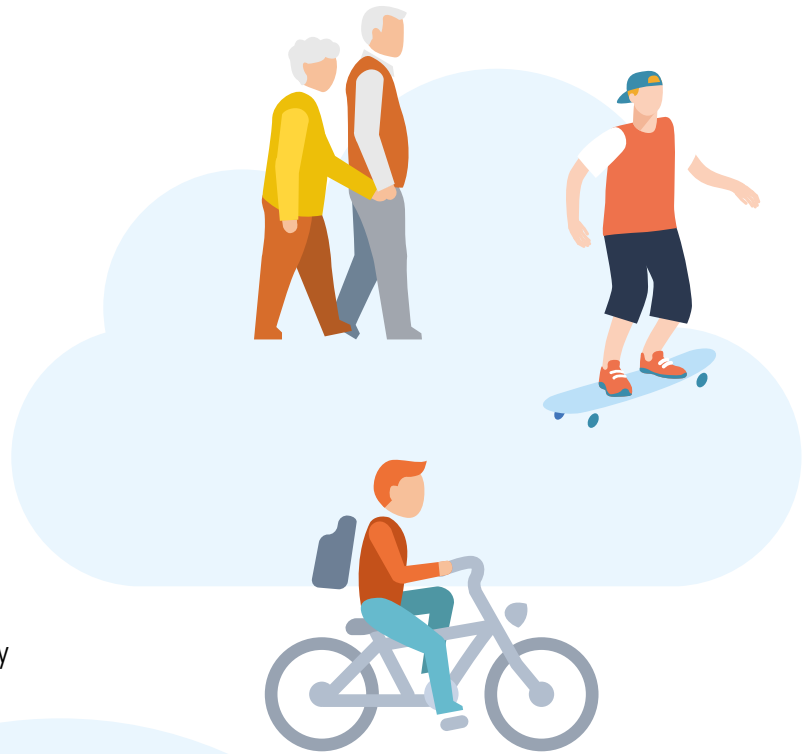


Introduction

THE LOVE LIVING HERE COMMUNITY PLAN PROVIDES THE LONG-TERM STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR PEOPLE WHO LIVE, WORK AND VISIT ANTRIM AND NEWTOWNABBEY.

Following a review of the Community Plan and Action Plan in 2023–24, priorities were refreshed to ensure continued relevance in the context of post-pandemic recovery, the cost of living crisis and climate challenges.

This Statement of Progress provides a public-facing overview of delivery between January 2024 to April 2026. All actions within the Love Living Here Community Plan are relevant to this report and are presented under the four Community Plan pillars: People, Place, Prosperity and Planet.



PRINCIPLES

THE FOUR OUTCOMES IN THE COMMUNITY PLAN ARE BASED ON THE FOLLOWING EIGHT PRINCIPLES. THE PRINCIPLES ARE IMPORTANT TO DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY PLAN WHICH WILL MEET THE NEEDS OF ALL THE CITIZENS OF OUR BOROUGH.

EQUALITY

The statistical evidence has shown that inequalities exist across the outcome themes. Proactive measures and targeting of areas most in need will aim to ensure that the varying social and economic needs of communities across the area are addressed. The overall aim will be to raise living standards in the most deprived areas up to at least the average of the rest.

SUSTAINABILITY

We wish to adopt a sustainable approach to social, environmental and physical development. This means making sure that the impact of what we do is long term and based on the needs of our citizens. We also want to make sure we protect the valuable built and natural environment that exists in the Borough.

CONNECTIVITY

We need to improve the social and physical connections throughout the Borough. This includes examining and seeking ways to improve our roads, paths, transport networks and digital connectivity.

We would also like to improve the social connections between residents across our Borough creating greater cohesion.

OPPORTUNITY

We are fortunate that there are a lot of positive qualities about our Borough including our schools and colleges and the variety of high quality businesses based here. We want to build on this and increase opportunities for our citizens in training, education, and employment. We want our first class leisure facilities to continue to provide opportunities for participation in a range of leisure activities.

INCLUSIVITY

We want to promote a culture of tolerance, acceptance and inclusivity for all our citizens, which will link all elements of the Community Plan.

VITALITY

We need to increase or restore vitality to communities both physically and socially by providing citizens with opportunities to be part of popular and inclusive events and activity in their area.

CAPABILITY

We want our citizens to be able to take advantage of any opportunities created through Community Planning. At the moment, this ability varies across different communities and we want to address this. The different skills levels across the Borough can act as a barrier to employment and enterprise and we want to find solutions to address this.

COMPASSION

We want to care for and support our neighbours and the vulnerable within our community. Social responsibility will be built into the Community Plan and is reflected in our vision for Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council.



SETTING THE CONTEXT:

A Changing Environment

POST COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant and lasting impact across all aspects of life for residents and partners within Antrim and Newtownabbey. During this period, priorities across the Council, statutory agencies, and the community and voluntary sector shifted to respond to immediate needs and mitigate the effects of the crisis. As recovery has progressed there has been a renewed focus on delivering the Community Plan and ensuring it responds effectively to the evolving needs of residents.

The pandemic has also influenced how people live, work and engage with their local environment. Increased use of parks and open spaces, alongside changing behaviours in shopping, travel, and environmental awareness has reshaped local priorities. The Community Planning Partnership continues to respond to these shifts, aligning delivery with changing lifestyles and supporting improved outcomes for communities.



COST OF LIVING

The ongoing cost of living crisis continues to present significant challenges for residents and services across the Borough. Rising energy, food and fuel costs have placed increased pressure on household finances, with the greatest impact felt by those most vulnerable.

In response, partnership working has become increasingly important to coordinate support, maximise resources and deliver targeted interventions. Through the Community Plan, partners are working collaboratively to mitigate these pressures, support those most in need and build resilience within communities.



OVERALL CONTEXT

Together, these factors highlight a rapidly changing operating environment. The Community Planning Partnership remains committed to adapting to these challenges, ensuring that collective action continues to improve quality of life and deliver positive, long-term outcomes for all residents.

PROGRESS OVERVIEW:

Traffic Light Status

This table provides a high-level overview of progress against the Love Living Here Community Plan actions during the 2025 reporting period.

All actions remain active and relevant. Progress is grouped under each Community Plan pillar and assessed using a traffic light system to provide clear, accessible information for the public.

TRAFFIC LIGHT KEY:

Green - On track / delivering as planned

Amber - Progressing but subject to dependencies, funding or longer-term delivery timelines

Red - Limited progress during the reporting period

Pillar	Action	Summary	Status 2025
People	1.1	Strong and vibrant community and voluntary sector	Green
People	1.2	Physical and mental wellness	Green
People	1.3	Age-friendly and inclusive communities	Green
People	1.4	Integrated approach to tackling poverty	Green
Place	2.1	Improving access for all, to leisure, play and public spaces	Amber
Place	2.2	Road safety and safe travel initiatives	Amber
Place	2.3	Sustaining clean, vibrant and welcoming places	Green
Place	2.4	Housing-led regeneration and place shaping	Amber
Prosperity	3.1–3.2	Business growth, entrepreneurship, skills and training	Green
Prosperity	3.3	Transport, energy and digital infrastructure	Amber
Prosperity	3.4	Opportunities for all to reach full potential	Green
Prosperity	3.5	Built heritage regeneration	Amber
Planet	4.1	Sustainability and resilient communities	Green
Planet	4.2	Environmental education and green skills	Amber
Planet	4.3	Climate change mitigation and emissions reduction	Amber
Planet	4.4	Access to green spaces and greenways	Amber

Amber ratings reflect actions that are progressing but rely on partnership delivery, external funding or longer-term capital investment. No actions were assessed as Red during the 2025 reporting period.

PILLAR:

People

RELEVANT ACTIONS:

ACTION 1.1 - Strong and vibrant community and voluntary sector

ACTION 1.2 - Physical and mental wellness

ACTION 1.3 - Age-friendly and inclusive communities

ACTION 1.4 - Integrated approach to tackling poverty



THE PEOPLE PILLAR FOCUSES ON SUPPORTING RESIDENTS TO ACHIEVE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL, IMPROVING HEALTH AND WELLBEING AND ENSURING THOSE EXPERIENCING VULNERABILITY ARE SUPPORTED WITH DIGNITY AND COMPASSION. DELIVERY DURING 2025 PRIORITISED PREVENTION, EARLY INTERVENTION AND INTEGRATED RESPONSES TO POVERTY AND WELLBEING.

9

COMMUNITY-BASED
SCHOOL UNIFORM SCHEMES
SUPPORTED

£134,500

DELIVERED THROUGH THE
OIL STAMP SCHEME

267

ENERGY EFFICIENCY
ENQUIRIES RECEIVED

90

OIL DELIVERIES
ACROSS ALL 7 DEAS

88

REFERRALS TO NIHE
ENERGY ADVICE AND
GRANT SCHEMES

50,000KG

OF SURPLUS FOOD
REDISTRIBUTED

6

COMMUNITY FRIDGES
SUPPORTING APPROX.
8,000 USERS PER MONTH

£1.7M+

FINANCIAL GAINS SECURED
THROUGH ADVICE SERVICES

1,662

WINTER WOOLLIES
ITEMS DISTRIBUTED

CASE STUDY: INTEGRATED APPROACH TO TACKLING POVERTY

During 2025, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council delivered a coordinated programme of anti-poverty interventions designed to support residents experiencing cost-of-living pressures. Key initiatives included the Oil Stamp Scheme, Energy Efficiency support, Community Fridges, Winter Woollies, Keep Warm and Well events and a targeted Food Programme.

The Oil Stamp Scheme supported residents to budget for home heating oil, with 90 deliveries facilitated across the Borough and £134,500 worth of oil sold. Surveys showed that 100% of participants felt the scheme helped them manage heating costs more effectively. Energy Efficiency support generated 267 enquiries, resulting in 50 referrals to the NIHE Energy Advice Line and 38 referrals to open grant schemes for boiler replacement or insulation. For households without heat, 40 heaters were loaned and over 570 Keep Warm Packs were distributed across 2024–25.

Six Community Fridges continued to operate across the Borough, supporting approximately 8,000

users per month and redistributing an estimated 50,000kg of surplus food, while delivering carbon savings. The Winter Woollies programme collected 1,662 donated items, distributed through 22 organisations located primarily in the 20% most deprived areas. These initiatives supported families, older people, refugees, victims of domestic abuse and those experiencing crisis.

Why this matters: *An integrated approach to tackling poverty helps prevent crisis, protects health and wellbeing and supports residents to maintain dignity and stability during periods of financial pressure.*



CASE STUDY: WEAVE - STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY CAPACITY ACROSS ANTRIM AND NEWTOWNABBEY

The WEAVE Programme (We Educate, We Empower, We Engage) is a flagship initiative within the PEACEPLUS Local Community Action Plan, designed to build stronger, more resilient communities across Antrim and Newtownabbey. With significant investment, the programme is already demonstrating meaningful progress in enhancing the capacity of the community and voluntary sector, with a particular focus on supporting volunteers and strengthening local leadership.

Launched at the “Weaving Our Future Together” conference in October 2025, the programme brought together over 150 community representatives, creating an important platform for collaboration, shared learning and identifying key development needs. This co-design approach has ensured that WEAVE is rooted in the lived experiences of local organisations and volunteers.

A central strength of the programme lies in its direct response to the priorities identified by the sector itself. Key areas such as volunteer engagement and management, training and development, fundraising and organisational governance are now being addressed through a coordinated package of support. This targeted approach ensures that volunteers - who are the backbone of the community sector - are better equipped, supported and empowered in their roles.

Through a series of interconnected “threads”, WEAVE is delivering practical tools and opportunities that will have a lasting impact. Initiatives such as the development of a Digital Governance Support Hub, access to funding through a Grant Tracker platform and the rollout of community capacity-building programmes are enabling organisations to operate more effectively and sustainably. These supports will reduce administrative burdens on volunteers, improve access to resources and strengthen overall organisational resilience.

Importantly, the establishment of seven District Electoral Area (DEA) Community Forums is creating new opportunities for volunteers to engage in



decision-making, share knowledge and collaborate across communities. This is helping to build confidence, strengthen networks and ensure that local voices are at the heart of community development.

The programme is also investing in skills development through accredited training opportunities and leadership programmes, ensuring that volunteers have clear pathways to grow, develop and take on more active roles within their communities. This not only enhances individual capacity but also contributes to a stronger, more sustainable community infrastructure across the Borough.

Early progress highlights a programme that is both ambitious and responsive. With key milestones already achieved, including the establishment of community forums, the development of local community plans and upcoming initiatives such as a Funders Fair and accredited training programmes, WEAVE is laying solid foundations for long-term impact.

Overall, the WEAVE Programme represents a strategic and collaborative approach to community development. By investing in volunteers, strengthening organisational capacity and fostering partnership working, it is helping to create a more connected, confident and capable community sector. As the programme continues to evolve, it will play a vital role in supporting communities across Antrim and Newtownabbey to thrive and shape a positive, shared future.

Why this matters: *This matters because the WEAVE Programme is building the skills, confidence and infrastructure that enable local communities and volunteers to lead sustainable change, ensuring the long-term resilience and shared prosperity of Antrim and Newtownabbey.*

CASE STUDY: COMMUNITY CONNECT EVENT

The Community Connect Event, delivered by Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council at Antrim Forum in August 2025, provided an inclusive and accessible platform to connect residents with a wide range of local support services.

The event brought together over 40 organisations from the community and voluntary sector, charities and statutory partners, reflecting the collaborative approach at the heart of the Community Plan. Services available on the day spanned key areas including employability and skills, health and wellbeing, housing support, financial advice and wider community-based assistance, alongside practical supports such as school uniform provision during the back-to-school period.

With over 400 attendees and a 100% satisfaction rate, the event demonstrated strong community engagement and a positive user experience. Feedback highlighted the value of accessing multiple services in one place, receiving timely advice and engaging directly with providers in a supportive environment. Participating organisations also reported strengthened partnership working, improved referral pathways and increased awareness of local services.



Overall, the Community Connect Event illustrates the impact of coordinated, place-based working across Antrim and Newtownabbey, supporting more connected communities, improving access to services and contributing to better outcomes for residents in line with Community Plan priorities.

Why this matters: *This matters because it improves access to essential services, strengthens collaboration between partners and ensures residents are better supported to achieve improved wellbeing and life outcomes across the Borough.*



CASE STUDY: CHRISTMAS TOY SUPPORT

The Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Christmas Toy Scheme, delivered in partnership with Habitat ReStore, was implemented in December 2025 through a pop-up shop at Muckamore Community Centre.

The initiative provided targeted support to families experiencing financial pressures during the festive period, offering a dignified and inclusive environment where parents could choose age-appropriate gifts for their children. This approach helped to reduce financial strain while promoting choice, respect and a positive experience for families.

The scheme saw strong community engagement, with over 3,500 toys donated by local residents, partners and organisations. More than 30 families were directly supported, contributing to improved wellbeing for children and easing seasonal pressures on households. Additional support was also secured through independent donations from Marks and Spencer Newtownabbey and local volunteer Scott Wilson ("The Legendary Santa"), which were distributed via Community Advice Antrim and Newtownabbey to further assist families in need.

Overall, the initiative highlights the strength of partnership working and community generosity in responding to local need, using flexible and person-centred approaches to deliver meaningful support.

Why this matters: *This matters because it demonstrates how collaborative, community-led initiatives can reduce financial stress for families, improve wellbeing for children and foster a more compassionate, connected and resilient community.*



CASE STUDY: MUMS ON THE MOVE

The Mums on the Move programme, delivered by Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, continued to promote women's health, wellbeing, and social connection through a programme of structured and informal physical activity sessions across the Borough.

Designed to reduce social isolation and support both mental and physical wellbeing, the initiative provides accessible opportunities for women - particularly mothers- to engage in regular activity within a supportive, peer-led environment, with a focus on early intervention and preventative support.

During the reporting period, six sessions were delivered at Antrim Castle Gardens and three at the Valley Leisure Centre, offering a blend of outdoor and indoor activities to encourage participation. A Winter Wellness Event held at Mossley Mill in February 2025 further enhanced engagement, bringing together 25 participants for wellbeing-focused activities and social connection during the winter months.

A key outcome of the programme has been the development of strong peer networks, with participants independently establishing social groups to continue meeting for walks and activities beyond the formal sessions. This reflects the programme's success in fostering ongoing engagement and sustainable wellbeing benefits. Building on this momentum, further sessions are planned for Ballyclare and Randalstown, extending the reach of the programme to additional communities.

Why this matters: *This matters because it supports improved physical and mental wellbeing, reduces social isolation and empowers women to build lasting social connections, contributing to healthier, more connected communities.*



CASE STUDY: WINTER WOOLIES

The Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Winter Woolies programme, delivered between September and November 2025, provided targeted seasonal support to individuals and families most affected by cold weather and fuel poverty.

The initiative focused on improving access to essential winter items - including hats, scarves, gloves and warm clothing - while strengthening partnership working with organisations supporting vulnerable residents across the Borough. A key element of the programme was the Wool Drive, which harnessed community generosity to collect and redistribute winter essentials in a coordinated and effective way.

Through this approach, support was directed to 10 organisations operating within the top 20% most deprived areas, ensuring resources reached those with the greatest need. In total, 1,662 donated items were distributed to 22 statutory and community organisations for onward provision throughout the winter period. The programme highlights the impact of a simple, community-driven intervention in addressing seasonal hardship, while reinforcing strong collaboration between the Council, statutory partners, and the community and voluntary sector.

Why this matters: *This matters because it helps reduce the health and financial impacts of cold weather on vulnerable residents, while strengthening community resilience and partnership working to support those most in need.*

CASE STUDY: SILVER SUMMER SCHEME

The Silver Summer Scheme was developed in response to resident feedback highlighting increased loneliness among people aged over 50 during the summer months, when many regular groups pause. To address this, a pilot Over 50s Summer Programme was delivered from 21-25 July 2025, offering a range of activities across the Borough in local libraries and community facilities.

The programme included arts and crafts, Nordic walking, planting in local parks, entertainment, boccia and a community litter pick. A total of 127 participants engaged across eight activities, with feedback demonstrating significant impact: 100% of attendees enjoyed the programme, and 98% indicated they would attend again.

Following the success of the pilot, findings were presented to the Age-Friendly Over 50s Council to ensure residents' voices informed future planning. The programme will return in 2026, expanded to run over several weeks in July and August, with additional activities such as storytelling, mystery jigsaw competitions and soft archery.



CASE STUDY: ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS (EVAWG)

In Antrim and Newtownabbey, efforts to end violence against women and girls have developed into a strong, connected programme that extends beyond any single initiative. Grounded in an understanding of local need, it has evolved into a partnership-led response bringing services and communities together.

A key development has been the creation of a local EVAWG partnership linking policing, health, housing, education and community organisations. This has supported a shift from isolated responses to a more coordinated, preventative approach guided by a local action plan. Much of the work has been delivered through practical, visible projects. Events like the Pathways to Protection conference and “It Starts With You” brought together over 100 participants each, building awareness of coercive control, trauma and healthy relationships. Training has also been significant, with over 100 professionals attending sessions and reporting high satisfaction.



A changed society where women and girls are free from all forms of gender-based violence, abuse, and harm, including the attitudes, systems and structural inequalities that cause them.



	PSNI officers attend one domestic abuse incident on average every 16 minutes.
	Sexual offences up 10% on previous year.
	1,077 violence against the person crimes with a domestic abuse motivation in Antrim and Newtownabbey.
	30,509 domestic abuse incidents recorded.
	2,151 in Antrim and Newtownabbey police district.
	Of all domestic abuse crime victims, 68% were women and 32% were men.
	747 controlling or coercive behaviour offences.
	Seven women killed.

Community initiatives have extended these messages further. The “Seeking Refuge” exhibition highlighted lived experiences, while programmes like In Her Corner and Voices of Change engaged young people, with 40 participants reporting increased confidence to challenge inappropriate behaviour. Creative approaches, such as street art projects like *Liora’s Hope* and White Ribbon workshops in schools, helped younger audiences better understand healthy relationships.

There has also been a focus on safety and confidence in daily life. Around 150 women joined safety-focused running and walking programmes, while 370 older residents attended “Be Safe” events, increasing awareness of domestic abuse. Women’s empowerment programmes supported around 80 participants.

Underpinning this is a strong focus on capacity building and collaboration. Partners are better equipped to recognise and respond to abuse, while Change Fund support has enabled tailored, community-based projects.

Overall, the work shows a shift from awareness to action - combining partnerships, practical interventions and community engagement to improve support and help women and girls feel safer and more empowered.



**12 MILLION
IMPRESSIONS**



PILLAR:

Place

RELEVANT ACTIONS:

ACTION 2.1 - Improving access for all

ACTION 2.2 - Increasing road safety

ACTION 2.3 - Sustaining clean and vibrant places

ACTION 2.4 - Housing-led regeneration



THE PLACE PILLAR FOCUSES ON ENSURING RESIDENTS LIVE IN CONNECTED, SAFE, CLEAN AND VIBRANT ENVIRONMENTS. DELIVERY DURING 2025 CENTRED ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY, COMMUNITY PRIDE, ACCESSIBILITY AND PLACE-BASED REGENERATION.

20

COUNCIL-MANAGED AND
12 COMMUNITY SITES
AWARDED GREEN FLAG
STATUS IN 2025

HIGHEST NUMBER
OF GREEN FLAG
AWARDS ACHIEVED
BY ANY COUNCIL IN
NORTHERN IRELAND

MULTIPLE ULSTER
IN BLOOM AND NI
AMENITY AWARDS
ACHIEVED

218

RESPONSES TO PARKS AND
OPEN SPACES SURVEY
(66% SATISFACTION)



CASE STUDY: SUSTAINING CLEAN AND VIBRANT PLACES

During 2025, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council continued to invest in high-quality parks, open spaces and town centres, supported by community involvement and cross-sector collaboration. In 2025, 20 Council-managed sites and 12 community spaces achieved Green Flag status, the highest number across Northern Ireland, recognising excellence in environmental management, safety and community engagement.

The Parks and Open Spaces Survey received 218 responses, with 66% of respondents satisfied with Council parks and open spaces. Feedback is being used to shape future investment, accessibility improvements and biodiversity initiatives. Community pride was further strengthened through success in the Translink Ulster in Bloom and NI Amenity Awards, with Randalstown crowned 'Best of the Best' in Northern Ireland.

Why this matters: *Clean, attractive and well-managed places improve physical and mental health, strengthen community pride, attract visitors and support local economic activity.*



CASE STUDY: HEALTHY KIDS PROGRAMME - ANTRIM AND NEWTOWNABBEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Healthy Kids Programme, delivered in partnership with Northern Healthy Lifestyles Partnership, has made significant progress in improving the health and wellbeing of primary school pupils across the Borough. Over a 12-week period, the programme was implemented in 30 primary schools, reaching over 900 pupils and providing a structured, engaging approach to physical activity, nutrition and mental wellbeing.

The programme combined both practical and educational elements to ensure a holistic learning experience. Weekly sessions included 35 minutes of classroom-based learning focused on key themes such as nutrition, hydration and mental wellbeing, alongside 25 minutes of physical activity designed to promote movement and build positive exercise habits. This aligns with the Council's wider objective of encouraging young people to prioritise both physical and mental health through early intervention and education.

A key strength of the programme was its partnership approach. Training and support were provided to both coaches and students, enhancing the capacity of schools to sustain health and wellbeing initiatives beyond the lifespan of the programme. The involvement of external partners, including the Northern Health Trust, ensured that content was evidence-based and consistent with regional public health priorities.



The programme culminated in a "Healthy Heroes" practical session, where pupils applied their learning in a hands-on environment by preparing healthy meals using air fryers. This practical element reinforced classroom learning and helped build confidence and life skills, while encouraging children to make healthier food choices in their everyday lives. Similar initiatives across the Borough have demonstrated that combining education with interactive activities increases engagement and supports long-term behaviour change.

Feedback from participating schools highlighted improvements in pupils' knowledge of healthy eating, increased enthusiasm for physical activity, and greater awareness of mental wellbeing. The programme also contributed to wider community planning outcomes by supporting children to develop positive lifestyle habits from an early age.

Overall, the Healthy Kids Programme has demonstrated measurable progress in promoting healthier lifestyles among young people. Its scalable model, strong partnerships and balance of theory and practical application position it as a valuable and sustainable intervention within the Borough's ongoing commitment to improving health and wellbeing outcomes for children.



CASE STUDY: WILD BUSHCRAFT - RECONNECTING COMMUNITIES WITH NATURE

Wild Bushcraft is a family-focused outdoor initiative designed to encourage residents of all ages to engage with and appreciate the Borough's natural spaces. The programme invited participants to take part in hands-on bushcraft activities within local parks, including fort building and the creation of nature-inspired artwork using responsibly foraged materials.

Led by experienced facilitators, each session provided an opportunity to develop practical woodland skills such as shelter construction, basic foraging awareness and outdoor cooking techniques. The activities promoted teamwork, confidence, creativity and environmental stewardship, while fostering meaningful connections between participants and the natural environment.



The initiative was delivered through six sessions across the Borough, attracting a total of 144 participants. Wild Bushcraft provided an inclusive and educational experience for families and young people, supporting the *Love Living Here* Community Plan's objectives of enhancing wellbeing, encouraging active lifestyles, and increasing engagement with local green spaces.

PILLAR:

Prosperity

RELEVANT ACTIONS:

ACTION 3.1-3.2 - Business growth, entrepreneurship, skills and training

ACTION 3.3 - Transport, energy and digital infrastructure

ACTION 3.4 - Opportunities for all to reach full potential

ACTION 3.5 - Built heritage regeneration

DELIVERY UNDER THE PROSPERITY PILLAR FOCUSED ON EMPLOYABILITY, SKILLS AND ENTERPRISE, SUPPORTING RESIDENTS TO ACCESS SUSTAINABLE INCOME AND SUPPORTING LOCAL ECONOMIC RESILIENCE.



122

RESIDENTS ENGAGED
IN EMPLOYABILITY
PATHWAYS

1,341

RESIDENTS ATTENDED
CAREERS AND JOBS EVENTS

71%

OF EMPLOYMENT ACADEMY
PARTICIPANTS SECURED
EMPLOYMENT



CASE STUDY: TOWN CENTRE IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, in partnership with the Department for Communities, is delivering a Town Centre Shopfront Improvement Programme across Antrim, Ballyclare, Randalstown, Crumlin and Glengormley. The programme offers grants of up to £4,999 to support local businesses in enhancing the appearance of their premises, helping to improve the overall streetscape of commercial areas and create more welcoming, vibrant town centres.

The initiative aims to improve the visitor experience, increase footfall and support local businesses to invest in their properties, while reducing physical decline across the town centres.

Engagement with the programme has been extremely positive, with almost 200 successful applications, demonstrating strong interest from local businesses. A total of £470,000 has been offered to participating businesses to support aesthetic improvements including external painting, replacement signage, window and door upgrades and other aesthetic improvements.

Feedback from participating businesses has been encouraging, with many highlighting an increased sense of pride in their premises and noticeable improvements taking place across their town centres.

The programme is making a significant contribution towards the wider regeneration ambitions for the Borough's town centres, complementing both previous and future investment initiatives aimed at enhancing the attractiveness and vitality of these important local centres.

***Why this matters:** This matters because improving shopfronts not only enhances the visual appeal of town centres but also boosts local economic activity, strengthens business confidence and helps create more vibrant, attractive places where people want to visit, spend time and invest.*



CASE STUDY: LABOUR MARKET PARTNERSHIP

The Antrim and Newtownabbey Labour Market Partnership supported delivery of the Anti-Poverty Strategy through coordinated action to address local employability barriers and improve access to sustainable employment. During the reporting period, seven partnership meetings and one Schools Sub-Group meeting were held, informing the development of a local Action Plan, approved by the Regional Labour Market Partnership. An evaluation of LMP activity is ongoing.

Engagement levels remained positive, with 60% attendance at LMP meetings and 73% attendance at sub-group meetings, supporting collaborative decision-making. Survey feedback shows 56% of responding members felt their views were reflected in the Action Plan and evaluation, the same proportion reported contributing to delivery and felt the LMP is making a positive difference.

Increased awareness of local employability and labour market issues was reported by 56% of LMP members and 12% of sub-group members, strengthening the partnership's capacity to deliver targeted poverty-reduction interventions.

Why this matters: This matters because the Labour Market Partnership is aligning local partners to tackle employability barriers in a coordinated way, improving access to sustainable jobs and strengthening the Borough's ability to reduce poverty and support inclusive economic growth.



CASE STUDY: LABOUR MARKET ACADEMIES

Labour Market Academies supported 126 residents through targeted Pathway, Employment Academy and Upskilling initiatives, helping individuals facing barriers to employment progress towards sustainable work and improved income. A further 2,684 residents engaged through Jobs Fairs, Wellness and Employability events and a Careers and Apprenticeship Fair, improving access to employment, training and employability support.

Engagement with 13 post-primary schools, 102 employers and 35 employability and skills providers strengthened alignment between local labour market needs and training provision. Targeted childcare interventions reduced barriers to work, with 12 residents trained as new childminders and 8 upskilled in SEN, achieving a 100% completion rate and supporting progression into self-employment for 42% of newly trained childminders.

Outcomes to date show a 93% programme completion rate, 94% of participants more informed about career opportunities and 44% progressing into new, permanent or higher-paid employment (with further outcomes expected as programmes conclude). High satisfaction was reported across engagement activity, with 89% attendee satisfaction, 96% finding events helpful and strong employer and provider satisfaction, demonstrating effective delivery of poverty-reduction focused employability support.

Why this matters: *This matters because these targeted employability interventions are delivering tangible outcomes - helping residents overcome barriers, access better job opportunities and increase their income - while strengthening links between employers, education and training to support long-term, inclusive economic growth and poverty reduction.*



CASE STUDY: GO SUCCEED PROGRAMME

The Go Succeed enterprise support programme continues to contribute to local economic inclusion and anti-poverty objectives by supporting new and existing businesses and creating pathways to sustainable income within the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough.

In 2024/25, 241 applications were received locally to the Go Succeed service, resulting in 145 jobs promoted through business start-up interventions in the Council area, exceeding performance targets and reflecting strong local entrepreneurship engagement.

Across Council operated and funded business support activity, 362 local businesses were assisted to develop or expand operations through Go Succeed and other initiatives.

The programme also achieved high regional reach and impact, contributing to the creation of around 2,500 new businesses and over 3,500 new jobs across Northern Ireland since launch (data region wide), supporting enterprise growth and income opportunities in the borough context.

Go Succeed helps reduce barriers to economic participation by providing tailored advice, mentoring, masterclasses, peer-to-peer networks and access to grant support, strengthening local entrepreneurial capacity and supporting the Council's anti-poverty and economic development objectives.

Why this matters: *This matters because the Go Succeed Programme is equipping individuals and businesses with the skills, advice and support needed to start, grow and sustain enterprises, driving entrepreneurship, creating jobs and strengthening the local economy across Antrim and Newtownabbey.*



PILLAR:

Planet

RELEVANT ACTIONS:

ACTION 4.1 - Sustainability and resilient communities

ACTION 4.2 - Environmental education and green skills

ACTION 4.3 - Climate change mitigation and emissions reduction

ACTION 4.4 - Access to green spaces and greenways



THE PLANET PILLAR FOCUSES ON ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY, CLIMATE ACTION AND ACCESS TO GREEN SPACES, RECOGNISING THE CONNECTION BETWEEN ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES AND QUALITY OF LIFE.

6

COMMUNITY FRIDGES
REDUCING FOOD WASTE
AND CARBON IMPACT

POLLINATOR-FRIENDLY
PLANTING AND SUSTAINABLE
MAINTENANCE APPROACHES
IMPLEMENTED



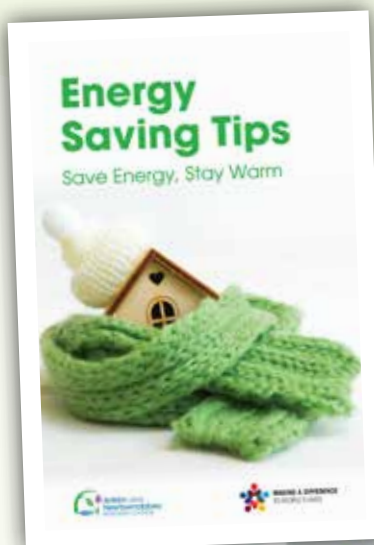
CASE STUDY: ENERGY EFFICIENCY EDUCATION

The Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Energy Efficiency Programme continued to support residents to manage energy costs, improve household warmth and build awareness of practical energy-saving measures. The programme combined information, advice and direct support to help households better understand and manage their energy use, while also connecting residents to available schemes and assistance, contributing to wider cost-of-living and fuel poverty priorities.

As part of delivery, four energy efficiency videos were produced and shared across social media, reaching 4,427 views and extending the accessibility of key messages. An Energy Saving Tips booklet was also developed and distributed through health fairs, community events and local outreach, ensuring inclusive access to information for those less likely to engage online. Direct engagement resulted in 267 resident enquiries, with 50 referrals made to the NIHE Energy Advice Line and 38 to energy efficiency grant schemes, supporting longer-term household improvements. In addition, 40 heaters were loaned and 572 Keep Warm Packs distributed, providing immediate support during colder periods.

Overall, the programme demonstrates a balanced, preventative approach, combining awareness-raising with practical interventions to support residents in staying warm and reducing energy costs.

Why this matters: *This matters because it helps households reduce financial pressure, improve comfort and wellbeing and build longer-term resilience to rising energy costs through both immediate support and access to sustainable energy solutions.*



54,308
TREES HAVE BEEN
PLANTED BRINGING
THE OVERALL TOTAL
TO 320,803 TREES

CASE STUDY: 'ONE MILLION TREES' PROGRAMME

Progress continues toward Council's goal of planting 1,000,000 trees across the borough.

During this year's tree planting season, 54,308 trees have been planted bringing the overall total to 320,803 trees from the inception of the one million tree initiative. This initiative plays a vital role in enhancing local biodiversity, improving air quality and promoting environmental sustainability.

CASE STUDY: GREEN FOR BUSINESS PILOT PROGRAMME

The Green for Business Pilot Programme was launched in October 2024 by Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council in partnership with CarbonFit to support local micro and SME businesses in reducing carbon emissions and energy costs. This fully funded 12-month initiative aligns with the Council's sustainability ambitions and the Planet pillar of the Corporate Plan.

A total of 25 businesses enrolled, with 23 successfully completing the programme. Participants received tailored support including carbon assessments, carbon reduction plans (Scope 1 and 2), carbon footprint certification, access to carbon accounting software and sustainability training.

The programme identified estimated carbon savings of 1,468.92 tonnes of CO₂e, with key measures including the adoption of electric vehicles, installation of solar PV panels, transition to low-carbon heating systems and switching to green electricity contracts. These actions could result in an 85% reduction in the combined carbon footprint of participating businesses, positioning them for future funding opportunities and supporting the Borough's transition to Net Zero.



CASE STUDY: DECARBONISATION OF FLEET

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council's Decarbonisation of Fleet initiative demonstrates significant progress toward reducing carbon emissions and enhancing operational sustainability. Guided by the Fleet Strategy 2022-2027 and aligned with the Planet pillar of the Corporate Plan, the Council has proactively transitioned its vehicle fleet to low-emission alternatives in anticipation of future regulatory changes.

Originally comprising 96 vehicles - predominantly diesel - the fleet has been strategically modernised through an annual replacement programme prioritising Zero and Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ZEVs and ULEVs). As of October 2025, the fleet consists of 86 vehicles, including 8 electric, 41 HVO-powered, and 37 diesel vehicles, with 57% now classified as ULEVs.

These measures have resulted in a 38% reduction in carbon emissions between the 2021/2022 and 2024/2025 financial years. Supported by EV charging infrastructure, GPS-enabled route optimisation and driver training, the initiative exemplifies best practice in sustainable fleet management and contributes to the Borough's journey toward Net Zero.



Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Academic Year September 2024 - June 2025

40 schools with
current Green
Flags (54%)



13,305 pupils reached in
schools with active
green flags

74 Number of schools
registered in council
area

20,929

Total number of pupils in
council area

88% schools retained their
2023 green flag

Ambassador Schools

- Ballycraig Primary School
(new 2017/18)
- Fairview Primary School
(new 2018/19)
- Ballyclare Primary School
(new 2022/23)

6 Teachers attended the Cluster
Group Meeting

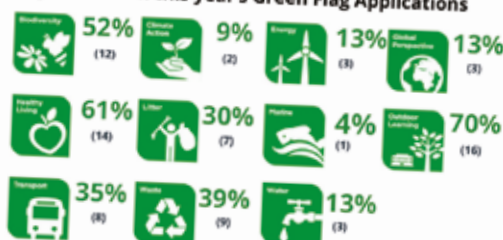
25 Workshops delivered

40 Teacher meetings

3 Special Awards received

- Eco-School of the Year – Loanends
Primary School
- Eco Pupil of the Year – St James's
Primary School
- Eco Teacher of the Year – St James's
Primary School

Topic choice in this year's Green Flag Applications



Wheelie Big Challenge Winners

- 3rd Prize (£200): Greystone Primary School
- 2nd Prize (£300): Antrim Grammar School
- 1st Prize (£500): Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach



Eco-Schools: added value

1. Regular email
updates with 100%
of schools in your
council area

100%

2. In person and online
workshops available
to help engage
dormant schools:

- Tackling Fast Fashion
- Climate Campaigning
- Wheelie Big Challenge
- Young Reporters for the Environment
- Cluster Group Meetings
- Action Plan Clinics
- Application Clinics
- Teacher Resource Training Clinics

3. Financial Incentives
for schools
participating:
Up to £100 for the
Wrigley Litter Less
Challenge

Up to £100 for Young
Reporters for the
Environment



Up to £500 & a laptop
in our NIHE School's
Energy Competition

Up to £500 in Wheelie Big
Challenge Competition

Plus many other
opportunities:
Radius Housing projects, grants etc.

4. Teacher resources
across all Key
stages



5. A team of dedicated
Field Officers out on
the ground
supporting schools
through the Eco-
Schools programme

6. Online webinars and
training sessions to help
teachers and delivery
partners effectively lead and
deliver our programme.

7. 5.2K+ followers and
growing on
Facebook



8. Individual Council
Eco-School's
Award
Ceremonies



9. Carbon Literacy
Training for
teachers

Carbon Literacy
Programmes



www.eco-schoolsni.org



Conclusion

**THIS STATEMENT OF PROGRESS
DEMONSTRATES STRONG DELIVERY
AGAINST THE LOVE LIVING HERE
COMMUNITY PLAN DURING 2025.**

By grouping progress under each pillar, the report shows how a wide range of actions collectively contribute to improved outcomes for people, place, prosperity and the planet. Partners will continue to build on this progress towards the Community Plan's 2030 vision.





OUR CITIZENS
ENJOY GOOD HEALTH
AND WELLBEING

OUR CITIZENS LIVE
IN CONNECTED, SAFE,
CLEAN AND VIBRANT
PLACES

OUR CITIZENS
BENEFIT FROM
ECONOMIC
PROSPERITY

OUR CITIZENS
ACHIEVE THEIR
FULL POTENTIAL

OUR VULNERABLE
PEOPLE ARE
SUPPORTED



NOTES:

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