

Rathcoole Neighbourhood Renewal Area

Annual Report 2023-2024



About Neighbourhood Renewal

In June 2003, Government launched “People and Place – A strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal” This long term (7-10 year) strategy was designed to target those communities throughout Northern Ireland suffering the highest levels of deprivation.

Neighbourhood Renewal is a cross Governmental strategy, which aims to bring together work of Government Departments in partnership with local people to tackle disadvantage and deprivation in all aspects of everyday life.

Neighbourhoods in the most deprived top 10% of wards across Northern Ireland were identified using the Noble Multiple Deprivation Measure. Following extensive consultation, this resulted in 36 areas and a population of approximately 280,000 (one person in 6 in Northern Ireland), being targeted for intervention.

Partnerships were established in each Neighbourhood Renewal Area as a vehicle for local planning and implementation.

About Rathcoole Neighbourhood Partnership

Established in 2006, The Rathcoole Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership (RNRP) meets on a bi-monthly basis to carry out the task outlined in the Department for Social Development (DSD) “People and Place” document to develop an Action Plan for the Neighbourhood Renewal Area.

RNRP identifies priority objectives, which it believes are fundamental to addressing the four strategic priorities which have been set by the Department for Social Development (see below). These objectives are added to the Action Plan which was first produced in 2006 and which is revised on an annual basis.

The Action Plan is also guided by a needs assessment, which is continuously updated as new information becomes available from Northern Ireland Statistical Research Agency. The Action Plan takes account of NINIS statistics, statutory priorities and lessons learned from the Neighbourhood Renewal Mid Term Review report.

The following information highlights key points for residents living within Rathcoole:

Households

The table below shows Mid-Year Population Estimates (2019) for Rathcoole NRA and shows the % change from the 2009 Mid-Year Population Estimates for a range of age bands for both males and females.

	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Total
Age Bands	0-15 years	16-39 years	40-64 years	65+ years	Male	0-15 years	16-39 years	40-64 years	65+ years	Female	All
Population Estimates 2019	831	1,157	1,095	535	3,618	805	1,232	1,236	723	3,996	7,613
2009-2019 Population Change (%)	22.0%	1.2%	5.1%	-3.4%	5.8%	23.1%	-3.1%	14.3%	-15.5%	3.4%	4.5%

The table below shows demographic characteristics of the people living in Rathcoole NRA from 2001 and 2011 Censuses. The 2001 census took place on 29th April 2001 and the 2011 Census on 27th March 2011.

	2001 Census	2011 Census*
Population	7,323	7,408
Aged 16-59 years (%)	53.8	58.0
Aged 60 and over (%)	26.7	23.2
Male (%)	46.3	47.0
Female (%)	53.7	53.0
Catholic Community Background (%)	3.4	5.3
Protestant and other Christian (including Christian related) Community Background (%)	92.6	83.4
Persons aged 16 and over who were single (never married) (%)	32.2	39.2
One family and no others: lone parent households with dependent children (%)	12.1	14.2
Lone pensioner households (%)	20.4	16.6

50% of individuals claiming income support are lone parent families. Though the figures for Lone Pensioner Households appear to be decreasing this is set to significantly increase in the future with a population increase of 42.1% expected of people aged 65+ between 2015 and 2030.

Education and Learning

Key Stage 1 Level 2 qualifications in English and Maths were higher than non-NRA areas by 0.9% and 0.2% respectively in the 2011/12 results. However by GCSE level the percentage of those achieving 5 GCSEs including Maths and English shows a significant and growing gap of 34.8%. School leavers with no GCSEs has also risen from 7.5% to 8.1%, with the 2011 non-NRA average being 1.4%

Between the 2001 Census and the 2011 Census the population with no qualifications within Rathcoole dropped from 59.6% to 43.2%. In 2011 the Northern Ireland average of individuals with no qualifications was 40.63, dropping the gap to only 2.57%.

The population who had a degree level/level 4 or higher qualification rose from 5.3% to 10.5% between the 2001 and 2011 census. Though percentage has nearly doubled in the space of ten years, the figures still remain behind the Northern Ireland average of 23.65%.

Well-Being and Employment

In the 2011 census 31% of residents had a limiting long-term illness, health problem or disability, significantly higher than the Northern Ireland average of 20.69%.

In 2019 20.3% of residents in Rathcoole were on Employment and Support Allowance (a decrease of 0.4%) with a further reduction from 960 to 920 in 2020. The decreases correlates with an increase in PIP payments from 400 in 2018 to 950 in 2020 (approximately 12.5% of the population).

It is important to highlight the impact mental ill health has had upon Rathcoole's well-being and employment figures. Half of individuals in Rathcoole on ESA were on the benefit because of psychiatric disorders. Of those on disability living allowance 19% defined as mental health causes.

69% of individuals claiming income support are also in receipt of carer's premium (an increase of 9% on previous figures), emphasising the need to support carer's within the area to maintain a good quality of life for both themselves and the people they are caring for.

Crime

Overall crime rates per 1,000 of the population show that Rathcoole is a safe place to live, with figures often better in the NRA area than in non-NRA areas. An increase in drugs offences is noteworthy, however this is also evident in non-NRA areas. Domestic abuse offences have however increased by 14% between 2003 and 2018. It is important to note that this figure is over double that reflected in the Non-NRA statistics.

There has been a 220% increase in drug offences between 2003 and 2018, with drug related deaths doubling between 2003-2009 and 2013-2017.

Action Plan

The Rathcoole Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership completed a review of its original Action Plan in 2021 and published further updates on an annual basis to ensure that the actions required against all key priorities identified were sufficiently detailed. The Neighbourhood Renewal Strategic Plan (10 year) and Annual Action Plan reflect priorities that are valid and relevant for the area, are supported by robust evidence and take account of local knowledge.

It should be noted that the Rathcoole Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership members have signed up to and abide by the Neighbourhood Renewal Code of Practice, and guiding principles, and subsequent Sub-Group Terms of Reference.

To take forward the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme Rathcoole Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership was established in 2006, The Partnership membership comprises of representatives from the local community, voluntary and statutory organisations and elected representatives.

The main statutory agencies involved in RNRP, and local Government Departments have continued to contribute to the delivery of the Action Plan – either directly through the performing of their statutory function in a way that best suits the needs of the Rathcoole community; or, through significant and timely support to the sub-groups to add value to their projects.

The Partnership will continue to work hard and respond to community needs and changes, as and when they occur. The Partnership meets on a bi monthly basis; with facilitation and Co-ordination of the Partnership and sub-groups provided through the Neighbourhood Renewal Co-ordinator post, which is funded by DfC through Belfast Regeneration Office and managed by Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council.

Rathcoole Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership Structure and Membership:

Organisation	Name
ANBC Elected Representative	Councillor Robert Foster (Chair)
ANBC – Elected Representative	Councillor Matthew Brady
ANBC – Elected Representative	Councillor Ben Mallon
ANBC – Elected Representative	Councillor Taylor McGrann
ANBC - Elected Representative	Councillor Victor Robinson (ending 18 th May 2023)
ANBC – Elected Representative	Councillor Stafford Ward (elected 18 th May 2023 elections)
ANBC – Elected Representative	Councillor Billy Webb
DFC - Belfast Regeneration Office	Paul Connolly
NIHE	Breige Mullaghan/Stephen Gamble
PSNI	John Lee (or representative)

Northern Health & Social Care Trust	Denise McClenaghan
Inniscoole Day Centre	Jill Jordan/Liz Adams
Abbey Community College	Maria Quinn
Rathcoole Primary School	Emma Quinn
Education Authority	Francis Loughlin
Synergy/Team JVC Hub	Elaine McCrum
Breakaways	Joyce Campbell
Listening Ear	Karen Phillips Vice chair
Newtownabbey Women's Group	Wilma Lennox
RATH Community Group	Rosemary Bell-McCracken
Mallusk Enterprise	Emma Garrett /Maria McGouran

Newtownabbey Family Connections	Claire Humphrey
Newtownabbey Methodist Mission	Rev Karen Spence
Community Advice Antrim and Newtownabbey	Lorraine Adamson/Claire Reid/Jaclyn Glover
RNR Officer (ANBC)	Cathy Hall
Tackling Deprivation Coordinator (ANBC)	Amy Lynch/Claire McAuley
Community Development Manager (ANBC)	Stef Buchanan
Abbey Surestart	Brenda Doherty
Billy Boys Band	John Hunter
Abbey Allsorts	Samantha Wallace
Clanmil Housing	Gerard Rosatto

Rathcoole Neighbourhood Partnership Sub-groups

Currently the partnership facilitates 2 sub-groups to assist in the identification, development and, where appropriate, the delivery of projects which aim to address the 4 strategic objectives set out in the People and Place Strategy; Community Renewal, Social Renewal, Economic Renewal, and Physical Renewal.

The RNRP two sub-groups working towards the four themes are:

**Learning, Health, Well-Being and Physical
Economic and Social Cohesion**

Each sub-group also assists local community organisations to co-ordinate actions that are beneficial for all communities living and working in the Rathcoole Neighbourhood Renewal Area (NRA).

Rathcoole Neighbourhood Renewal Sub-groups – Roles and Membership

The role of each subgroup is to focus on issues within the Rathcoole Neighbourhood Action Plan. Membership of sub-groups is open to anyone working or living in the Neighbourhood Renewal Area who feels they have a contribution to make to support Neighbourhood Renewal and the work of the Neighbourhood Partnership.

All sub-groups meet bi-monthly with additional focus groups established from time to time where need arises. A report of the activities of each sub-group is given at a feedback session to the main Rathcoole Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership at its bi-monthly meetings.

The aims of sub-groups are:

- To influence statutory agencies to focus their investments and resources on the delivery of public services where they will have most impact on improving the well-being and quality of life for those living and working in Rathcoole.
- To engage in effective working partnerships with key stakeholders from all relevant sectors to pro-actively deliver the identified priorities detailed in the Neighbourhood Action Plan;
- To maintain a Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership and related sub-group structures that are representative of local regeneration stakeholders that will lead, co-ordinate and monitor implementation of the Neighbourhood Action Plan.

Though the current membership of the sub-groups is detailed below it should be noted that membership of the sub-groups are open. All sub-group members are welcome to attend any group; and any person or organisation expressing an interest in the work of the Partnership are free to attend. This list is therefore not exhaustive.

Learning, Health, Well-Being and Physical Sub-Group

Organisation	Name
DfC - Belfast Regeneration Office	Paul Connolly
Community Advice Antrim and Newtownabbey	Jacqui Glover
Inniscoole Day Centre	Jill Jordan
Synergy	Elaine McCrum

Breakaways	Joyce Campbell
Newtownabbey Methodist Mission	Rev. Karen Spence
Education Authority	Laura Whittley
Barnardos Thrive	Claire Humphrey
Barnardos Newtownabbey Family Connections	Roisin O'Neill/Chris Pollock
SureStart	Brenda Doherty
SureStart	Cathy Todd
Rathcoole Primary School	Emma Quinn
Abbey Community College	Maria Quinn
Alzheimer's Society	Hannah Coleman
Listening Ear	Karen Phillips
Abbey Allsorts	Samantha Wallace
Rathcoole Library	Gemma Dummigan
Rathcoole Neighbourhood Renewal Officer	Cathy Hall

Economic and Community Cohesion Sub-Group

Organisation	Name
ANBC Elected Representative	Councillor Billy Webb

ANBC Economic Development	Stewart McCormack
Department for Communities	Paul Connolly
Newtownabbey Jobs and Benefits Office	Jonathan Logan/Mark Sturgeon
Mallusk Enterprise	Emma Garrett/Maria McGouran
NIHE	Stephen Gamble
Jobmatch Network Personnel	Michelle McMullan
USEL Stride	Rachel McHugh
Rathcoole Library	Gemma Dummigan
Listening Ear	Karen Kerr
PSNI	John Lee
Rathcoole Neighbourhood Renewal Officer	Cathy Hall

The Rathcoole Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership's vision identifies the following main objectives for each of sub-groups:

Learning, Health, Well-Being and Physical Sub-group

- To improve community safety for older and most vulnerable people
- To develop a befriending service for vulnerable groups
- To develop stronger links with the Police and Community Safety Partnership
- To increase community based activities for older people, and also excursions and transport.
- To continue to support the "Good Morning Newtownabbey" project

- To reduce dependency on prescription drugs
- To support Rathcoole residents with debt advice and money management.
- To ensure that there is accessible community health services
- To promote positive physical and mental health of older people
- To develop an older person's newsletter
- To research the extent and nature of transport provision, identifying any gaps and the implications on the mobility of older people.
- In partnership with the Improving Outcomes for Children in Rathcoole and Monkstown Action Plan
- To develop a plan amongst schools to raise parents and children's views regarding education
- To promote and increase volunteer activity to support out of hours learning facilities
- To develop a co-ordinated early intervention approach for age 0-5 years
- To develop a family support programme
- To improve educational attainment for all ages as a result of support provided to the family.
- To target disengaged young people 16-18 years at risk of disengaging from education and training
- To improve educational attainment particularly among the 16-18 age group seen as disengaged from education and training provision
- To promote and support positive lifestyle choices
- To develop and promote a positive image of young people
- To improve relationships between young people and the wider community
- To create positive opportunities for young people at risk of social exclusion
- To increase the number of programmes for young people that focus on diversity, culture and identity

- To increase the participation of young people within Rathcoole on all matters that affect them.
- To improve opportunities for young people in relation to sport.
- To be responsive to the needs of young people and provide services at times that they require them.

Economic and Community Cohesion

- To support local residents to move from dependence to independence
- To provide greater employment opportunities
- To encourage training providers to establish pre-employment opportunities with employers for long term unemployed
- To provide awareness of access to existing opportunities
- To support individuals to be ready to take up opportunities
- To develop and promote training and support mechanisms to encourage women to return to work.
- To promote business start-up programmes to the community
- To work towards building a united cohesive community moving away from divisions within the Rathcoole Area.
- To increase the number of volunteers to support community activities.
- To increase the number of community events for all the community to become involved in on a recurring basis.
- To improve communication methods.
- To support local residents to feel safe
- To support the maintenance of a drugs amnesty box.
- To support the development of the allotments project

- To improve the appearance and quality of experience in living within Rathcoole.

Delivery of the Action Plan

The Rathcoole Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership has not underestimated the scale of its task. To deliver the objectives on the Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plan there is a need for:

- Positive leadership
- Promotion of a positive image
- New working relationships
- A robust plan that allows for change and is sufficiently flexible to respond to the needs and opportunities during the course of Neighbourhood Renewal
- A willingness to change working practices and a shared commitment to pooling resources and expertise.

The Action Plan is reviewed regularly to reflect changing statistics and other material, which builds on the baseline position and in particular takes account of the high levels of need in relation to education and skills, poor health and the physical living environment.

Neighbourhood Renewal Investment Fund

In the Rathcoole Neighbourhood Renewal Area, the Neighbourhood Renewal Investment Fund supports both community and statutory organisations in tackling the multiple deprivations that have been identified by the government statistical and research

agency NISRA (Northern Ireland Statistical and Research Agency) through NINIS (Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service).

Organisations currently funded under the Neighbourhood Renewal Investment Fund in Rathcoole include:

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council

Community, Economic, Physical and Social Renewal

Department for Communities funding of the Rathcoole Neighbourhood Renewal Co-ordinator for the year 2022/23 contributed towards technical assistance, partnership development, developing best practice and project expenses. Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council managed the Neighbourhood Co-ordinator contract, enabling the post holder to work collaboratively with statutory, voluntary, community bodies and political representatives to drive forward the Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plan.

Robust partnership working between Central Government (BRO/Department for Communities) and Local Government (Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council) has been evident since the inception of Neighbourhood Renewal in Rathcoole. There are 6 elected representatives who actively participate on the main Neighbourhood Partnership and its associated sub-groups.

The role of the Co-ordinator is:

- To support the Neighbourhood Partnership to put in place appropriate procedures to govern, specifically, the DfC Code of Practice and Guiding Principles on Neighbourhood Renewal and the conduct of their business including policy on dealing with conflicts of interest;
- To support the Neighbourhood Partnership with monitoring of progress against the Neighbourhood Action Plan and to review and update priorities within the Action Plan on an annual basis;
- To establish and maintain thematic sub-groups to take forward priorities within the Neighbourhood Action Plan;
- To work with Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council and DFC on the development of future community development programmes;
- To provide strategic direction to the Neighbourhood Partnership and support and direction to the NR sub-groups;
- To influence and maintain service delivery in the Rathcoole Neighbourhood Renewal Area;
- To work closely with the Rathcoole community, providing support and leadership, developing programmes aimed at older people, youth, women, men, health, education, employment and economic regeneration.
- To attract funding for community development projects in the area;
- To maintain vital links between the community and statutory sector and contribute to the building of community infrastructure in the Rathcoole Estate.

The Co-ordinator supports newsletter design, updates social media sites to raise awareness of Neighbourhood Renewal, and produces six-monthly progress reports and annual reports.

Team JVC Hub (Previously Synergy)

In partnership with Rathcoole Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership who donated mental health books and mindfulness activity cards, we made and filled 165 draw string bags each one included a colouring book, colouring pencils, a stress ball, and a fidget bracelet for the kids in Rathcoole Primary School in aid of Mental Health awareness week.

After visiting a local wellness fair, we got chatting to Women's Aid who we seen supplied their children with lovely knitted "worry monsters" These were designed with a pocket on the mouth so that the child can write down their worries and feed it to the monster, this enabled their care givers to then see what was causing worry to the children and be able to help for effectively.

Throughout this period, we facilitated Essential Skills Maths and English on a Friday morning within the hub alongside the usual Essential Skills we worked with Belfast Works Connect who provided an OCN accreditation for phones and tablets and one for personal development. We were in receipt of funding from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive to run a project with GLOW – Giving life opportunities to women. This was a 12-week course and resulted in an OCN accredited qualification in vocational skills. Between all of these above the number of people receiving job specific training was 19 throughout the year.

We joined together with Newtownabbey Women's Group to attend a 10-week course in the Women's Tec to learn DIY skills. They learnt how to use power tools, hang pictures, made planters, completed crafts, and had healthy eating sessions. The ladies enjoyed this thoroughly and attended ever Thursday afternoon.

Thanks to a grant from Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council we were able to run a street party for the coronation. Each child got a goody bag of sweets, crisps, and a drink. There was a slush machine, popcorn machine, candyfloss machine, face painting, balloon modelling, bouncy castles, and music

Our Knitting and crocheting group were busy all year round doing various projects for the local fire service, PSNI, local nursery school and Sands making various things such as Worry worms, trauma teddies, baby hats, blankets, baby hats etc. We also participated in the winter warmers project organised by Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council

Throughout the year we had quizzes, hand massages, wreath making workshops, embroidery and applique classes, decoupage sessions, pebble art and painting jars etc.

A very informative session from the Policing and community safety partnership regarding home safety took place, each of the participants got useful information and some things to take away to help keep their home safe.

The Rathcoole Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership kindly funded us to participate in an outing to the Garden Show Ireland in Antrim Castle Gardens. This was a great opportunity to develop social skills and learn more about the services accessible through local vendors within our community. In August a bus trip was organised to Newcastle this was such a great day and we welcomed lots of new people within the community to join us. Goodie bags were made for the children consisting of some snacks, drinks,

colouring books, and pencils.

Our volunteer continues to bake for the love 2 serve mornings every Tuesday morning where our ladies go and support each week.

With the help of Heads Up we held a drug awareness early intervention programme, this was very informative giving up to date information on current drug trends and things to look out for in our young people.

We held 3 health awareness sessions, Breast cancer awareness, Bowel cancer awareness and cervical cancer awareness.

October was breast cancer awareness month; we held a coffee morning and decorated the room in pink while the ladies all dressed in pink.

Rathcoole Neighbourhood renewal ran a training and careers event where we took a table to share some information on the services that we provide to the local community.

We were invited and attended the Rathcoole Crew Christmas event, a great afternoon was had by all with beautiful food and lots of dancing. We attended the Christmas event ran by Newtownabbey Women's Group

Thanks to NIHE for their funding in the OCN accreditation we were able to run a celebration afternoon in Corrs Corner, the Mayor was in attendance to issue certificated and congratulate the ladies on their wonderful achievement.

In January 23 we started a 6-week course called New Year Healthy Body Healthy Mind course. The aims were to raise self-awareness and identify steps to become more pro active in managing our own wellness by creating a daily structure in supporting wellness through food, movement, breathing and mental/emotional balance techniques and strategies.

A Valentines Tea party was held where the building was decorated, food was ordered in and one of the volunteers baked some delicious baked goods. This was such a great morning, and everyone helped set up and clear away to make it such a success.

Belfast Works connect provided a Make up Master class and lunch for all those who completed the OCN courses. Just 2 of the success stories that were amazing coming out of the Belfast Works connect programme was 1 lady has been rehoused with the help and support of the organisation and 1 lady is going on to do her classroom assistant level 3 through the programme.

We supported ROC Health and wellbeing fair where we attended and supplied information about our services to be displayed on the community table

Various crafts were completed such as easter wreaths, Mothers Day Frames and Knitted Ducks with crème eggs inside. Some of these were given to Listening Ear to give the counsellor who works with them, some were given to a charity for the Childrens Hospice and the rest were given to the Hope Shop to sell and raise money for their funds. We held a quiz morning which was prepared and hosted by one of our ladies.

We had a visit to Monkstown Garden Village to support the work that they do. We had demonstrations and gained some in depth knowledge from Aine who runs the project. In the light of current cost of living issues, the ladies loved getting the opportunity to learn and took knowledge and materials away to start to grow their own vegetables

To finish off the year we held a 6-week course in British Sign Language. To maximise numbers to 20 participants we hired a room in the Dunanney centre. There has been very strong interest in completing a more in-depth course for a further 6 weeks in the British Sign Language which will be starting in May 24.





Newtownabbey Women's Group

Drop-In Service

We provided our usual drop-service throughout the year. The aim of this service is to provide a space to alleviate social isolation and provide information to those requiring signposting support.

Coronation Event

A coronation event was held, funded by Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, in recognition of the Coronation of King Charles III. This included food and entertainment.

Summer Events

We organised a number of group outings for families over the Summer months. The aim of these trips was to help reduce the costs for families and alleviate social isolation over the summer.

Christmas Event

We hosted our annual Christmas Event with approximately 200 in attendance. The event included fairground rides, a Mr Hullabaloo workshop and a Santa visit.

Winter Warmers

We worked closely with the Partnership throughout November and into March to run a Winter Warmers programme in the Dunanney Centre. This involved hosting events throughout the day and into the evening with specific themes such as arts and crafts, sewing etc. We also ensured that, on a number of the days, hot food and beverages were provided. This was part of a project to help alleviate isolation and to mitigate some of the costs during the Cost of Living Crisis of food and heating.

Group Support

We provided support to a range of groups over this period including Rathcoole Crew, Listening Ear, RNRP, Carer's Forum, NACN etc over this period ranging from advice to the provision of activity sessions and the loan of equipment and space.

Partnership Member Community Organisations:

Breakaways

The Breakaways are a 55+ club. The club meets every Tuesday for lunch and dancing. Throughout the year they organise additional events, trips, and fundraising opportunities. The aim of the group is to reduce social isolation for older people living in Rathcoole and the surrounding environs.

Listening Ear

Listening Ear is a mental health charity based in the Dunanney Centre in Rathcoole. The aim of the organisation is to provide mental health training and support to individuals and groups. Throughout the year Listening Ear also provide a 24/7 emergency helpline as well as regular/daily call service upon request. Additional/complementary services include benefits and housing advice and advocacy services, as well as food and gas/electric support schemes and a uniform scheme. A Knit and Knatter group runs weekly through the organisation in order to address social isolation in the area. Recently the group have received funding to allow them to hire a part-time counsellor with qualifications covering children, youth and adult services.

RATH Community Group

RATH Community Group provide a range of training, community and youth opportunities for local residents. Members of the group have founded a disability football team catering to children and young people from throughout the borough in addition to their localised services.

Community Advice Antrim and Newtownabbey

The offices of Community Advice Antrim and Newtownabbey (previously Citizen's Advice Antrim and Newtownabbey) are within the Dunanney Centre in Rathcoole. The organisation offers advice on debt management, welfare issues and tax and benefits to residents, with the office very well utilised all year round.

Barnardo's Newtownabbey Family Connections/THRiVE

The Barnardo's Newtownabbey Family Connections and THRiVE projects work towards improving educational outcomes for children and young people in Rathcoole.

Their key areas of work during the 2023/2024 year were:

- Family Support Programme—providing support to local children and their families to enable a holistic change in the whole family dynamic in order to impact positively on the educational life of the child.
- THRiVE Campaign – this campaign seeks to improve the aspirations of children and young people.

Billy Boys Band

The Billy Boys Band places a strong focus on music and culture as a tool to divert young people away from ASB and provide them with opportunities to learn new skills.

Abbey Surestart

Abbey Surestart has been working in the area for almost 20 years, working with preschool children and their parents to establish parenting skills and prepare children for their early years in education.

Newtownabbey Methodist Mission

The Mission keeps strong links with its congregation throughout the estate whilst also providing additional support to individuals and families as need arises. A number of programmes run through the church halls on a rolling basis throughout the year. A playgroup runs within the grounds of the church.

Abbey Allsorts

Abbey Allsorts is a disability playgroup running every Saturday in the Dunanney Centre in Rathcoole. The aim of the group is to provide holistic support to the whole family grouping. The group also run a series of additional events and schemes throughout the year.

Rathcoole Neighbourhood Renewal Programmes:

Financial Support Programme

The Partnership offered the opportunity for local groups to apply for up to £500 of support towards their programmes. The following support was provided:

NACN Coole Studios OCN centre registration- £500

OCN requested for the Partnership to pay their initial registration fee to become a recognised OCN accredited training organisation.

Girls' Football Team Mental Health Programme - £500

This programme allowed for participants of the disability football team to participate in a number of summer trips. The continuation of social routine over the summer proved valuable to helping maintain essential friendships for the children and young people involved in the project.

Listening Ear Knit and Knatter trip - £500

Participants of the Listening Ear Knit and Knatter group were given the opportunity to participate in a trip with the aim of providing opportunities to residents of the estate that may not otherwise be available to them, while elevating social isolation.

Newtownabbey Women's Group - £500

For the provision of materials and ingredients for meals/refreshments for the Winter Warmer Programmes in the City Mission and Dunanney Centre.

Billy Boys Band - £500

For a Summer Intergenerational Project. The intergenerational band practised together throughout the summer before bringing the band to a local nursing home to provide music along with an ice cream van.

R.A.T.H. Community Group - £500

This allowed the group to take young people on diversionary programmes over the summer months.

Sons of Kai - £500

The band took a number of families who could not otherwise afford the experience on a break to the coast.

Funky Kids Workshop - £500

The group utilised the funding to add to their summer programme of activities for children.

Breakaways - £500

The group were able to use the funding to reduce the cost of a residential for older people by subsidising the bus.

City Mission - £500

The City Mission were able to use the additional finances to allow them to create Christmas hampers for older people who were alone over Christmas and/or would not have been able to afford typical Christmas fare.

Additional Approvals to local organisations

Abbots Cross Primary School

£400 was allocated to a transition event to support pupils as they left Primary to move to Secondary education.

Barnardos THRiVE

£693.75 was allocated to support the group with the daily running of their programmes. £1800 was also allocated to support with their THRiVE Awards event – recognising the aspirational stories of young people from the community.

Breakaways

£250 was allocated to support with the cost of a bus to Crumlin Road Gaol for a tea dance.

Team JVC Hub

An additional £450 was allocated to support Team JVC Hub in April-June in the absence of programme costs during this period

NACN

Funding allowed for 2 young people to receive a fully paid scholarship for the year for the membership of the NACN Performing Arts Academy. The Partnership also paid for newsletter/podcast style project to aid with the dissemination of information throughout the estate on the work on the vital range of services and organisations running throughout the vicinity.

Rathcoole Football Club – Youth

£500 was allocated to the girls' wing of the youth football club to allow them to participate in a mental health course with a trained counsellor and trips incorporated. The club was also provided with £800 to help with pitch hire to reduce the pressure on club membership during the Cost of Living Crisis.

Community Organisations Support and Guidance Programme

Dalaradia

Dalaradia has recently be given the lease of The Whitehouse, an historical building on the outskirts of Rathcoole. They aim to use the venue to promote a shared understanding of history and support groups from the estate in their community development work. Applying for grants is a new process for Dalaradia. The Rathcoole Neighbourhood Renewal Officer was on hand to guide them through the process.

NACN

The RNR Officer worked closely with NACN on a successful funding bid to Heritage Lottery to allow for a 2 year project focusing on the history of Rathcoole through an app, podcasts and an exhibition.

Listening Ear

The RNR Officer supported Listening Ear in a successful application to National Lottery to allow for 3 years of funding including salaries to enable the continuation of their services.

R.A.T.H. Community Group

R.A.T.H. Community Group were supported to seek funding to develop further their annual Remembrance Day Event. Partnership working with Clanmil Housing provided an additional £3000 to the group, allowing them to access things such as military vehicles to add further interest to their programme.

Funky Kids Workshop

Funky Kids were supported to seek funding through Lottery Awards for All to help them with their new allotment project, this is with the aim of applying in future for a shed to act as a workshop on the site.

Youth Centre Young Mother's Programme

The Partnership provided funding to allow the Young Mothers' Programme to have a meal during their self-created family Christmas photoshoot day in December.

Rathcoole Football Team – Youth

The RNR officer has been supporting the team to apply for funding to allow for the provision of increased services to their participants, including mental health support.

Community Training Programme

The Partnership were able to provide a number of training opportunities to local groups to support volunteers with the work of their organisations. This included emergency first aid; paediatric first aid; food safety; suicide awareness; a range of different information programmes including dementia, learning disabilities, diabetes, epilepsy etc; child protection; child protection in sport; and chaperone training for children and young people in the entertainment industry (with NACN).

Counselling Support

Rathcoole Neighbourhood Renewal were able to provide top-up funding to an existing counselling service within the estate, catering to all ages, to provide additional hours to this much needed provision.

Newsletter/Podcasts

The RNR Officer has been working in partnership with NACN to develop a contemporary Newsletter to support with communication throughout the estate. An initial hard copy and digital newsletter was created however this did not have the full desired impact. NACN suggested a move to a podcast series, with the possibility of a newsletter developing out of the podcast content. This is currently on trial between this year and next financial year.

NACN Performing Arts Academy Scholarships x2

The scholarships allowed for 2 young people who would not otherwise be able to participate in the Academy with the opportunity to do so.

Community Survey

A Community Survey has been developed to assess community need, with a specific focus on training and employment. The information gathered will inform work in 24/25.

Community Renewal Expenditure 2023/24

The following table details current projects funded via the Neighbourhood Renewal Investment fund the overall 2023/24 total expenditure in the Rathcoole Neighbourhood Renewal Area.

Programme/Project	CFF Funding Period	CFF Funding Amount 2023/2024	2023/2024 Spend
Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council (in collaboration with JVC Hub/NWG) – Neighbourhood Renewal in Rathcoole	01/04/2023 - 31/03/2024	£78,728.24	£70,257.63

Achievements of Neighbourhood Renewal Funding In 2023/2024 Year

Community Renewal Output Measures

Output Measure	Team JVC Hub	Newtownabbey Women's Group	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council
CR1 Number of community relations projects supported	2	3	3
CR3 Number of footfall using existing Community facilities	60	60	0
CR6 Number of people involved in volunteering including unpaid voluntary work	20	20	100
CR7 Number of Community/Voluntary Groups supported	15	8	10

Social Renewal Output Measures

Output Measure	Team JVC Hub	Newtownabbey Women's Group	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council
SR(Ed)8 Number of pupils directly benefitting from the project	0	0	50
SR(H)3 Number of health awareness initiatives	4	2	4
SR(C)2 Number of community safety initiatives supported	1	3	3

Economic Renewal Output Measures

Output Measure	Team JVC Hub	Newtownabbey Women's Group	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council
ER1 Number of people receiving job specific training	10	4	0
ER9 Number of FTE jobs safeguarded	0.5	0.5	1

Targets specific to Neighbourhood Renewal Coordinator

Target	Achievement
NR Partnership to have reviewed and prepared annually Neighbourhood Renewal information pack for all new members of NRP and sub groups. To update this pack as necessary throughout the period up to 31/03/24	Information Pack updated as necessary and on website.
Undertake an annual Training Needs Analysis of the NR Partnership and Sub Groups	Training needs analysis undertaken of main partnership and Subgroups as requested.
NR Partnership to have undertaken a review of Partnership and Sub Group membership	Undertaken at each meeting of partnership and Subgroups.
NR Partnership to have undertaken an annual review of NR Action Plan, in consultation with DFC, taking cognisance of the Measurement of Outcomes report, and update action plan accordingly. To ensure that NR Action Plan takes account of current service provision in the area through council and other statutory and voluntary and community sector organisations.	Action Plan reviewed.
An annual report to be produced for Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership approval which details the progress on NR implementation to date, NRIF investment in areas, programmes funded and outcomes achieved.	Annual report for 2022/23 provided November 2023.

Target	Achievement
NR Partnership to facilitate a minimum of 6 NRP meetings and a minimum of 12 Sub Groups meetings annually. To issue all meeting papers at least 2 full working days in advance of meetings. Agreed minutes of meetings should be reissued within 10 working days after each meeting.	6 Rathcoole Neighbourhood Partnership meetings, 12 Sub Group meetings – (Economic and Community Cohesion & Learning Health, Wellbeing and Physical).
NR Partnership to follow up on action points from each Sub Group to drive forward implementation of Neighbourhood Action Plan.	Done on an ongoing basis throughout 2023/24 at each partnership and Sub Group meeting.
NR Partnership Coordinator to provide progress of Sub Groups and projects to each NRP meeting and to provide updates on new funding opportunities. To update NR Action Plan in advance of all NRP meetings and issue to all members at least 2 working days in advance of meetings.	Done on an ongoing basis throughout 2023/24 at each partnership meeting.
To raise awareness of Best Practice by ensuring Partnership members are involved in Councils Best Practice Visits/Community Planning Events/Guest Speakers and that key messages with regard to Community Planning are disseminated to Partnership members in a timely manner.	Done on an ongoing basis throughout 2023/24 at each partnership and Sub Group meeting.

Rathcoole Neighbourhood Partnership Conclusion

In the 2023/24 financial year, Rathcoole Neighbourhood Partnership total overall spend was £70,257.63



**Communities, Place and Local Government Group
Community Empowerment Division
North Belfast and Greater Shankill
Level 8, Causeway Exchange,
1-7 Bedford Street, Belfast BT2 7EG**