

# Local Development Plan | 2030

Draft Plan Strategy

Evidence Paper 9: Open Space, Sport  
and Recreation

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## Executive Summary

- Open space, whether or not there is public access to it, is important for its contribution to the quality of urban life by providing important green lungs, visual breaks and wildlife habitats in built-up areas.
- The Sustainable Development Strategy 2010 (SDS) promotes recreation and sport as a means to create a strong healthy society.
- The Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) highlights the need to provide adequate provision for green and blue infrastructure in cities, towns and neighbourhoods, and new developments.
- The Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) recognises the cultural, social, economic, health and environmental benefits of open space and states that everyone should have easy access to open space. The SPPS advises the need to protect existing areas of open space, identify sites for such future provision and ensure that new development provides additional or enhanced open space to meet growing needs over the LDP period.
- The Local Development Plan (LDP) has an important role to ensure that open space is an important consideration in the planning process and for new facilities to be sustainability accommodated for in both settlements and in the countryside.
- The Borough's towns and villages are well catered for in regards to parks, play parks and open space for recreation and leisure use.
- Antrim Castle Gardens, Carnmoney Hill, Lough Neagh, Jordanstown Loughshore Park, Hazelbank Park, Newtownabbey Way and Three Mile Water Park are important recreation assets in the Borough, providing excellent open space and recreation opportunities.
- The Council has made significant investment in their open space, parks, play areas and synthetic sports pitches across the Borough.
- The Council has 17 award winning parks and open spaces.
- There are 14 Public Rights of Way (PRoW) in the Borough, located predominately in the settlement of Antrim and Metropolitan Newtownabbey, with a total length of 7.15km.
- With specific regard to cycling, the National Cycle Network (NCN) routes 93, 94 and 96 traverse the Borough.
- There are significant walking and cycling opportunities via the Borough's community greenways, public rights of way and designated walking trails.

- There are four main fishing rivers within the Borough providing coarse, game and trout fishing.
- The Borough is home to 8 golfing facilities, including driving ranges and courses.

# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This is one of a series of background papers and studies being presented as part of the evidence base to inform the preparation of the Antrim and Newtownabbey Local Development Plan 2030 (LDP). This paper draws together the evidence base used in relation to the topic of open space, sport and outdoor recreation. The evidence in this paper was collated at a point in time and may be subject to further updates. Evidence papers should be read collectively.
- 1.2 In line with Departmental guidance, the Council has updated its evidence base to inform the next stage of the LDP known as the Plan Strategy. This paper updates the 'Meeting the Needs of Society' baseline evidence paper, as it relates to Open Space, Sport and Recreation, which accompanied the Preferred Options Paper (POP) published in January 2017.
- 1.3 It should be noted that the evidence base collected to inform the draft Plan Strategy also forms the basis for additional assessments and appraisals required as part of the plan preparation process, most notably the Sustainability Appraisal (SA).
- 1.4 Open space is currently defined in Planning Policy Statement 8 (PPS 8) 'Open Space, Sport and Recreation' as;
- 'All open space of public value, including not just land, but also inland bodies of water such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs which offer important opportunities for sport and outdoor recreation and can also act as a visual amenity.'*
- 1.5 Open space can include a wide variety of spaces including all open space and ancillary facilities of recreational, amenity or environmental value, including land and water bodies, irrespective of ownership or access. This can include public parks and gardens, outdoor sports facilities, play areas, amenity open space, greenways, community pathways and public rights of way, river corridors, ponds and reservoirs, natural and semi-natural spaces, woodlands, allotments and community gardens, cemeteries, designed landscapes and civic spaces.
- 1.6 Open space is essential in any society for both amenity and recreation purposes. It makes a valuable contribution in enhancing the character, attractiveness, economic competitiveness and vitality of our Borough. It provides areas for children to play, spaces for community events and enhances the quality of the built environment. Open spaces and green networks are valuable areas for nature and biodiversity. They can promote safe, accessible pedestrian linkages, act as a buffer between different land uses, help to reduce flood risk and provide 'green lungs' that can help to improve air quality and reduce urban heating.
- 1.7 The variety of open spaces within and outside the urban area can have positive impacts on the landscape as well as providing spaces for people to

visit and utilise. High quality open spaces can support regeneration, improve quality of life for communities, as well as promoting health and wellbeing. Open space also performs a strategic function by helping to define an area and create a sense of place. Ultimately, open space can make a valuable contribution to the health and quality of life for all.

- 1.8 The LDP has an important role to ensure that open space is an important consideration in the LDP preparation process. This includes protecting existing areas of open space and identifying sites for such future provision and ensuring that new development provides additional or enhanced open space to meet growing needs. In terms of sport and outdoor recreation facilities the LDP should ensure that, new facilities can be sustainability accommodated in both settlements and in the countryside. The role of the LDP is to bring forward a strategy for open space as well as operational planning policy in the draft Plan Strategy. The Local Policies Plan will identify key areas of open space along with any key site requirements for new zonings.
- 1.9 This paper provides an overview of community facilities across the Borough, comprising of the following topics:
- Open Space Provision;
  - Sports Facilities; and
  - Outdoor Recreation Facilities.

## **2 Legislative Context**

### **The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011**

- 2.1 The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (hereafter referred to as the 2011 Act) is the principal planning legislation in Northern Ireland, which underpins the reformed two-tier planning system that commenced on 1 April 2015. It introduced the plan-led system, where the LDP is the primary consideration for decision making on all new development schemes and proposals will be required to accord with its provisions unless, exceptionally other material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 2.2 Under the new Planning System introduced in 2015, the LDP will comprise of two documents, a Plan Strategy and a Local Policies Plan that will be prepared in sequence. It also requires the LDP to be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal.

### **The Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015**

- 2.3 These Regulations set out the sequence in which the Council's new LDP is to be prepared and provides detail on the content and procedure of each stage in the LDP preparation process and independent examination.

**The Planning (Statement of Community Involvement) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015**

- 2.4 These Regulations set out the sequence in which the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is to be prepared and provides detail on the content and procedures required. The Council published its SCI in January 2016 the purpose of which is to define how the Council will engage with the community in the delivery of the LDP. It is set within the context of the Council's Corporate Plan and meets the requirements of the 2011 Act.

**Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006**

- 2.5 Section 25 of the Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006 requires all Northern Ireland Departments and Councils, in exercising their functions, to act in the way they consider best calculated to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Section 5 of the 2011 Act copper-fastens this duty by requiring those who exercise any function in relation to LDPs to do so with the objective of furthering sustainable development.

**Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014**

- 2.6 The Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 introduced a statutory link between a Council's Community Plan and LDP, and requests that the preparation of the LDP must take account of the Community Plan.

**Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998**

- 2.7 The Council has a statutory duty under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 as a public authority, in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between the nine equality categories of persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation; men and women generally; persons with a disability and persons without; and persons with dependants and persons without.
- 2.8 Council has engaged and will continue to engage with Section 75 groups throughout the LDP process, adhering to the Council's SCI.

**Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016**

- 2.9 The Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 provides a statutory duty on public authorities to have due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans, and when designing and delivering public services and came into effect for Councils in June 2017.
- 2.10 Rural needs is an ongoing and integral component of the Council's LDP.

**The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004**

- 2.11 It is a statutory requirement that all plans and programmes that are likely to have a significant environmental effect must be subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The European Union Directive '2001/42/EC' states that an SEA is mandatory and was transposed into local legislation in the

form of The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004 (the EAPP (NI) Regulations). The objective of the SEA directive is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the Council's LDP, with the view to promoting sustainable development.

- 2.12 The SEA is an ongoing process and must be carried out in conjunction with, and integrated into the LDP process. Under the provisions of the SEA Directive and the Regulations, an environmental report is published with the LDP document.

#### **The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995**

- 2.13 The LDP is required to consider its impact on the integrity of Natura 2000 sites (these comprise Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and RAMSAR Sites) and will be subject to a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA). Similar to the SEA the HRA is an on-going process, which will take place at key stages during the preparation of the LDP. The Regulations contribute to transposing the requirements of the EC Habitats and Birds Directives.

### **3 Regional Policy Context**

#### **Draft Programme for Government Framework 2016-2021**

- 3.1 The key aim of the draft Programme for Government (PfG) is to grow a sustainable economy through investing in the future, tackling disadvantage, improving health and wellbeing, protecting the people and the environment, building a strong and shared community and delivering high quality services. The delivery of many of the strategic outcomes will be the responsibility of central government, however, the LDP will play a supporting role in helping to deliver many of these.
- 3.2 The PfG specifically identifies the Play and Leisure Action Plan as one of the 'building blocks' to underpin the first strategic priority of creating opportunities, tackling disadvantage and improving health and well-being. Sports Matters, a strategy for Sport and Physical recreation is cited as a building block for strategic priority 4 'Building a strong and shared community'.
- 3.3 There are several relevant references to open space and recreation in the draft document. Under Outcome 2 'We live and work sustainably - protecting the environment'; the Executive will make their contribution to valuing the place we live in by, helping to improve the quality of the places in which people live, work and play and increasing access to clean, high quality, green spaces. Under Outcome 10, 'We are a confident, welcoming, outward-looking society'; the Executive will attract and support international cultural and sporting events. Under Outcome 14 'We give our children and young people the best start in life', the Executive will support opportunities for play, recreation and creativity.

### **Sustainable Development Strategy Northern Ireland 2010**

- 3.4 The Government's Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS) identifies that sport and recreation has a role to play in ensuring a strong society through, promoting and improving the health and well-being of the population and improving the quality life through experiencing and participating in and accessing cultural and sporting pursuits. Similarly open space provision can contribute to the creation of a better quality environment and way of life for the population.

### **Regional Development Strategy 2035**

- 3.5 The Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) sets the context for the sustainable development of Northern Ireland to 2035. The RDS is the spatial strategy of the Northern Ireland Executive and sets the overarching planning framework for the region. The RDS offers two types of strategic guidance: Regional Guidance (RG) which applies to the entire region under the three themes of sustainable development (economy, society and environment); and Spatial Framework Guidance (SFG) that is shaped specifically to address the 5 elements of the Spatial Framework.
- 3.6 The RDS provides the following Regional Guidance (RG) that is relevant to open space, sport and outdoor recreation.
- RG 7 - Support urban and rural renaissance by ensuring that environmental quality in urban areas is improved and maintained particularly with adequate provision of green infrastructure. Part of the process of urban and rural renaissance requires even greater significance being given to the design and management of the public realm. It is important to promote recreational space within cities, towns and neighbourhoods, and new developments or plans should make provision for adequate green and blue infrastructure. This is particularly important near designated nature-conservation sites, as it will help reduce recreational pressure on these sites.
  - RG 11- Conserve, protect and where possible, enhance our built heritage and our natural environment, as they are key tourism and recreational assets that can make a valuable contribution to the environment, economy and society.
- 3.7 In terms of the Spatial Framework Guidance (SFG) the RDS aims to:
- SFG 5- Protect and enhance the quality of the setting of the Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area (BMUA) and its environmental assets. This can be achieved by protecting and enhancing the network of open spaces in the BMUA.

### **Regional Transportation Strategy for Northern Ireland 2002-2012**

- 3.8 The Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) for Northern Ireland 2002-2012 identifies strategic transportation investment priorities and considers potential funding sources and affordability of planned initiatives over the strategy period. The RTS is a 'daughter document' of the Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2035, which sets out the spatial development framework for Northern Ireland up to 2035.
- 3.9 This Strategy was supported by three initiatives namely Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan 2004, Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan 2015 and the Sub-Regional Transport Plan 2007.

### **Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan 2004**

- 3.10 The Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP) 2004 is the local transport plan for the Belfast Metropolitan Area (BMA) including Metropolitan Newtownabbey. This plan delivered a phased and costed implementation programme of transport schemes to 2015. This plan took forward the strategic initiatives of the RTS 2002-2012.

### **Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan 2015 (2005)**

- 3.11 The former Department for Regional Development (DRD), now the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) prepared the Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan (RSTN TP) 2015. The Plan is based on the guidance set out in the RDS 2035 and the RTS 2002-2012. The Plan presents a range of multi-modal transport initiatives to manage, maintain and develop Northern Ireland's Strategic Transport Network. The Regional Strategic Transport Network of Northern Ireland comprises the complete rail network, five Key Transport Corridors (KTCs), four Link Corridors, the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Corridors and the remainder of the trunk road network.

### **Sub-Regional Transport Plan 2007**

- 3.12 The Sub-Regional Transport Plan (SRTP) 2007 covers Antrim and takes forward the strategic initiatives of the Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS) for Northern Ireland 2002-2012. The SRTP deals with the transport needs of the whole of Northern Ireland with the exception of the BMA and the rail and trunk road networks, which are covered, in the BMA and RSTN TP.

### **Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future – 'A New Approach to Regional Transportation' 2011**

- 3.13 Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future (ESTF) was developed to build on the RTS for Northern Ireland 2002-2012 and to refocus and rebalance the investment in the future. Unlike the 2002 Strategy, Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future (ESTF) does not include details of schemes or projects. Rather, the Department has set three High Level Aims for transportation along with twelve supporting Strategic Objectives, covering the economy, society and the environment. The ESTF complements the RDS 2035 and contains high-level aims and strategic objectives to support the growth of the economy, enhance

the quality of life for all and reduce the environmental impact of transport. It sets out the approach to regional transportation and is used to guide strategic investment decisions beyond 2015. Work is progressing on the implementation of the ESTF and the Council will ensure that any future transportation projects affecting the Borough are appropriately reflected in the LDP.

### **Forthcoming Transport Plans**

- 3.14 The Department for Infrastructure is currently preparing new Transport Plans which will cover the Borough. This includes a new Regional Strategic Transport Network Plan for all of Northern Ireland and a new Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan which will cover Belfast City Council, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, Ards and North Down Borough Council and Mid and East Antrim Borough Council as well as Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council. Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council is represented on the Project Boards for both plans along with other Councils.
- 3.15 As part of the preparation for the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan, the Department is preparing a Transport Study for the greater Belfast area and the Council has taken the emerging study into consideration in the preparation of its draft Plan Strategy. Work will also continue to bring forward the next stage of the LDP, the Local Policies Plan, alongside the Department's Transport Plans.
- 3.16 Further information on the Transport Study and Transport Plans is available on the Department of Infrastructure's website <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/>.

### **Sustainable Water – A Long-Term Water Strategy for Northern Ireland 2015-2040**

- 3.17 'Sustainable Water – A Long-Term Water Strategy for Northern Ireland (2015-2040)' sets out a range of initiatives to deliver the Executive's long term goal of a sustainable water sector in Northern Ireland. The Strategy recognises how planning can impact on flood risk and water quality and aims to ensure that existing water and sewerage infrastructure and investment proposals inform future planning decisions and the preparation of LDPs.
- 3.18 The Strategy sets out a number of matters that the Council's new LDP will need to take into account which are summarised below:
- Ensuring planning decisions are informed by up to date information on the risk from all significant sources of flooding;
  - Prevention of inappropriate development in high flood risk areas and ensuring that future development does not increase flood risk;
  - Exceptional development within high flood risk areas must make provision for adequate mitigation measures;
  - Ensure surface water drainage is adequately addressed; and
  - Planning policy should promote sustainable water and sewerage services by making appropriate space for water and sewerage infrastructure including sustainable drainage systems.

### **Strategic Planning Policy Statement 2015**

- 3.19 The Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) contains a section on open space, sport and outdoor recreation. It recognises the importance of open space and consequently there is a presumption against the loss of existing open space and sites for future provision of open space, subject to a number of exceptions.
- 3.20 The SPPS states that Councils consider bringing forward a policy for new residential developments (generally over 25 units) to provide adequate open space as an integral part of development. This should also include provision for the future maintenance of such areas. The SPPS includes policy provisions for intensive sports facilities, to be located within settlement limits and the provision for stadiums to be located outside of settlement limits. The SPPS also states that the impact of noise generating uses, where there is the potential to create nuisance and disturbance, should be considered and only allowed where there is no unacceptable level of disturbance.
- 3.21 The SPPS identifies that LDPs should contain policy for the development of outdoor recreation in the countryside, taking into account issues like visual and residential amenity; public and road safety; impact on natural and built heritage; and accessibility.
- 3.22 The SPPS also identifies that LDPs should carefully consider proposals for all types of sport and outdoor recreation facilities, including facilities ancillary to water sports use, taking into account a range of planning considerations. This includes any provision of floodlighting.

### **Play and Leisure Policy Statement for Northern Ireland 2011**

- 3.23 This policy statement was produced by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister in 2011 and aims to improve current play and leisure provision for children and young people aged between 0 -18 years, and for children who are/have been in care or children with a disability the age limit extends to 21 years. The Executive's vision for play is '*to recognise, respect and resource play is to recognise, respect and value childhood.*' As a result, the **Play and Leisure Implementation Plan 2006-2016** was published in 2011. This aims to recognise the importance of play facilities for all children and young people. Work is currently underway on the review of the plan and the development of a new strategy post 2016.

### **Sport Matters – The Northern Ireland Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation 2009-2019**

- 3.24 In partnership with the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL), Sport NI produced the 'Sport Matters Strategy', which focuses on improving participation, performance and places. The strategy imparts a shared vision for sport as being, '*a culture of lifelong enjoyment and success in sport*'. The 10-year strategy sets out strategic priorities for the future investment in sport and recreation through the support of three 'anticipated needs of sport' – participation, performance and places.

3.25 The strategy encourages organisations to embed the 26 high level targets within development and business plans for the improved quality, quantity and access to places of sport to promote increase participation and improve sporting performances. The strategy articulates the case for ongoing and increased investment in sport and physical recreation to deliver the 26 high level targets and support the wider social and economic agenda in areas such as education, health and the development of communities over the 10 year period, affirming the Executive's commitment in support of the vision.

#### **Mountain Bike Strategy for Northern Ireland 2014-2024**

3.26 Outdoor Recreation NI in May 2014 prepared a Mountain Bike Strategy for Northern Ireland 2014 –2024. The vision of this strategy is to make Northern Ireland a world-class mountain bike destination.

#### **A Bicycle Strategy for Northern Ireland 2015**

3.27 Published by the Department for Regional Development (DRD) in August 2015, this Strategy outlines how Northern Ireland can become a cycling community over the next 25 years. It promotes cycling as a viable and attractive form of transport.

#### **Exercise, Explore, Enjoy – A Strategic Plan for Greenways**

3.28 Published by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) in November 2016, this document aims to encourage a substantial increase in the number of people walking and cycling as a regular part of everyday life through the building of a connected and accessible regional greenway network.

#### **Outdoor Recreation NI – Making Northern Ireland's Outdoors Great: A Strategic Plan for outdoor recreation in NI 2015-2020**

3.29 Outdoor Recreation NI (ORNI) deliver a not for profit role under a number of arrangements including delivering for strategic partners and consortiums through Service Level Agreements and on a project-by-project basis. ORNI's role is to develop and manage outdoor recreation across Northern Ireland. The vision articulated in the strategy seeks to 'place outdoor recreation at the heart of society.' The strategy sets out six key priorities:

- Championing the outdoors;
- Developing partnerships and promoting best practice;
- Improving the nation's health and well-being;
- Empowering volunteers;
- Delivering and managing quality outdoor recreation products; and
- Increase awareness of outdoor recreation opportunities.

#### **Sport NI Active Places Research Report 2009 & 2014 update**

3.30 In 2009, Sport NI published a report 'Bridging the Gap' which identified unmet demand and shortfalls for facilities such as sports halls, swimming pools, tennis

courts, pitches and athletic tracks. The publication encouraged the strategic development of sports facilities in Northern Ireland and presented opportunities for facility providers to address key issues and unmet facility demands within their geographical area.

- 3.31 In 2014, this report was updated and the figures aligned to the new Council areas. The 2014 update presents facility shortfall tables for pitches and sports halls only. The facility shortfall tables presented in the 2009 report excluded school sports facilities due to their limited availability for community use. However, in light of recent community use of schools guidance published by Sport NI and the Department of Education, it is important to recognise the potential value of school sports facilities in addressing the facility shortfalls throughout Northern Ireland.

### **Community Use of Schools**

- 3.32 Following the 2009, Sport NI 'Active Places Research Report' a shortfall of sports facilities was highlighted throughout Northern Ireland. The report highlighted the valuable supply of sporting facilities within schools and suggested if the facilities were available to the wider local community, facilities could go towards 'bridging the gap' to community access to sporting facilities.
- 3.33 Current legislation for schools is outlined in the Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989, which enables schools to make provision for the wider community to use their premises when not otherwise required for educational purposes. The effective community use of schools not only increases community access to sporting facilities, it helps to develop local sport and recreation, provides value for money but also contributes to the wider health and wellbeing agenda of the Executive.

### **Active School Travel Initiative**

- 3.34 Sustrans in partnership with the Public Health Agency and Department of Infrastructure have developed the Active School Travel Programme to assist in meeting the Executive's Programme for Government targets to increase active school travel. The programme started in 2013 and in the school year 2016-2017, Sustrans worked with 229 schools, accounting for 22% of schools in Northern Ireland. At the end of the 2016-2017 school year, the number of children walking, cycling and scooting to school at participating schools increased from, 36% to 46%.

### **Other Planning Policy**

- 3.35 Current operational planning policy, in relation to aspects of open space, sport and recreation is primarily included within the following Planning Policy Statements (PPSs):
- PPS 8 Open Space, Sport and Recreation;
  - PPS 7 Quality residential Developments; and
  - PPS 21 Sustainable Development in the Countryside.

3.36 These PPSs, as well as the SPPS, have been taken into consideration in the formulation of the Detailed Management Policies, which are contained within the draft Plan Strategy document.

### **Departmental Guidance**

3.37 The LDP has been prepared taking account of Departmental policy and guidance, which is available by contacting the Department of Infrastructure.

3.38 The Development Plan Practice Note 7 'The Plan Strategy' published in 2015, guides officers and relevant users through the key requirements for the preparation of the Plan Strategy and deals primarily with procedures as well as good practice.

3.39 Development Control Advice Notes (DCANs) are non-statutory planning guidance, which is intended to supplement, elucidate and exemplify policy documents including PPSs and development plans. The DCANs relating to open space, sport and recreation include:

- DCAN 8 Housing in Existing Urban Areas.

3.40 The supplementary planning guidance 'Creating Places - Achieving Quality in Residential Development' (2000) has been the principal guide for use by prospective developers in the design of all new housing areas. This guidance recognises the importance which open space can have on people's health, well-being and quality of life. The guidance considers the location, level of provision, design and maintenance of public and private open spaces.

3.41 The supplementary planning guidance 'Living Places: An Urban Stewardship and Design Guide for Northern Ireland' (2014) is a key reference point for formulating LDPs and recognises the wider economic, cultural and community benefits of achieving excellence in the stewardship and design of these places, be they existing or proposed.

## **4 Local Policy Context**

### **Legacy Development Plans**

4.1 The following is a list of the legacy development plans that apply to the Borough:

- Antrim Area Plan 1984-2001 and its alterations (AAP);
- Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 (BUAP);
- Carrickfergus Area Plan 2001<sup>1</sup> (CAP);
- Draft Newtownabbey Area Plan 2005 (dNAP); and

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<sup>1</sup> Insofar as it relates to that part of the legacy Carrickfergus Borough Council area at Greenisland that transferred to Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough in 2015 under Review of Public Administration (RPA).

- Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (dBMAP).

4.2 It should be noted that the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan adopted in September 2014 was subsequently quashed as a result of a judgement of the Court of Appeal delivered in May 2017. As a consequence, the BUAP is now the statutory development plan for the Metropolitan Newtownabbey area of the Borough, with dBMAP remaining a material consideration.

### **Community Plan – Love Living Here 2017**

4.1 The Council's Community Plan, 'Love Living Here', sets out a shared vision and agreed outcomes for the area up to 2030. The successful implementation of the Community Plan will be marked by a demonstrable improvement in how services are delivered across our Borough and the quality of life our citizens experience. As such, the Community Plan is an important document and has been taken into account in the preparation of the Council's Local Development Plan.

4.2 The Community Plan sets out four outcomes which are as follows:

- Our citizens enjoy good health and wellbeing;
- Our citizens live in connected, safe, clean and vibrant places;
- Our citizens benefit from economic prosperity; and
- Our citizens achieve their full potential.

4.3 It also sets out one wildly important goal namely that our vulnerable people are supported.

### **Corporate Plan – Our Borough Your Vision (2019-2030)**

4.4 The Council's Corporate Plan sets out our vision for the Borough and identifies what we need to do between now and 2030 to achieve this. The Vision for the Borough up to 2030 is defined as,

*'A progressive smart and prosperous Borough. Inspired by our people; Driven by ambition.'*

4.5 The Corporate Plan sets out a number of objectives in relation to Place, People and Prosperity. The LDP has a key role to play under the objective of 'place' and the corporate plan states:

*'We will have succeeded if: People take pride in their surroundings. People feel safe. Our environment, natural habitats and built heritage are protected and enhanced. We have vibrant and welcoming towns, villages, neighbourhoods, and rural areas. We have an efficient planning process that promotes positive development and sustainable growth.'*

### **Antrim and Newtownabbey Leisure Strategy 2017-2030**

4.6 The Council's Leisure Strategy 2017-2030 sets out the 'big picture' for how the Council will approach the provision and delivery of leisure over the next thirteen years. The strategy sets out a simple but ambitious vision; 'More people, More Active, More Often', which is supported by 5 overall priorities. As a

Council, we want to align the services we deliver to the needs of our residents and increase access to opportunities regardless of age or income. Underlining all of this are, the Council's Corporate and Community Plan. The Council recognises the valuable social and health benefits the provision of leisure facilities, and opportunities can create for our communities, alongside an improved quality of life.

### **Council Masterplans/Village Plans**

- 4.7 Through the Village Renewal Scheme as supported by the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 the Council benefited from funding to devise and update plans for the development of villages in the Borough. Whilst these plans are non-statutory, they have been prepared in close conjunction with local residents and identify a range of potential projects to improve the settlements. These range from short term goals to long-term aspirations. The village plans alongside the masterplans relating to the Borough will be considered in the preparation of the LDP where relevant.

### **Cross Boundary Policy Context**

- 4.8 In considering the local policy context, it is important to note that the Borough does not sit in isolation. Accordingly, it will be important to take account of our neighbouring local authorities comprising; Belfast City Council; Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council; Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council; Mid Ulster District Council and Mid and East Antrim Borough Council.
- 4.9 Neighbouring Council's Preferred Options Papers (POPs), supporting evidence base and draft Plan Strategies have been taken account of, as these are regarded as the main cross boundary documents to be considered in addition to regional guidance.

**Table 1: Neighbouring Councils Position**

<b>Council</b>	<b>Document</b>
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council (ACBCBC)	<p>The POP document highlights the value of open space stating that the LDP has a key role to play in protecting existing open spaces and recreational facilities as well as identifying new opportunities. ACBCBC seeks to bring forward an Open Space Strategy.</p> <p>Under the Key Issue SOC 4 'Protecting Open Space' the POP sets out ACBCBC's preferred option to;</p> <p><i>'Protect existing open space (in addition to identifying and zoning land for new provision) in line with existing policy and regional direction, tailored to meet local circumstances'</i></p> <p>The preferred option reinstates that there will be a presumption against the loss of open space, existing or zoned and this will be supported by a new strategic policy in the draft Plan Strategy.</p>

	<p>Under the Key Issue SOC 5 'Facilitating open space/play provision in new largescale residential developments' the POP sets out the preferred option to have:</p> <p><i>'A locally tailored approach with amendment to the existing criteria for play park provision in largescale residential developments to increase provision in larger schemes to more than one equipped play area as well as provide the option for Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs), where appropriate, unless otherwise specified in LDP Key Site Requirements.'</i></p> <p>The preferred option would also allow for Key Site Requirements (KSRs) to be used for housing zonings, at the Local Policies Plan stage, to set out site-specific requirements such as level and nature of play provision needed, if any, including if developer contributions are required. - The Council's view is that the existing policy-led approach to on-site play park provision in residential developments, as set out in Policy OS 2 (PPS 8), should be carried forward but tailored to meet specific local needs.</p>
Belfast City Council (BCC)	<p>A Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan (GBIP) has been prepared to provide an integrated strategic plan that can be used to assist decision-making in development management as well as for investment decisions. The draft Plan Strategy includes a range of policies including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Policy GB1 Green and Blue infrastructure network' – recognises the opportunity to plan for a network of these spaces and corridors to provide a multitude of recreational, environmental, ecological, wellbeing, socio-cultural and economic benefits for Belfast.</li> <li>• 'Policy OS1 Protection of open space' – seeks the retention and enhancement of important open spaces, including parks, playing fields, woodlands, allotments, large tracts of countryside, landscape features and many other areas that make up the provision of green and blue infrastructure.</li> <li>• 'Policy OS2 New open space within settlements'- seeks to support the provision of new and improved open space at appropriate locations within defined settlement limits.</li> <li>• 'Policy OS3 Ancillary open space' –seeks to ensure that the provision of open space is integrated into the design for new residential and large commercial developments and is provided on-site.</li> <li>• 'Policy OS4 New open space outside settlements' - seeks to support the provision of new open space, sport and outdoor recreation facilities at appropriate accessible locations in the countryside, where such a location is necessary to accommodate the use, provided there is no significant adverse impact on rural land uses, landscape &amp; visual amenity, wildlife and the environment.</li> <li>• 'Policy OS5 Intensive sports facilities' – seeks to ensure that new intensive sports facilities are at accessible and appropriate locations within settlement boundaries and sets out the key criteria against which proposals will be assessed.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Policy OS6 Facilities ancillary to water sports' – seeks to support ancillary facilities required in connection with water sports on our rivers, reservoirs, lakes and canals.</li> <li>• 'Policy OS7 Floodlighting' - seeks to ensure a balanced approach in considering new floodlighting proposals whilst ensuring that environmental matters are given due weight.</li> </ul>
Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC)	<p>The POP identifies four Key Issues relating to Tourism, Open Space and Recreation, of which Key Issue 21 'Protecting and enhancing open space, sport &amp; outdoor recreation' is of most relevance. Under Key Issue 21 the LCCC brings forward two preferred option:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Option 21A 'Protect and enhance all areas of open space and provide opportunity to identify a limited number of potential new Community Greenways'.</li> <li>• Option 21B 'Protect and enhance all areas of open space'.</li> </ul> <p>These options retain the existing policy-led approach in accordance with PPS 8 and offers the opportunity to expand the existing network of open space and encourage linkages to the natural heritage assets. LCCC is currently working towards publication of its draft Plan Strategy publication.</p>
Mid and East Antrim Borough Council (MEABC)	<p>The POP identifies four Key Issues relating to Open Space, Sport and Leisure and under each key issue, the Council has outlined its preferred option:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key Issue 16 'Community Growing Spaces and Allotments' recognises that spaces for growing of food can positively enhance and contribute to the health and wellbeing of people. This key issue is supported by the preferred option to '<i>Support delivery of Community Growing Spaces/Allotments in suitable locations</i>'.</li> <li>• Key Issue 17 'Community Greenways/Pathways' highlights the value of greenways, in that they have the ability to link larger areas of open space and provide important wildlife corridors/ecological networks. This key issue is supported by the preferred option to '<i>Facilitate the development of a network of Community Greenways/Pathways.</i>' This option will set out strategic policy to protect designated community greenways and pathways and ensure that new development has open space linkages to these greenways.</li> <li>• Key Issue 18 'Play Park Provision' highlights the importance of play provision in residential developments and is supported by the preferred option to '<i>Set out strategic policy requiring residential developments of 100 units or more, or on sites of five hectares or more to provide an equipped children's play area, unless otherwise specified through key site requirements</i>'. This option will allow children's equipped play provision to be assessed on a site by site basis and will safeguard</li> </ul>

	<p>against the loss of opportunities for the provision of play areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key Issue 19 'Open Space Provision in New Residential Developments' reinforces the need for adequate private, semi-private and public amenity space as an important consideration in all residential developments. This is supported by the preferred option to <i>'retain the current strategic criteria based policy regarding public open space contained in Policy OS 2 of PPS 8'</i> This approach will also ensure that an appropriate degree of open space is provided within residential development proposals that come forward outside of zoned housing sites.</li> </ul> <p>MEA is currently working towards publication of its draft Plan Strategy.</p>
Mid Ulster District Council (MUDC)	<p>The draft Plan Strategy seeks 'to protect existing areas of open space and encourage the provision of new open space.' This is supported by several policies namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy OS 1 'Protection of Open Space' – seeks to avoid the loss of open space to competing land uses.</li> <li>• Policy OS 2 'Protection of River Corridors' – seeks to protect the water environment.</li> <li>• Policy OS 3 'Outdoor Sport and Recreation' – supports proposals for outdoor sport and recreation facilities within settlements and seeks to support rural communities recognising the role of sports clubs in the countryside while protecting the rural character.</li> <li>• Policy OS 4 'Indoor Sport and Intensive Outdoor Sports Facilities' – this policy will facilitate the provision of indoor sport and recreation so small scale facilities can be developed outside villages and small settlements to reflect rural population and predominance of clubs and societies in the countryside.</li> </ul>

4.10 The Council has responded to neighbouring Council's POPs and LDP documents as they are published. In addition, the Council is also represented on a number of working groups and project boards to discuss cross boundary issues. This includes the Metropolitan Area Spatial Working Group and the Belfast Metropolitan Plan Project Board.

4.11 In terms of growth across the region, the Council view is that no neighbouring Council's growth strategy should have a negative impact on the Council's LDP in terms of resources for infrastructure provision delivered by statutory providers.

4.12 In consideration of neighbouring Council's documents as well as regional policy, it is the opinion of the Council that it's draft Plan Strategy is sound and is not in conflict with neighbouring Council's emerging LDPs.

## 5 Preferred Options Paper

- 5.1 The Council's Preferred Options Paper (POP) was published in 2017 and was the first formal stage in the preparation of the LDP for the Borough and was designed to promote debate in relation to key strategic planning issues arising in the area. The POP set out a range of strategic options in relation to how and where development should be located within the Borough. It included options for the Borough's settlements, centres, employment land and housing locations, as well as a number of other key planning issues.
- 5.2 In addition, the Council asked the public for their views on a range of planning topics and issues. A total of 148 representations were received which were considered during the development of the draft Plan Strategy document and, where relevant, these will also be considered during the preparation of the Local Policies Plan. Details are set out in the Council's published 'Preferred Options Paper Public Consultation Report 2019'.

## 6 Soundness

- 6.1 The LDP is prepared to meet the tests of soundness as set out in the Department for Infrastructure's Development Plan Practice Note 6: Soundness (Version 2, May 2017).

## 7 Open Space Provision

- 7.1 The Borough's open space, sport and outdoor recreation facilities are shown in Appendix 1.

### **Organisations Responsible for Open Space, Sport and Recreation**

- 7.2 The Department for Communities (DfC) is responsible for the central administration and promotion of arts and creativity, museums, libraries, sport, inland waterways and inland fisheries. Sport NI is a lead development agency for sport in Northern Ireland as established under the Recreation and Youth Service (Northern Ireland) Order 1986.

### **Open Space Typology**

- 7.3 Open space encompasses a variety of spaces that are readily and freely accessible to the wider community, primarily for amenity and recreational purposes. Within the Borough, there is a considerable amount of existing open space provision comprised mainly of, public parks, woodlands and amenity green spaces within residential areas. Table 2 describes the categories and descriptions of open space.

**Table 2: Open Space Typology**

<b>OPEN SPACE TYPOLOGY</b>		
<b>Category</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>PARKS</b>	Country Park	They are of a significant size of open space, with large areas of natural or semi natural landscapes supporting a range of wildlife. They are publicly accessible by public transport and attract large numbers of visitors and tourists. They provide a range of facilities and heritage features offering recreational, ecological, landscape, cultural or green infrastructure benefits. E.g. Cavehill (91,000 visitors in 2014).
	Urban Parks	Formal open space of a significant size that offers a combination of facilities and heritage features at the sub-regional level. They are among the main visitor attractions in the Borough and are popular with tourist and visitors. They are readily accessible by public transport and have a superior quality of facilities. E.g. Antrim Castle Gardens, Threemilewater Conservation Park.
	District Parks	Medium areas of open space that provide a landscape setting with a variety of natural features providing for a wide range of activities, including outdoor sports facilities and playing fields, children's play for different age groups and informal recreation pursuits. E.g. Valley Park, Jordanstown Loughshore Park.
	Local Parks and Open Spaces	These local parks serve the local neighbourhood and provide for safe open space. They contain provision for court games, children's play, sitting out areas and nature conservation areas. They are usually accessible by foot and are mainly utilised by the local community. E.g. Lilian Bland Community Park, People's Park Rathcoole, Sandyknowes Park.
<b>AMENITY GREENSPACES</b>	General Amenity Open Spaces	Areas of landscaped green spaces that provide natural surfaces and shaded areas for informal play and passive recreation. They enhance residential and commercial areas.
<b>GREENWAYS</b>	Linear Open Spaces	Open Spaces and towpaths along rivers, disused railways, nature conservation areas, and other routes that provide opportunities for informal recreation walking and cycling. Provide a valuable green corridor for wildlife. Often characterised by features or attractive areas that contribute to the enjoyment of the space. E.g. Newtownabbey Way
<b>CIVIC SPACES</b>	Civic Spaces	High quality hard landscaped areas that have public value often used for outdoor events. Generally

		located within or near to urban centres. E.g. Market Square Antrim, Mossley Mill Civic Square.
<b>PLAYING FIELDS</b>	Public Playing Fields	Natural or artificial surfaces publicly owned used for sport and recreation. They include outdoor sports facilities, pitches and playing fields.
	Private Playing Fields	Natural or artificial surfaces that are privately owned and used for sport and recreation. They include outdoor sports facilities, pitches and playing fields.
	School Playing Fields	Land belonging to a school or college for formal sports and informal play. Often schools allow community use of the sports facilities.
	Other Outdoor Sports Provision	Natural or artificial surfaces either publicly or privately owned that are used for sport and recreation. They include tennis courts, bowling greens and athletics tracks etc.
	Golf Courses	Natural landscaped spaces either publicly or privately owned to be used for golf.
<b>PLAY AREAS</b>	Play Grounds	Usually described as playgrounds or play parks. Areas designed with equipment primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people. This would include teenage shelters, skateboard parks, BMX tracks, Play equipment and Multi Use Games Areas (MUGA).
<b>ALLOTMENTS</b>	Allotments & Community Gardens	Sites providing plots which offer opportunities for residents to grow their own produce. Important for health and community involvement /cohesion.
<b>CEMETERIES</b>	Cemeteries	Quiet areas that provide opportunities for wildlife.
<b>WOODLANDS</b>	Woodlands	Includes publicly accessible woodlands and forests.
<b>INDOOR FACILITIES</b>	Indoor Sport & Recreation Facilities	Public leisure centres or indoor activity centres e.g. 10 pin bowling Antrim Forum.

## Parks

- 7.4 The main public parks in the Borough comprise of formal spaces, which are accessible to the local community and are destinations to which people will travel. Table 3 shows the Borough's Park provision.

**Table 3: Open Space Parks**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	
Antrim Castle Gardens	Randalstown Road	Antrim
Antrim, Loughshore Park	Lough Road	Antrim
Former Pitches At Steeple Road	Steeple Road	Antrim
Peace Park	Lough Road	Antrim
Alexander Irvine Park	Church Road	Antrim
Sixmile River Park Open Space	Mill Road	Ballyclare
Ballyclare War Memorial Gardens	Ballynure Road	Ballyclare
Ballynure War Memorial Park	Lismenary Road	Ballynure
Burnside River Park	Burnside Road	Burnside
Crumlin Glen	Mill Road	Crumlin
Burn's Memorial Park	Main Street	Crumlin
Burney's Lane Parkland	Burney's Lane	Newtownabbey
Lilian Bland Park	Ballyclare Road	Newtownabbey
Threemilewater Conservation Park	Doagh Road	Newtownabbey
Sandyknowes Park	A6 Antrim Road	Newtownabbey
Hazelbank Park	A2 Shore Road	Newtownabbey
Jordanstown Loughshore Park	A2 Shore Road	Newtownabbey
Land At Ypres Park	Ypres Park	Newtownabbey
Peoples Park Open Space	Derrycoole Way	Newtownabbey
Valley Park	O'Neill Road	Newtownabbey
Rush Park	Beechwood Avenue	Newtownabbey
Glas-Na-Braden Glen Park	Church Road	Newtownabbey
Gideon's Green Park	Whitehouse Park	Newtownabbey
Glen Park	Glenville Road	Newtownabbey
Mossley Park	Carnmoney Road North	Newtownabbey
Neillsbrook Park/Riverside Walk	Neillsbrook Road	Randalstown
Randalstown Forest	Staffordstown Road	Randalstown
Wallace Park	Lylehill Road	Templepatrick
Toome Linear Park	Railway Road	Toome

7.5 As well as parks, there are many other more informal amenity greenspaces, ranging in size and are mostly found in residential areas, office locations or areas of employment. These contribute to the softening of the urban fabric and to local visual amenity and are often of local high value in environmental terms. Examples of such areas include amenity space at Abbots Cross, Newtownabbey and at Fountainhill/Donogore Drive, Antrim.

### **Green Flag Sites**

7.6 The Green Flag Award is an international certification, which recognises parks and open spaces with high levels of maintenance, facilities and community involvement. Included in the 2017/18 awards were a few first-time winners, including Jordanstown Loughshore Park, Hazelbank Park and Gideon's Green, Mill Race Trail, Valley Park and Wallace Park.

7.7 The following locations within the Borough have received a Green Flag status: Newtownabbey Way; Kilbride Cemetery; Mallusk Cemetery; V36; Valley Park; Glas-na-braden; Jordanstown Loughshore Park; Hazelbank Park; Gideon's Green; Six Mile Water Park; Ballynure Graveyard; Mill Race Trail; Wallace Park; Rashee Cemetery and Ballyeaston Church Ruin.

### Play Parks

7.8 Safe and enjoyable children's play spaces are increasingly important in encouraging a more active lifestyle from an early age. According to 'Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play: Beyond the Six Acre Standard' (2015)<sup>2</sup>, children's play areas can be divided into three categories:

- Local Areas for Play (LAPs) aimed at very young children;
- Locally Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) aimed at children who can go out independently; and
- Neighbourhood Areas for Play (NEAP) aimed at older children.

7.9 The associated recommended walking distances for these areas are 100m, 400m and 1km respectively. Throughout the Borough, there are a number of children's outdoor play areas, which are shown in Table 4. For more information on parks and play parks, visit the Council's webpage.

**Table 4: Play Parks**

Name	Location	
Steeple Play Area	Stiles Way	Antrim
Springfarm Play Area	Durnish Road	Antrim
Parkhall Play Area	Queens Road	Antrim
Peace Park (Antrim Forum)	Lough Road	Antrim
Dunlop Play Area (Muckamore)	Ballycraig Road	Antrim
Erskine And Rashee Play Area	Erskine Park	Ballyclare
Grange Play Area	Thornhill Drive	Ballyclare
Ballyclare Memorial Play Area	Ballynure Road	Ballyclare
Sixmilewater River Park Play Area	Avondale Drive	Ballyclare
Ballynure Play Area	Lismenary Road	Ballynure
Burnside Play Area	Burnside Road	Burnside
Burn's Memorial Play Area	Main Street Crumlin	Crumlin
Anderson Play Area	Anderson Park	Doagh
Felden Place Play Area	Felden Place	Newtownabbey
Mallusk Play Area (William Morrison)	Mallusk Road	Newtownabbey
V36 - Valley Play Area	Church Road	Newtownabbey
Bawnmore Play Area	Felden Place	Newtownabbey
Valley Play Area	O'Neill Road	Newtownabbey
Hazelbank Park Play Area	A2 Shore Road	Newtownabbey

<sup>2</sup> ['Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play – Beyond the Six Acre Standard'](#)

Jordanstown, Loughshore Play Area	A2 Shore Road	Newtownabbey
Rush Park Play Area	Beechwood Avenue	Newtownabbey
Kings Park Play Area	Fernagh Road	Newtownabbey
Abbeyglen Play Area	Abbeyglen Drive	Newtownabbey
Ballyduff Play Area	Forthill Drive	Newtownabbey
Mossley Play Area	Carnmoney Road, North	Newtownabbey
New Mossley Play Area	Ballyearl Drive	Newtownabbey
Sandyknowes Play Area	A6 Antrim Road	Newtownabbey
Monkstown Play Area	Cashel Drive	Newtownabbey
Glengormley Play Area	Carnmoney Road	Newtownabbey
Rathfern Jubilee Play Area	Knockenagh Avenue	Newtownabbey
John Street Play Area	John Street	Randalstown
Neillsbrook Play Area	Neillsbrook Road	Randalstown
The Diamond Play Area	Rathmore Drive	Rathcoole
The People's Park Play Area	Derrycoole Way	Rathcoole
Wallace Park Play Area	Lylehill Road	Templepatrick
Toome Play Area	McCorley Road	Toome

## Outdoor Gyms

7.10 There are a number of outdoor gyms and Multi Use Gym Areas (MUGA) located within the Borough as indicated in Table 5. Outdoor Gyms bring a new dimension to outdoor activity and are ideal to complement walking or running. Suitable for all fitness levels, these pieces of gym equipment are designed specifically for outdoor use and are completely free to use.

**Table 5: Outdoor Gyms**

Name	Location	
Antrim Forum MUGA	Lough Road	Antrim
Sixmilewater River Path	Mill Road	Ballyclare
Burnside Park MUGA	Burnside Road	Burnside
Hazelbank Park	A2 Shore Road	Newtownabbey
Jordanstown Loughshore	A2 Shore Road	Newtownabbey
Neillsbrook MUGA	Neillsbrook Road	Randalstown
Wallace Park	Lylehill Road	Templepatrick
Toome MUGA	Railway Road	Toome

## Allotments

7.11 Allotment gardening provides opportunities for members of the public and communities within the Borough to grow their own produce, while supporting health, sustainability and social inclusion. They also provide an opportunity for residents to enjoy green spaces away from the pressures of modern urban living. As indicated in Table 6 there are a number of allotments at the following locations in the Borough. Although significant work has taken place to address demand, there remains a significant number of people on waiting lists for

allotment plots across the Borough. As of 2018, there were 85 people on the waiting list for allotment provision.

**Table 6: Allotments**

Name	Location		Management	Number of plots
Greystone Allotments	Ballycraig Road	Antrim	Council Managed	69
New Mossley Allotments	Ballyearl Rise	Glengormley	Council Managed	90
Ballyearl Allotments	Doagh Road	Newtownabbey	Council Managed	29
Sentry Hill Allotments	Ballycraig Road	Newtownabbey	Council Managed	58
Rathfern Allotments	Knockenagh Avenue	Newtownabbey	Council Managed	28
Toome Allotments	Bann Crescent	Toome	Community Managed	40

## Cemeteries

7.12 It is important to recognise the contribution that cemeteries can make to the urban and rural open space provision. These sites are havens for biodiversity often containing mature trees and grassland areas relatively untouched by people supported by a diverse variety of wildlife. Table 7 shows the location of those cemeteries which the Council either owns and operates or maintains. Further cemeteries are located throughout the Borough, generally associated and adjacent to churches.

**Table 7: Cemeteries**

Name	Location	
Antrim Cemetery	Moylena Road	Antrim
Belmont Cemetery	Belmont Road	Antrim
Milltown Cemetery	Milltown Road	Antrim
Antrim Non- Subscribing Presbyterian Church	Castle Way	Antrim
Sixmile Cemetery (Extension To Belmont Cemetery)	Belmont road	Antrim
Muckamore Cemetery	Oldstone Road	Antrim
Ballyclare Cemetery	Doagh Road	Ballyclare
Rashee Cemetery (New)	Springvale Rd	Ballyclare
Rashee Cemetery (Old)	Lower Rashee Road	Ballyclare
Ballynure Cemetery	Church Road	Ballynure
Kilbride Cemetery	Moyra Road	Burnside
Crumlin Cemetery	Crumlin Road	Crumlin
Doagh Cemetery Station Road Doagh	Station Road	Doagh
Mallusk Cemetery	Park Road	Mallusk
Carnmoney East Cemetery	Prince Charles Way	Newtownabbey

Carnmoney Main Cemetery	Prince Charles Way	Newtownabbey
Carnmoney Church Yard Cemetery	Church Road	Newtownabbey
Carmavy Cemetery	Carmavy Road	Killead
Cranfield Cemetery	Cranfield Road	Randalstown
Drummaul Cemetery	Caddy Road	Randalstown
Umgall Cemetery	Umgall Road	Templepatrick
Upton Castle Graveyard	Antrim Road	Templepatrick

### **Community Greenways**

- 7.13 Community Greenways are corridors within the urban fabric that often link parks and natural areas together to create urban open spaces. The showpiece 'Newtownabbey Way' provides an excellent example of such green infrastructure within the Council area.
- 7.14 There are currently 3 Community Greenways within the Borough, formally designated through BMAP (2014 version) and are shown in Appendix 2. Further information on them can be access via the Community Greenway Clarification Booklet<sup>3</sup>.
- 7.15 The 3 Community Greenways are identified as:
- Monkstown (Cashel Drive) to Cavehill (Belfast Zoo);
  - Loughshore Park (Jordanstown) to Belfast (Dargan Crescent); and
  - Valley Park (O'Neill Road) to Carrickfergus Escarpment (Carntall Road)
- 7.16 The recently published 'Exercise, Explore, Enjoy – A Strategic Plan for Greenways' identifies the Department's ambition for the creation of a 1,000km network of Community Greenways in Northern Ireland. A number of these potential routes traverse the Borough.
- 7.17 At present the feasibility of creating, a new greenway from Doagh to Larne to offer opportunities for cycling and walking is being considered by the Council. Any outcome of this process and any further development of greenway infrastructure elsewhere in the Borough is expected to be reflected in the Local Policies Plan.

### **Walking and Cycling**

- 7.18 Walking and cycling within the Borough can be facilitated along formal designated routes, such as community greenways or where other more informal opportunities present themselves.
- 7.19 In addition to the community greenways, BMAP (2004 and 2014 versions) designates a number of Belfast Hills Access Points, included to encourage formal access into the countryside at Cavehill and Carnmoney Hill. These are located at:

<sup>3</sup> [Community Greenway Clarification Booklet](#)

- Collinbridge Drive (Cavehill);
- Carnmoney Cemetery (Carnmoney Hill);
- O'Neill Road (Carnmoney Hill);
- Knockenagh Avenue (Carnmoney Hill);
- Fernlea Lane (Carnmoney Hill);
- The Brackens (Carnmoney Hill); and
- Rockview Lane (Carnmoney Hill)

7.20 Alongside the six access points onto Carnmoney Hill, there are three coloured walking routes. More information on these routes including maps, advice on electronic orienteering and accessing Carnmoney Hill is on the Woodland Trust website<sup>4</sup>.

- **Red Walking Route** – a gentle 15-minute nature walk around the foot of the hill. This 800-metre pathway takes you through a recently transformed area just off Knockenagh Avenue, with a pond and landscaped grassland.
- **Blue Walking Route** – a two-hour hilltop walk with panoramic views of the city, Belfast Lough and North Down.
- **Yellow Walking Route** – a lower woodland walk. This 45-minute walk takes you through ancient woodland to a viewpoint overlooking Belfast Lough.

7.21 With specific regard to walking, there are several Highway to Health Schemes located within the Borough, as follows:

- Highway to Health, Antrim Loughshore
- Highway to Health, Randalstown
- Highway to Health, Rathcoole Walk A/B/C
- Highway to Health, Six Mile Water- Antrim/Muckamore
- Highway to Health, Six Mile Water River Park – Ballyclare
- Highway to Health, Threemilewater
- Highway to Health, Toomebridge
- Highway to Health, Valley Park
- Highway to Health, Whiteabbey Hospital

7.22 Highway to Health schemes are simple and innovative schemes that aim to encourage people of all ages to walk for leisure and good health. Along each of the dedicated routes, there are pole signs at one-kilometre intervals. More

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<sup>4</sup> [Woodland Trust Website](#)

information on these routes, including their locations & maps are accessible on WalkNI website<sup>5</sup>.

- 7.23 A section of the Ulster Way also runs through the Borough from Ballynure to Belfast. The Ulster Way is no longer a continuous walking route and walkers are encouraged to use public transport along the busiest sections. The Newtownabbey Way and Loughshore Park to the Belfast Docks section provides a traffic free environment enjoyed by walkers.
- 7.24 With specific regard to cycling, the National Cycle Network (NCN) routes 93, 94 and 96 traverse the Borough. The NCN is a series of safe, traffic-free paths and quiet on-road cycling and walking routes, which form a transportation link between most towns and cities. The NCN routes are in detail in Evidence Paper 10 - Transportation.
- 7.25 Further Information on walking and cycling can be found on the following websites:
- [Walk NI](#)
  - [Sustrans](#)
  - [Outdoor NI](#)

### Woodlands and Trails

- 7.26 While lacking formal designation through the existing area plans, there are a number of other routes, woodlands and heritage trails within the Borough, adding to the range of walking and cycling opportunities as shown in Table 8.

**Table 8: Woodlands and Trails**

Name	Location
Antrim Castle Gardens	Antrim
Rea's Wood	Antrim
Burnside Riverside Walk	Burnside
Crumlin Glen	Crumlin
Carnmoney Hill	Newtownabbey
Glas-na-Bradán Glen	Newtownabbey
Gideon's Green	Newtownabbey
Hazelbank Park	Newtownabbey
Newtownabbey way	Newtownabbey
New Mossley Woodland Walk	Newtownabbey
Monkstown Wood	Newtownabbey
Randalstown Viaduct Randalstown	Randalstown
Randalstown Forest	Randalstown
Tardree Forest	Parkgate

<sup>5</sup> [WalkNI Website](#)

### **Public Rights of Way**

- 7.27 Public Rights of Way (PRoW) are important countryside facilities for encouraging and promoting various forms of sport and physical recreation e.g. walking, cycling and horse riding. In Great Britain, there have been significant developments and improvements to PRoW since the enactment of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and consequently the PRoW networks is much more extensive.
- 7.28 There are 14 Public Rights of Way in the Borough, located predominately in the settlements of Antrim and Metropolitan Newtownabbey, with a total length of 7.15km. This is reflective of the small contribution that PRoW as a whole contributes to recreation and open space in Northern Ireland.

## **8 Sports Facilities**

- 8.1 The Council of Europe's European Sports Charter defines sport as;  
*'All forms of physical activity which, through casual or organised participation, aims at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships, or obtaining results in competition at all levels'.*
- 8.2 There is wide recognition of the contribution that sport makes to a sense of local and national identity, to personal, moral and physical development, and individual enjoyment. Additionally, recognition needs to be given to the wider socio-economic and health benefits of sport and recreation including job creation, physical fitness and cross-community relationship building.
- 8.3 A list of all sports clubs and teams within the Borough can be access via the Council's website by following the link,  
[\(https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/residents/community-information/sports-clubs-teams/\)](https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/residents/community-information/sports-clubs-teams/)

### **Pitch Provision**

- 8.4 Fields in Trust (FiT) is the new operating name of the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA), which was first established in 1925. In line with the SPPS, outdoor playing space in the Borough was assessed against the former National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) Six Acre Standard (SAS). This is a minimum standard for outdoor recreational space of 6 acres or 2.4 hectares per 1000 population. The SAS is broken down into the following components;
- 1.6 hectares of outdoor sports, of which 1.2hectares should be pitches; and
  - 0.8 hectares for children's play, of which 0.2-0.3 hectares should be for equipped play areas.

- 8.5 Fields in Trust (FiT) have produced new guidance entitled – '[Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play – beyond the Six Acre Standard](#),' which recommends the following benchmark guidelines for formal outdoor space:

**Table 9: Recommended benchmark guidelines – formal outdoor space**

Open space typology	QUANTITY GUIDELINE <sup>1</sup> (hectares per 1,000 population)	WALKING GUIDELINE (walking distance: metres from dwellings)	QUALITY GUIDELINE
Playing pitches	1.20	1,200m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Quality appropriate to the intended level of performance, designed to appropriate technical standards.</li> <li>* Located where they are of most value to the community to be served.</li> <li>* Sufficiently diverse recreational use for the whole community.</li> <li>* Appropriately landscaped.</li> <li>* Maintained safely and to the highest possible condition with available finance.</li> <li>* Positively managed taking account of the need for repair and replacement over time as necessary.</li> <li>* Provision of appropriate ancillary facilities and equipment.</li> <li>* Provision of footpaths.</li> <li>* Designed so as to be free of the fear of harm or crime.</li> <li>* Local authorities can set their own quality benchmark standards for playing pitches, taking into account the level of play, topography, necessary safety margins and optimal orientation<sup>2</sup>.</li> <li>* Local authorities can set their own quality benchmark standards for play areas using the <a href="#">Children's Play Council's Quality Assessment Tool</a>.</li> </ul>
All outdoor sports	1.60	1,200m	
Equipped/designated play areas	0.25 See <a href="#">table 4</a> for recommended minimum sizes	LAPs – 100m LEAPs – 400m NEAPs – 1,000m	
Other outdoor provision (MUGAs and skateboard parks)	0.30	700m	

Source: "[Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play – beyond the Six Acre Standard](#)."

- 8.6 Fields in Trust (FiT) also provides guidance on the recommended benchmarks for informal outdoor space:

**Table 10: Recommended benchmark guidelines – Informal outdoor space**

Open Space Typology	QUANTITY GUIDELINE <sup>3</sup> (hectares per 1,000 population)	WALKING GUIDELINE (walking distance: metres from dwellings)	QUALITY GUIDELINE
Parks and Gardens	0.80	710m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Parks to be of Green Flag status.</li> <li>* Appropriately landscaped.</li> <li>* Positive management.</li> <li>* Provision of footpaths.</li> <li>* Designed so as to be free of the fear of harm or crime.</li> </ul>
Amenity Green Space	0.60	480m	
Natural and Semi-Natural	1.80	720m	

Source: "[Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play – beyond the Six Acre Standard](#)."

- 8.7 The Sport NI Active Places Bridging the Gap 2016 update, has audited sports pitch provision in the Borough. Concerning synthetic pitches, the review indicated that the Borough has no shortfall. However, concerning grass pitches, the Borough in 2014 had a shortfall of 121.16 acres of grass pitches, which equated to 48 pitches. No additional grass pitches have been developed since then, however, investment in 3G hubs across the Borough at Crumlin, Valley Park and Allen Park has helped to address the identified shortfall, which is now 15.8 pitches.
- 8.8 Information derived from Active NI directory and Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service (NINIS) indicated in 2016, that there were 65 pitches in the Borough as illustrated in Table 11.

**Table 11: Pitch Directory**

Name	Ownership	Grass Pitch	Synthetic 3G Pitch	Sand Pitches
Academy Sports Club	District Council	✘		
Allen Park	District Council	✘	✘	
Antrim Forum	District Council	✘		✘
Antrim Grammar School	Education	✘		
Antrim Primary School	Education	✘		
Antrim Rugby and Ladies Hockey Club	Club	✘		
Ashgrove Primary School	Education	✘		
Ballyclare High School	Education	✘		
Ballyclare Nursery School	Education	✘		
Ballyclare Primary School	Education	✘		
Ballyclare Rugby Club	Club	✘		
Ballyclare Secondary School	Education	✘		
Ballycraig Primary School	Education	✘		
Belfast High School	Education	✘		
Carnmoney Primary School	Education	✘		
Crumlin Integrated College	Education	✘		
Crumlin Primary School	Education	✘		
Crumlin United FC	Club	✘	✘	
Crumlin Leisure Centre	District Council	✘	✘	
Dixon Park Ballyclare	District Council	✘		
Doagh Primary School	Education	✘		
Earlview Primary School	Education	✘		
Edmund Rice College	Education	✘		
Erins Own GAC Cargin	Club	✘	✘	
Foundry Lane	District Council	✘	✘	
Glengormley High School	Education	✘		
Glengormley Primary School	Education	✘		
Greystone Primary School	Education	✘		
Groggan Primary School	Education	✘		
Kickhams Creggan GAC	Club	✘		
Kilbride Primary School	Education	✘		
Kings Park Primary School Newtownabbey	Education	✘		
Loanends Primary School	Education	✘		
Mallusk Primary School	Education	✘		
Monkstown Football Pitch	Club	✘		
Muckamore Abbey Hospital	Other	✘		
Neilsbrook Community Centre	District Council	✘	✘	
Nortel ASC	Club	✘		

Ophir RFC	Club	✘		
Parkhall Primary School	Education	✘		
Parkview Hockey Club	Club	✘	✘	
Randalstown Rugby and Hockey Club	Club	✘		
Round Tower Integrated Primary School	Education	✘		
Sixmile Leisure Centre	District Council	✘		
St Benedict's College	Education	✘		
St Comgalls GAC	Club	✘		
St Endas GAC Glengormley	Club	✘		
St Ergnats GAC	Club	✘		
St James's GFC	Club	✘		
St Joseph's Primary School Antrim	Education	✘		
St Macnisius Primary School	Education	✘		
St Macnissis Primary School Newtownabbey	Education	✘		
Straidhavern Primary School	Education	✘		
Templepatrick Primary School	Education	✘		
The Diamond	District Council	✘		
The Soccer Shed	Private		✘	
Thompson Primary School Ballyclare	Education	✘		
Threemilewater Playing Facilities	District Council	✘	✘	
Tir Na nOg	Club	✘		
Tir-Na-Nog Primary School	Education	✘		
University of Ulster Sports Centre	Education	✘		
Valley Leisure Centre	District Council	✘	✘	
Valley Playing Fields	District Council	✘		✘

Source: <https://www.opendatani.gov.uk/dataset/active-places-ni-sports-facilities-database/resource/1b4b7dbe-f71b-419f-a6c6-a70805ab946d>

## 9 Outdoor Recreation Facilities

### Water based activities

- 9.1 The geographic location of the Borough, results in an ease of access to three significant bodies of water in terms of Lough Neagh, Lough Beg and Belfast Lough. Of the Councils that directly border Lough Neagh (Mid and East Antrim, Lisburn and Castlereagh, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon and Mid Ulster Council), Antrim and Newtownabbey has the highest number of wards bordering the Lough. In addition, access is also available to Lough Beg.
- 9.2 The Heritage Lottery Fund has recently made a grant of £2.49m to aid the management and conservation of the cultural, natural and built heritage of the Lough. To this end, the Lough Neagh Partnership has been set up for a 5-year period, to deliver 27 projects around the lough shore area, which will use natural and cultural heritage aspects of the Lough to bring the benefits of

regeneration to its communities. It is anticipated that recreation opportunities will be enhanced through these projects.

### **Fishing**

9.3 There are four main fishing rivers within the Borough providing coarse, game and trout fishing, namely the, Six Mile Water River, River Maine, Crumlin River and the Lower River Bann (Toome). The Borough also has a short coastline on Belfast Lough, which offers its own opportunities for sea fishing. In addition there are also a number of fisheries located at:

- Craigmore Fishery, Randalstown
- Creeve Trout Fishery, Randalstown
- Mossley Mill Dam, Newtownabbey
- Potterswall Dam, Antrim
- Straid Fishery, Ballyclare
- Tildarg Fishery, Ballyclare
- Toome Canal (only DAERA Public Angling Estate Fishery), Toome
- V36 Course Fishery, Newtownabbey

### **Golf**

9.4 The Borough is home to 8 golfing facilities, including driving ranges and courses. Golf courses are important not just from a recreation perspective but also provide substantial ecological and environmental benefits. Golfing facilities in the Borough include:

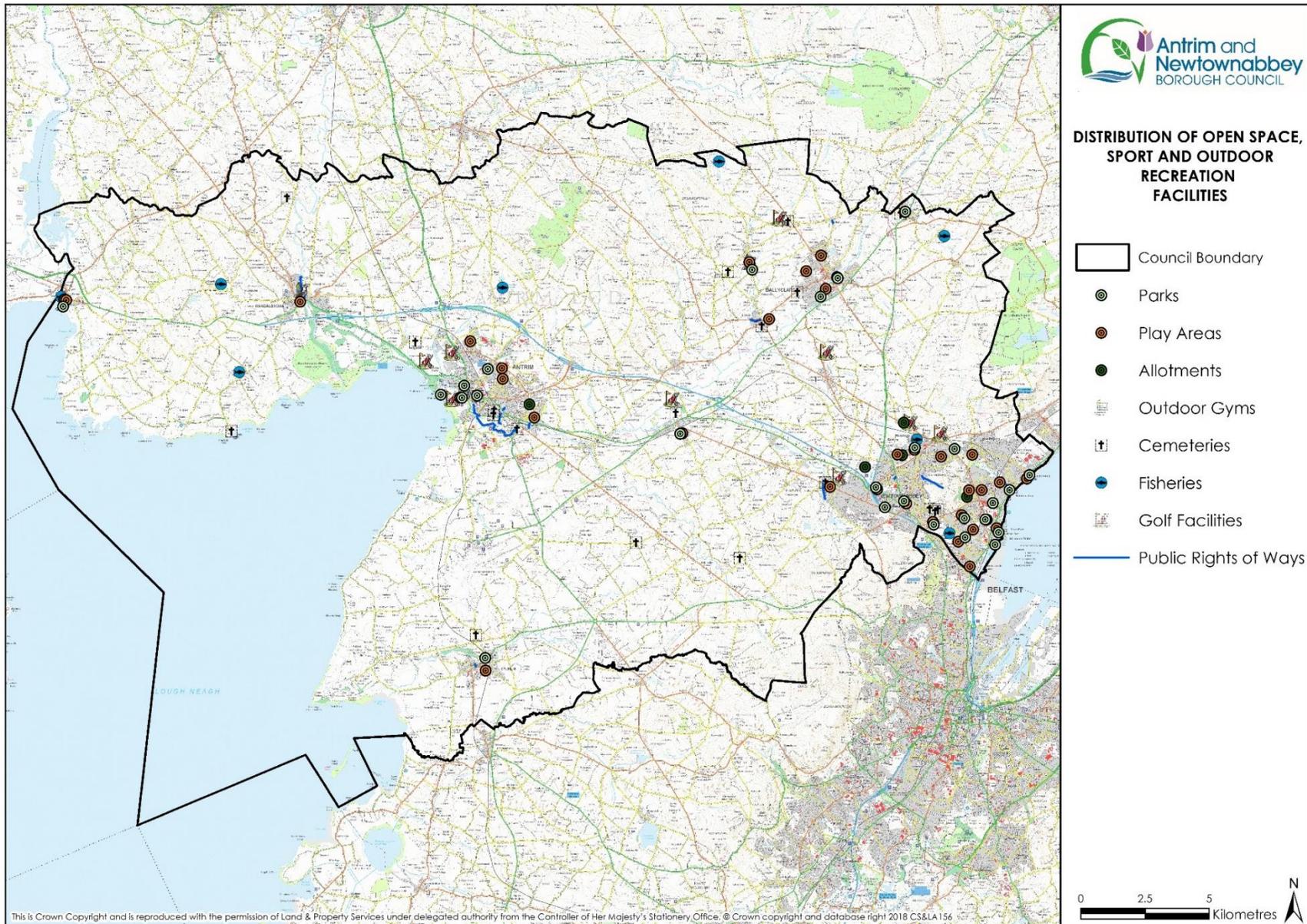
- Allen Park Golf Centre, Antrim
- Ballyearl Golf Course & Driving Range, Newtownabbey
- Ballyclare Golf Club, Ballyclare
- Burnfield House Golf Course Including Foot Golf, Newtownabbey
- City of Belfast Golf Course and Mallusk Golf Club, Newtownabbey
- Greenacres Golf Centre, Ballyrobert
- Hilton Templepatrick Golf Club, Templepatrick
- Massereene Golf Club, Antrim

## 10 Key Findings

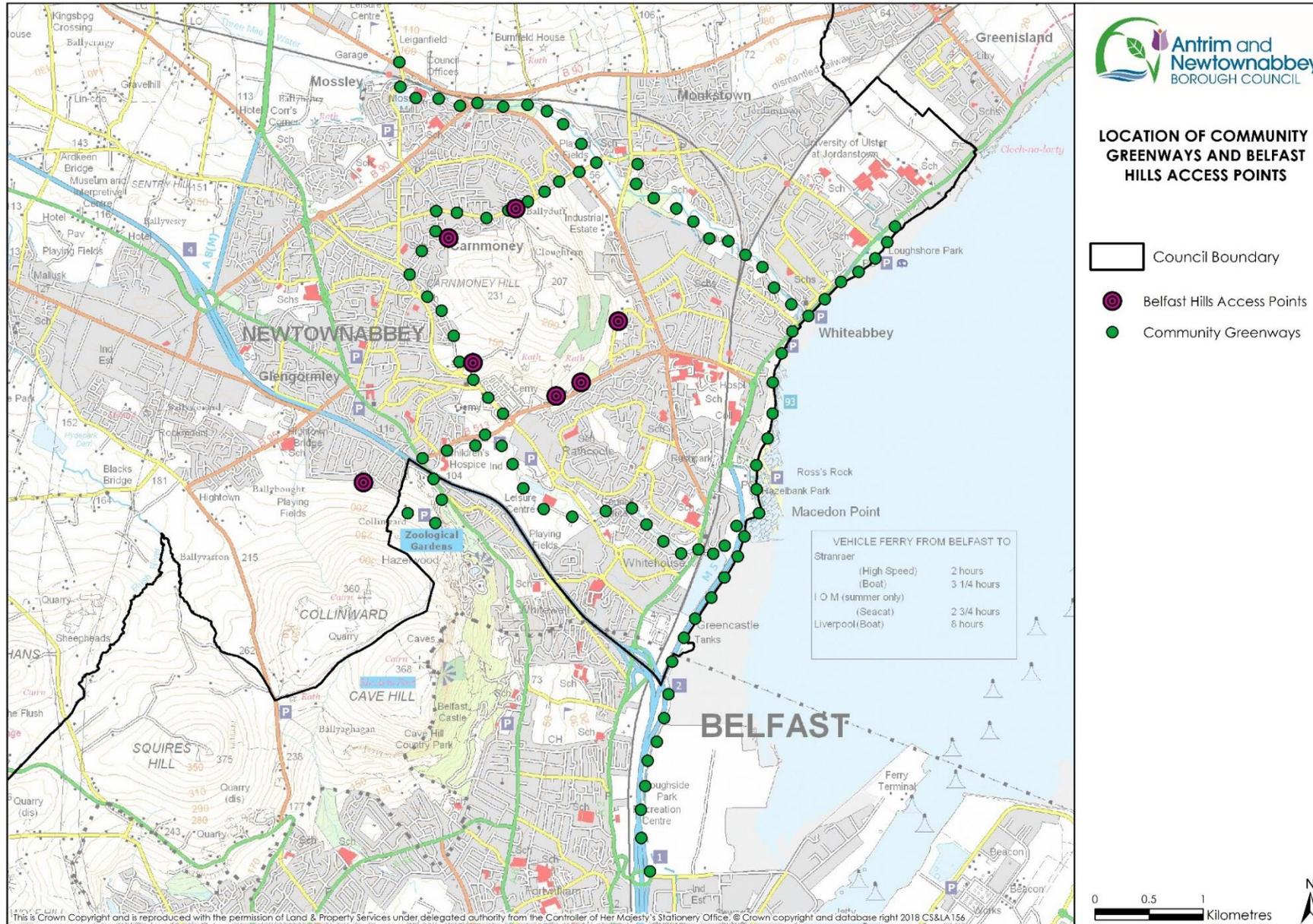
- There are a wide range of open space, sports and recreation facilities in the Borough.
- There is a significant number of quality public parks in the Borough.
- Carnmoney Hill is a unique and important recreation asset, with the potential for further enhancement.
- There are also a number of play parks, outdoor gyms, allotments, and walking and cycling routes in the Borough.
- The Council has made significant recent investment in synthetic sports pitches in a number of locations.
- The majority of play parks are provided in towns and villages.
- There are significant opportunities for cycling and walking in the Borough.
- The Newtownabbey Way runs through the Three Mile Water valley and forms a greenway connecting Corr's Corner to Belfast Lough at Whiteabbey.
- A new greenway is being considered between Doagh and Larne.
- Public Rights of Way make a very small contribution to the open space and recreation provision.

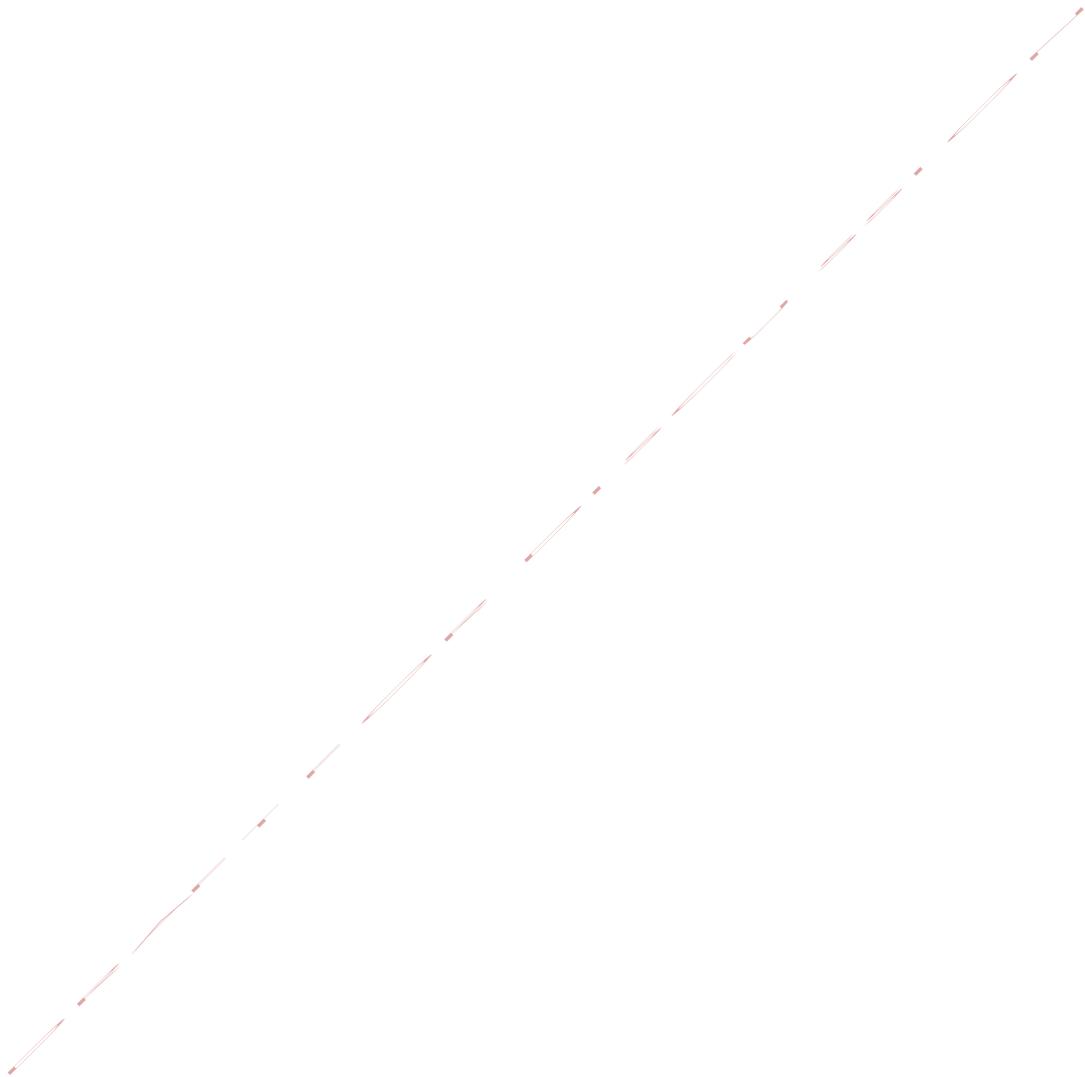
# Appendices

### Appendix 1 – Distribution of Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation



### Appendix 2 – Community Greenways and Belfast Hills Access Points







**Antrim and  
Newtownabbey**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Mossley Mill  
Carnmoney Road North,  
Newtownabbey  
BT36 5QA

Antrim Antrim Civic Centre  
50 Stiles Way,  
Antrim,  
BT41 2UB

[www.antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk](http://www.antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk)