

PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST

The Mid and East Antrim Community Plan

Councillor Audrey Wales MBE:

Mayor of Mid and East Antrim Borough and

Chair of the Community Planning Partnership Strategic Alliance

What issues matter most to you and your family?

For many of us, good health and wellbeing, strong employment prospects, access to education opportunities, feeling safe in our surroundings and the protection of the natural environment are hugely important to our lives.

We all want to live within a strong, vibrant, safe and inclusive community in which people work together to improve the quality of life for all.

Putting People First – a plan for the community, by the community – sets out how this can be achieved.

It is a blueprint for improving the lives of all of those who live, work, visit and invest in Mid and East Antrim.

We know our Borough is already a brilliant place. It was recently named the happiest area in Northern Ireland, and we have a lot to be proud of.

But we are all also aware that we can make it even better by tackling a number of serious and significant issues we face.

Putting People First is exactly what the Community Planning Partnership has been doing since the group's inception two years ago and is fully committed to continuing over the next 15 years.

The Community Plan, published last month, safeguards and promotes Mid and East Antrim's reputation as a proud, dynamic and ambitious place.

It does not repeat what has already been done. Instead, it is a fresh, innovative approach to achieving long-term objectives for improving the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of our area.

It sets us on a challenging yet hugely exciting journey.

A draft plan, led by Council and covering the period from **2017 to 2032**, was developed in partnership with a wide range of local people and organisations.

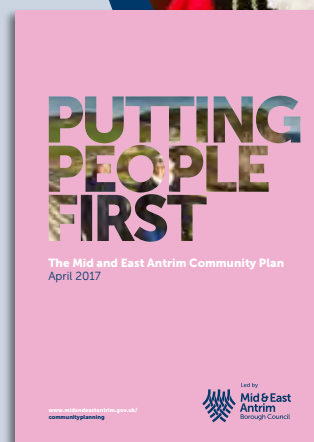
The document was the result of 18 months of meetings, workshops and consultations.

It brought together the public, private and voluntary sectors within Mid and East Antrim to shape a strategy that will greatly improve how public services are planned and delivered throughout our Borough.

We were delighted by the positive response to the draft proposals during an eight-week consultation period earlier this year.

Residents right across the new Borough set out their vision for a vibrant and dynamic Mid and East Antrim and helped to shape the final plan.

They told us what issues they wanted included in the map for our Borough's future and shared their concerns, desires and aspirations for their area.



Their input was key to the creation of a plan that has five priority themes at its core – **Sustainable Jobs and Tourism, Good Health and Wellbeing, Progress in Education, Community Safety and Cohesion, and Our Environment.**

Over the coming weeks, we will put each theme under the microscope in the Ballymena Guardian, setting out the improvements you told us you want to see and how we plan to achieve them.

The successful delivery of the aims and objectives within Putting People First depends on everybody working together to tackle issues that affect us all.

By coming together, we can realise the vision set out by the people of Mid and East Antrim and deliver the ambitious programme of change.

Success will be measured through regular meetings and other opportunities to review progress.

Your input remains vital as we move forward and work together to deliver on the promises set out in Putting People First.

The future of your Borough is in your hands.

Sustainable Jobs and Tourism

The first Community Plan has been published after residents set out their shared vision for Mid and East Antrim. Your input was key to the creation of a plan that has five priority themes at its core – Sustainable Jobs and Tourism, Good Health and Wellbeing, Progress in Education, Community Safety and Cohesion, and Our Environment. Over the coming weeks, we are putting each theme under the microscope in the Ballymena Guardian.

This week we highlight the plan to deliver sustainable jobs and develop our tourism potential.

The message is clear: Mid and East Antrim is open for business.

Our area has experienced significant challenges in recent years. The objectives laid out in the Putting People First Community Plan are designed to meet these head on and ensure we have a highly skilled and well-qualified workforce.

This will underpin Mid and East Antrim's position as a highly attractive investment location for businesses and an area offering much sought-after high value jobs.

By 2032 we will have created further employment opportunities, retained our own talent and the Borough will be widely regarded as an ideal place to live, work and invest in.

Traditionally, Mid and East Antrim has a strong reputation as a manufacturing heartland in Northern Ireland. However, the Borough has experienced recent economic shocks with the pending closures of some of our major manufacturing employers, with up to 2,000 projected job losses.

The challenge is how we respond to and ultimately overcome these economic shocks.

Rather than be daunted by the challenges posed, we have chosen to embrace change and strive to ensure Mid and East Antrim is ideally positioned to

adapt to and thrive in an ever-changing economy.

It is imperative local people are given the opportunities and support networks to learn new skills so they are ideally positioned to capitalise on economic opportunities.

We have committed to creating a vibrant business culture and building on our strengths in advanced manufacturing and agri-food, whilst supporting the growth of new industry sectors, including digital, tourism, financial and business services.

Town centre regeneration, job creation, tourism and marketing and strong support for the creation of an enterprise and entrepreneurial culture were among the issues most commonly highlighted by residents during the consultation on your Community Plan earlier this year.

The plan also details a number of exciting strategic infrastructure projects which are vital within this theme and are currently ongoing or under consideration.

These include the redevelopment of the St Patrick's Barracks site in Ballymena, the creation of an Advanced Manufacturing Centre of Excellence, the improvement of infrastructure across the Borough (including roads, energy and broadband development), and masterplans for key tourism and regeneration projects.

We will judge success using a range of indicators, including the number of businesses registered in Mid and East Antrim, business survival rate, turnovers, average weekly wage and the percentage of 16 to 64 year olds in employment, to name a few.

Capitalising on our tourism potential

Mid and East Antrim is rich in locations of historical interest and significance.

From castles at Carrickfergus, Galgorm and Glenarm, the walled town of Carrickfergus and the Moravian settlement at Gracehill to the majestic Chaine Tower, Larne's Town Hall and many significant churches,

buildings and other landmarks. The area also boasts strong American and Ulster-Scots connections, featuring the ancestral home of two United States presidents and the port of Larne, once a departure point for many Ulster-Scots emigrants, embarking on a new life in America.

However, one of the features which sets Mid and East Antrim apart is the diversity of our natural environment. Blessed with a huge variety of natural resources, the area spans the wild and rugged beauty of the Antrim coastline, along with Slemish mountain and many areas of parks and open countryside for everyone to enjoy.

The harnessing of our huge tourism potential is key to our 15-year plan.

The Causeway Coastal Route, coupled with our Borough's stunning natural beauty and rich heritage, offers enormous scope for development. Festivals and events will also become a feature as we bid to attract more visitors and encourage them to stay longer and spend more once they are here.

The Plan recognises the area's huge potential and identifies the importance of working to ensure our significant assets — such as The Gobbins and The Braid — are developed, packaged and marketed in a way so as to draw both international visitors and those closer to home.

Success will be measured by the number of overnight trips, the average expenditure of visitors, the number of tourists to our attractions and the reasons for visits to Mid and East Antrim.

Next week we look at the Good Health and Wellbeing section of Putting People First.

More information on Putting People First is available online at: **www.midandeastantrim.gov.uk/communityplanning**



How are we going to do it?

The extensive blueprint details plans for:

- ✿ The establishment of the Mid and East Antrim Leaders' Programme to develop capacity and economic leadership skills.
- ✿ A Local Business and Skills Barometer, including smart specialisation plan, to produce a local data set to aid the understanding of businesses and skills in the Borough.
- ✿ The Mid and East Antrim Client Managers and Business Escalator programme, working with growth pipeline companies offering a tailored programme of support for growth businesses, and establishing a new rapid redundancy response structure to deal with any future shocks.
- ✿ Enterprise and Innovation Promotion Programme to encourage a stronger culture of enterprise, entrepreneurship and innovation.
- ✿ Urban and rural regeneration to help revitalise our main town centres and rural economies and development of an evening economy.
- ✿ Integrated Property Programme to review current business space in the Borough and creation of new facilities for start-ups and grow on space.
- ✿ Broadband Benefits Realisation Programme.
- ✿ Implementation of the Tourism Strategy.



Good Health and Wellbeing

Led by



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Antrim**
Borough Council

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Each week we are putting a different theme under the microscope in the Ballymena Guardian.

This week we highlight the plan to deliver Good Health and Wellbeing.

We know Mid and East Antrim is already a brilliant place to live, work, study, visit and invest in.

It was recently named the happiest area in Northern Ireland and one of the highest performing places in the UK for residents' happiness. We have a lot to be proud of.

But we are all also aware that we can make it even better by tackling a number of serious and significant issues we face.

The health and wellbeing of our citizens is vitally important to all of us involved in the Putting People First Community Plan.

It aims to improve the way public services are planned and delivered across the Borough.

Throughout the 15-year lifespan of the Plan, the Community Planning Partnership will focus on five strategic priorities identified as key to improving physical and mental health in Mid and East Antrim.

They include prevention and early intervention, health and work, healthy places and lifestyles, deprivation and health, and responding to an ageing society.

We want all residents to enjoy long, healthy and active lives in a Borough which offers high quality public services and health equality for all.

Mid and East Antrim will be a place where we can give our children and young people the best start in life and a Borough which prides itself on its care for others and readiness to help those in need.

We have committed to adopting a deeper focus on the prevention of ill health, rather than the downstream treatment.

This is vital as there are higher than average rates of death from preventable causes in the Borough.

In 2014, the three main causes of deaths in our area were cancer, circulatory conditions and respiratory diseases, which accounted for 70% of all deaths.

The most commonly recorded medical conditions are high blood pressure, obesity, diabetes and asthma.

With early intervention, deaths from specific diseases could be prevented.

The Community Planning Partnership is also committed to ensuring those working in Mid and East Antrim experience positive health and wellbeing as a result of gainful and decent employment.

This can be a particular problem for the more deprived areas in the Borough.

Our most deprived areas have much higher than average hospital admission rates for alcohol and drug problems, as well as self-harm.

The Plan commits us to working even harder to ensure that residents' lifestyles contribute to healthy and happy lives and that their living environment supports this.

Mid and East Antrim must also be well equipped to respond to the demands of an ageing population.

Ageing poses a range of significant challenges in terms of a rise in dementia including Alzheimer's, increasing demand for residential and homecare services, and how we support older people to live well at home

and within their community.

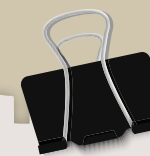
There are challenges around people's access to services, particularly those who live in rural areas, with the continuing restructuring of public services.

There was significant public support for the improvement of health and wellbeing, particularly the importance of a multi-agency approach to addressing underlying causes of suicide.

A scheme to boost emotional wellbeing was included within the final Plan, at the request of residents, along with actions to ensure the needs of citizens with disabilities are addressed.

The ambitious Plan, led by Council and covering the period from 2017 to 2032, was developed in partnership with a wide range of local people and organisations and brought together the public, private and voluntary sectors to work alongside the community.

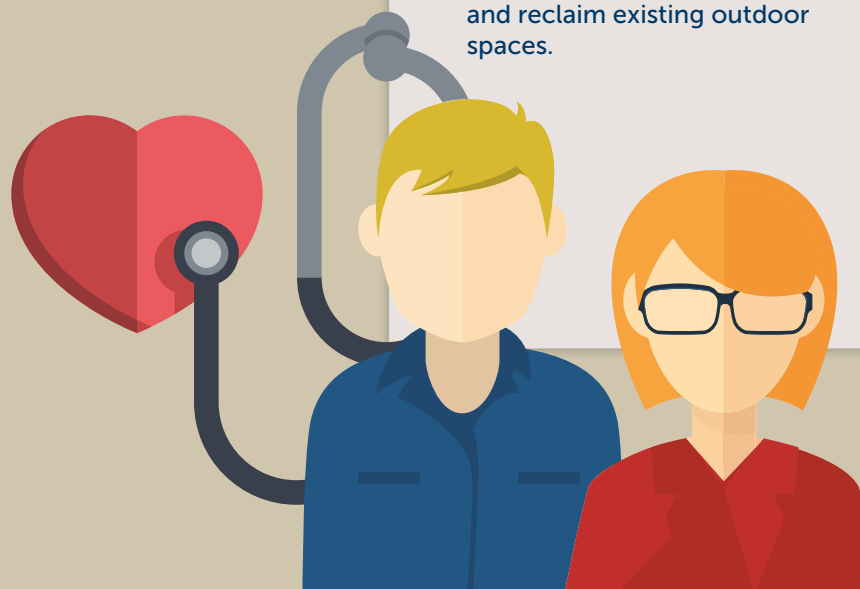
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What are we going to do?

Our vision includes:

- Develop a comprehensive Healthy Eating and Activity Strategy to tackle obesity and other prevalent issues in the Borough.
- Introduce a Healthy Places Incentive Scheme, with a focus on young people.
- Develop a Mid and East Antrim work-life balance charter in support of health and wellbeing for all employees.
- Launch a Healthy Work for Healthy People initiative, including mind and body; a programme for educating employers around vulnerable people and civic responsibility.
- Work with partners to address the underlying causes of suicide by developing or promoting a programme or programmes to improve emotional wellbeing and resilience.
- Ensure the needs of citizens with disabilities are addressed.
- Create greenways and pathways between areas and reclaim existing outdoor spaces.



Progress in Education

Led by



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This week we highlight the plan to deliver Progress in Education.

We all want to give our young people the best possible start in life.

The Putting People First Community Plan is a blueprint for how real Progress in Education can be delivered over the next 15 years.

It is our vision that families throughout Mid and East Antrim are engaged, empowered and supported in the education of their children. The plan aims to ensure that there are no barriers to our citizens achieving their potential and realising goals.

By delivering the skills for future economic development, we will have a skilled workforce able to adapt to the changing economy.

In 2014/15, 68% of school leavers achieved at least five GCSEs grade A*-C, slightly above the Northern Ireland average of 66%.

The percentage of our young people who achieved at least two A-levels was 57%, compared to the 58% Northern Ireland average.

By 2032 the Community Plan aims to ensure that everyone of working age has an accredited qualification and that all residents have equal access to learning opportunities, regardless of location, religion or social standing.

There are currently significant inequalities in educational attainment at a variety of levels in the Borough, which is why education was identified as one of our five key themes.

A clear link exists between deprivation and educational attainment, and geographical inequalities persist. A fifth of areas in Mid and East Antrim are ranked as being in the top 20% most deprived areas in Northern Ireland in terms of education, skills and training. There is also a retained legacy within working-class communities, with significant pockets of educational deprivation within Protestant and Catholic communities.

There are issues around the high proportion of the working age population of Mid and East Antrim who hold no qualifications and the low number of those with qualifications above Level 4 (including certificate of higher education, higher apprenticeship and higher national certificate). It is important to tackle this issue over the next 15 years by focusing on intergenerational solutions, where adults foster ambition in our young people.

There is also a challenge to have education viewed as a lifelong process which is valued throughout the community, with residents of all ages availing of the opportunities to grow and develop their understanding and skillsets.

The evidence suggests that this is currently not the case, as certain areas have high rates of unauthorised absences from school and a low take-up of places on adult education courses.

There has been, and will continue to be, a shift towards a knowledge-based economy in Northern Ireland. However, the Northern Ireland Skills Barometer indicates a mismatch between the skills needs of the economy and the current supply of skilled individuals and relevant skills within the Borough. In terms of softer skills, there is also a weakness in the work readiness and life skills of young people in the area.

Putting People First sets us on a path to ensuring we have a more equal society that gives our children and young people all the tools they need to prepare them for later life.

By combining this with the embracing of a culture of lifelong learning, Mid and East Antrim can cement a reputation as an innovative, creative place where everyone can fulfil their potential and entrepreneurship is nourished and prospers.

The ambitious Plan, led by Council and covering the period from 2017 to 2032, was developed in partnership with a wide range of local people and organisations and brought together the public, private and voluntary sectors to work alongside the community.

More information on Putting People First is available online at:

www.midandeantrim.gov.uk/communityplanning



What are we going to do?

Measures include:

- Research on best practice to deliver a five-year plan to raise aspirations of children and parents in relation to primary, post-primary and further education.
- Explore family/parenting programmes which can empower families to engage and support their children in education.
- Establish an employer/stakeholder forum, with the Chamber of Commerce or equivalent as a delivery mechanism.
- Engage with Northern Regional College and other providers to support access and extend provision of further education and vocational training.
- Develop volunteering programmes with accredited qualifications as a bridge to employment.
- Develop an outreach essential skills programme.
- Review the Northern Ireland Skills Barometer to identify skills needs and gaps in Mid and East Antrim Borough.
- Schools Area Development Planning including considerations around ensuring that children and young people have access to appropriate educational pathways, delivered through a network of sustainable schools.

Next we look at the Community Safety and Cohesion section of Putting People First.



Community Safety and Cohesion

The first Community Plan has been published after residents set out their shared vision for Mid and East Antrim.

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This week we highlight the plan to enhance Community Safety and Cohesion.

Feeling safe within our community and harbouring a sense of belonging to where we live has a huge impact on our quality of life.

Levels of crime have reduced throughout Mid and East Antrim in recent years, with numerous initiatives in place to tackle the scourge of issues such as illicit drugs, hate crime and antisocial behaviour.

The number of recorded crimes in the Borough in 2014/15 was 5,793 – a 19% decrease from 2008/09. This was the second highest reduction of all 11 council areas and compared to a decline of 5% across Northern Ireland. However, there are certain places and people who feel the impact of crime and community tensions more than others.

The Putting People First Community Plan, led by Council and developed in partnership with a wide range of local people and organisations, sets out how - using a collaborative and multi-agency approach – we can all work together to reduce crime and bolster good relations between people and communities within the Borough over the next 15 years.

The challenges identified are complex, with many underlying

issues, and will only be resolved through the combined energy and strength of all of us.

Clear links exist between levels of deprivation and crime. Some of the most deprived areas in the Borough have higher rates of recorded crime and incidents of antisocial behaviour.

Identifying hotspots of criminal activity, particularly where drugs are concerned, and developing a partnership approach to working alongside the community, police, education providers and voluntary agencies is vital to further reducing crime and developing good relations.

The Northern Ireland Executive's Action Plan on tackling paramilitary activity, criminality and organised crime commits to working closely with communities to end all forms of paramilitary activity and promote the use of peaceful and democratic means and the rule of law across all communities. The Action Plan recognises the importance of community plans in enabling partners to work together to address issues around community safety and cohesion.

There are certain groups within our community who are especially vulnerable. They include older people, young people, victims of domestic violence, people with disabilities, those with mental health issues, ethnic minorities, and those in poor housing.

A greater understanding of individual vulnerability will help in the identification and greater protection for those deemed to be more at risk.

It is also vital we seek to improve integration across generations through mutual respect and encouraging a culture of community engagement and volunteering.

The 2015 Good Relations Audit, conducted independently on behalf of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, identified a number of key issues including paramilitary flags, paramilitary

activities, lack of dialogue and respect, and territorial markings.

Putting People First sets us on a path to shaping a community in which division does not restrict the life opportunities of residents and where all areas are open and accessible to everyone.

Through its implementation we will have a safe community where we respect the law and each other, and live within a shared society that respects and cherishes diversity.

Success in all of this will ensure we give our children and young people the best possible start in life in a Borough free from the shackles of crime and prejudice.

More information on Putting People First is available online at:

www.midandeastantrim.gov.uk/communityplanning

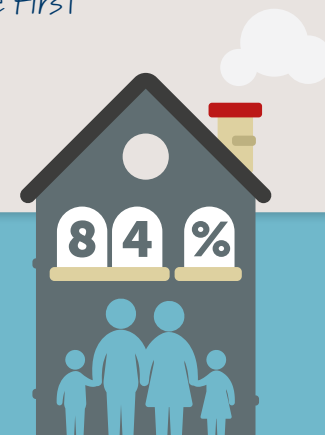


What are we going to do?

Measures include:

- Developing a dedicated cross-agency group to focus on emerging issues of vulnerability and identification of those individuals most at risk.
- Growing a cross-partner sharing of information and knowledge with a view to developing appropriate support.
- Scoping and identification of the most vulnerable places within the Borough.
- Developing a multi-agency 'rapid reaction' problem-solving team, to deal with emerging issues with regard to environmental issues and antisocial activity.
- Statutory agencies working together to design out crime in areas where it has been repeatedly reported.
- Developing projects or interventions in conjunction with regional departments and agencies to help to address concerns regarding paramilitary activity.
- Building civic pride through the celebration of success within communities.

Next week we look at the Our Environment section of Putting People First



Our Environment

The first Community Plan has been published after residents set out their shared vision for Mid and East Antrim.

Your input was key to the creation of a plan that has five priority themes at its core – Sustainable Jobs and Tourism, Good Health and Wellbeing, Progress in Education, Community Safety and Cohesion, and Our Environment.

Each week we are putting a different theme under the microscope in the Ballymena Guardian.

This week we highlight the plan to enhance and safeguard Our Environment.

Our Borough is brimming with environmental assets that can be harnessed for cultural, educational and leisure purposes. They are also key to our tourism industry and economy, and enhance the quality of life and wellbeing of all residents.

The Putting People First Community Plan puts the onus on us all to increase awareness, promote positive attitudes and take action for a clean, protected and vibrant environment.

By 2032 we want to ensure our environment is protected and enhanced through partner agencies collectively working closely with local communities. We want all of our citizens to have access to good quality green space within walking distance. And we want to achieve more environmental standards including green flags for parks and open spaces and blue flags for beaches and marinas.

The Borough's natural environment and built heritage must also be safeguarded and sustainably managed, with residents and visitors behaving responsibly towards both.

The area boasts sections of the Antrim Coast and Glens Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

With nature reserves, including Straidkilly and Cranny Falls, as well as the prolific birdlife to be found at the Gobbins sea cliffs, we are richly endowed with areas of real environmental significance. Civic parks, such as Carnfunnock Country Park, and several areas of woodland and other open spaces all require special attention so that we can sensitively manage and use these assets to their full potential.

A recent survey showed almost three-quarters of residents in Mid and East Antrim access the natural environment at least once a week. This was the third highest across the 11 councils, behind only Antrim and Newtownabbey, and Ards and North Down.

Most of our natural environment is of excellent quality. However, some species are under threat, terrestrial and marine habitats are being damaged and we continue to generate and dispose of a high volume of waste.

In recent years, we have improved our recycling rates but we still send far too much waste to landfill sites. In 2015/16, 45% of our collected waste in the Borough was prepared for reuse, dry recycling or composting compared to 42% across Northern Ireland. A current campaign urging residents to use their brown bins and caddies for food waste has been hugely successful, but our consumption and waste disposal represents a major challenge.

The natural world sustains us and provides us with life essentials; the air we breathe, the food we eat and the water we drink. A well-managed environment can reduce flood risk, process pollutants and provide enjoyment, inspiration and solace. However, decisions about managing our environment often fail to take account of nature's ability to provide these ecosystem services.

Most of our land has more than one use. We grow food on it, build houses and roads, and much of our water filters through it. Intensive use of the land through the generations has resulted in

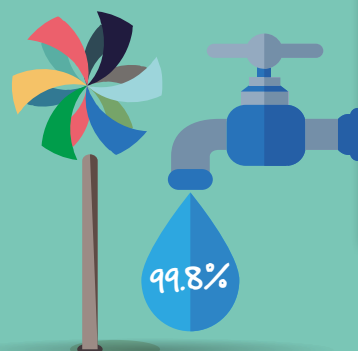
degraded soils, loss of beneficial wetlands and disappearing biodiversity.

There is a challenge for us all to reduce our carbon footprint so as to limit climate change, as well as the need to adapt to its likely consequences.

The natural environment can enhance our quality of life, nurture human health and wellbeing and underpin a growing visitor economy. By managing the environment properly, fostering community involvement and encouraging access, we will protect and enhance a Borough we can be proud of for generations to come.

More information on Putting People First is available online at:

www.midandeastantrim.gov.uk/communityplanning



Led by



**Mid & East
Antrim**
Borough Council



What are we going to do?

Measures include:

- Run a campaign to encourage environmentally responsible behaviour.
- Develop and launch an Environmental Champions programme.
- Deliver education programmes to raise awareness and promote the wider benefits of nature for health and wellbeing.
- Start car clubs as an alternative to car ownership.
- Expand community transport operations.
- Explore potential for development of additional cycle infrastructure.
- Create safe walking routes to schools and colleges.
- Connect existing walking and cycling routes to encourage less dependency on cars.
- Explore options for a coastal access path.
- Promote 'Highway to Health' to publicise the facilities we have access to.
- Transfer public land to communities.
- Develop an environmentally sustainable tourism strategy.
- Manage development to avoid building in areas prone to flooding, coastal erosion and land instability.

Next week completes our exclusive series on Putting People First and will feature insights from Council's partners on the many exciting projects and plans for our Borough over the next 15 years.



PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST

Our Vision:

Mid and East Antrim will be a strong, vibrant, safe and inclusive community, where people work together to improve the quality of life for all.

Led by



Mid & East Antrim
Borough Council

Over the past six weeks, the Ballymena Guardian has shone a spotlight on a hugely exciting and vital plan for the future of Mid and East Antrim.

Putting People First, the area's inaugural Community Plan, sets out a shared vision for our area.

Your input was key to the creation of this plan which has five priority themes at its core – Sustainable Jobs and Tourism, Good Health and Wellbeing, Progress in Education, Community Safety and Cohesion, and Our Environment.

Each week we have put a different theme under the microscope.

The plan sets us on a course to realising a community which is strong, vibrant, safe and inclusive.

Your continued engagement and support remain vital to delivering an ambitious programme of change and ensuring we continue Putting People First in Mid and East Antrim.

We finish the exclusive series this week, with messages from some of our partners who have helped shape the plan.

More information on Putting People First is available online on Council's website at:
www.midandeastantrim.gov.uk/communityplanning

Councillor Audrey Wales MBE, Mayor of Mid and East Antrim – Chair of the Strategic Alliance:



You told us what issues you wanted included in the plan for our borough's future and shared your concerns, desires and aspirations for the area. Our aim is to continually improve the way public services are planned and delivered throughout Mid and East Antrim. When partners pull together we can achieve so much more than when working alone.



Norman Worthington – Chair of the Community Panel:

The community has been key to the development of our first Community Plan. The community voice has shaped the themes, priorities and actions. It has taken a huge amount of work to get to this point and I would like to convey my sincere thanks to those community representatives and members of local groups for their hard work and commitment.

Noel Mulholland, Michelin – Co-Chair of Sustainable Jobs and Tourism:



Throughout the community planning process, I have engaged with a wide range of individuals and organisations who have an interest in developing the economy of Mid and East Antrim. The Community Planning Partnership presents a great opportunity to work with others to collectively address the challenges that we face in this borough.



Colin Johnston, Galgorm Resort and Spa – Co-Chair of Sustainable Jobs and Tourism:

I recognise the opportunities that community planning can bring to Mid and East Antrim through a collaborative approach to support our local economy and tourism growth. I am committed to this process, to ensure that Mid and East Antrim is a proud, vibrant and ambitious place for all its citizens and businesses.

Hugh Nelson, Northern Health and Social Care Trust – Chair of Health and Wellbeing:



The health and social care needs of the local population are best met when we come together as a community to develop a shared vision and action plan. The Community Plan provides a community-based and multi-agency approach to local issues, with a focus on early intervention and prevention. I look forward to working with the Mid and East Antrim community and our partner agencies in bringing forward initiatives and new ways of working to greatly improve people's health and wellbeing.



Darrin Jones, PSNI – Chair of Community Safety and Cohesion:

The challenges that we have identified through consultation are complex, with many underlying causes. The answers will only be found through using the combined energy and strength of all of us working and living in the borough. The PSNI are committed to community planning and determined to be full partners in delivering the plan.

Clare O'Neill, Northern Regional College – Chair of Progress in Education:



I was delighted to be part of this process and welcomed this opportunity and the collaborative working approach. There are significant inequalities in educational attainment at a variety of levels in Mid and East Antrim. Community planning offers us a new way to work together to address the underlying causes of these inequalities and improve educational attainment and aspirations for the citizens of our borough.



Councillor Billy Ashe – Inaugural Chair of the Strategic Alliance:

I want to thank everyone for the time and energy that has brought about the production of the Community Plan - a plan that I believe will make a significant contribution to the quality of life in Mid and East Antrim. I urge all to embrace the plan and contribute to building a strong, confident and vibrant Mid and East Antrim.



Jim Kitchen, Former Executive Director of Sustainable NI – Chair of Our Environment:

Community planning offers an unprecedented opportunity to develop a genuine collaborative partnership to deliver more effective services that will enhance the quality of life for people in our borough. The plan has been shaped by local knowledge and the community has shown great enthusiasm helping to identify priorities. Now the challenge is to make sure that implementation is successful.



Councillor Ruth Wilson – Chair of Community Planning Committee:

I am delighted to endorse the Community Plan. Putting People First is important to me as Chair of Community Planning Committee and I very much look forward to full delivery for our community, working together for a better future for us all.