NI Water is planning a solar installation at its North Down Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) site, located off the High Bangor Road in Donaghadee. The use of solar panels will help NI Water save energy costs at this site and reduce its carbon footprint. This leaflet is to inform residents about the proposed installation and provide a timeframe for construction.

NEED FOR THE PROJECT

NI Water has been actively seeking opportunities to reduce its carbon footprint and decarbonise its power. This is in line with the DAERA (Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs) Climate Change Act (NI) 2022.

As part our efforts, we are reducing our reliance on fossil fuels by using greener renewable energy sources such as solar to power our water and wastewater treatment works.

To date, NI Water has completed solar installations at 67 sites, including a 24,000-panel arrangement at Dunore Water Treatment Works near Antrim.

WHAT THE PROJECT WILL INVOLVE

The project will involve the careful placement of solar panels to maximise the amount of green energy generated while minimising the visual impact to neighbouring properties.

The panels - which will measure 3.2m at their highest point - will be arranged diagonally to maximise absorption of sunlight. This arrangement will also reduce the sightlines from the nearest houses. Space will be left between the panels and the site boundary with Rocklyn Manor so that the existing landscape provides natural screening. An earth bund will be created along the eastern boundary of the site onto which hedging will be planted. Trees will be planted at 5m intervals along the boundaries to the north and west of the site to further screen the installation from neighbouring properties.

A total of 3,354 solar panels will be installed which will generate 2 million kilowatt hours of energy. This is the equivalent energy consumption of around 655 homes. All of the green energy produced will be used on site which will substantially reduce the cost of running the North Down WwTW.

KEY FACT

This installation will reduce NI Water's carbon footprint by around **259 tonnes** of **CO_2** every year.

PROGRAMME

Work is due to start in early 2026 with site clearance, planting and fencing being the first elements of work to be undertaken. The full solar panel installation will follow on with an anticipated completion of summer 2026.

CONTACT

Our project team will strive to reduce disruption and keep you informed. We will be in contact with the nearest residents in Rocklyn Manor directly regarding this installation.

If you are not a resident of Rocklyn Manor and wish to speak to someone about the installation, please contact **NI Water's Project Manager, Patrick Grimes** by email on **patrick.grimes@niwater.com** or by telephone on **07825 835414.**

Contact details for the solar contractor will be provided to the nearest residents in advance of work getting underway.

We aim to complete this important project as sensitively as possible.

Please visit **niwater.com/northdownsolar** to view a short computer-generated fly-through video of the solar installation.

KEY FACT

NI Water is the biggest user of electricity in Northern Ireland. Every year around **£1.5m** is spent on electricity at North Down WwTW alone. This project will cut that cost by **20%.**

niwater

Delivering what matters

North Down WwTW Solar Installation

NI Water working towards a lower carbon future for all

niwater.com/northdownsolar

PROJECT BENEFITS

The project will deliver significant cost savings for NI Water as well as important environmental benefits. The cost savings will allow money to be spent on other vital water and wastewater projects. In addition, the planting of trees and hedging around the site will increase biodiversity in the area. Furthermore, the project will be another step forward in reducing NI Water's carbon footprint, in line with the Climate Change Act.

CONSIDERATE DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION

The solar installation at the North Down WwTW site has been designed with neighbouring properties in mind. The diagonal arrangement of the panels will allow landscaping to be added in a curved manner to soften the visual aspect.

Once the site has been cleared a 0.5m earth bund will be created and planting undertaken.

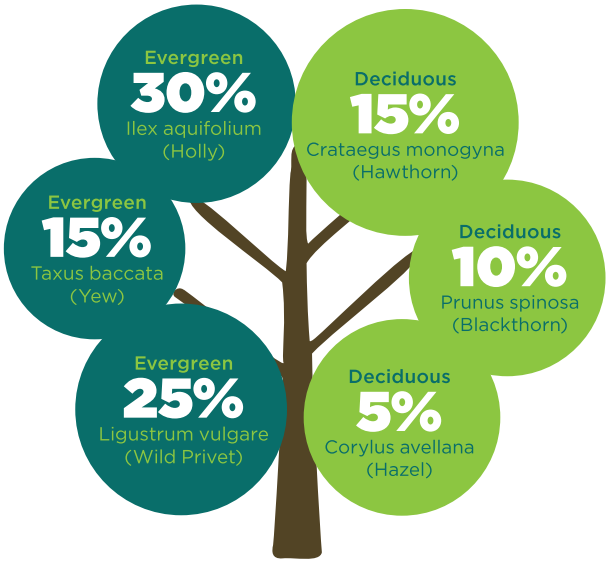
The hedging around the eastern boundary will be a native evergreen/deciduous mix suitable for a coastal location and will measure around 1m-1.5m when planted. Trees will be added to the planting arrangement, with considerate placement to ensure maximum screening without affecting light to adjacent properties. By carrying out the landscaping at the start of the project the plants will have the opportunity to grow while the construction work is ongoing.

Maintenance of the planting will be carried out by NI Water from within the North Down WwTW site.

This type of solar installation will involve low-level construction noise during working hours (Monday-Friday) for a period of approximately six months. Noise monitoring will be in place as required and the contractor will access the site directly from the High Bangor Road (and not via Rocklyn Crescent) to minimise local impact.

COASTAL NATIVE HEDGE MIX

70% EVERGREEN **30%** DECIDUOUS



An aerial view of the solar installation with anticipated views from Rocklyn Manor and Barn Hill.