

From:

Date:

Ashley Boreland, Chief Executive
Ards Borough Council
2 Church Street
Newtownards
BT23 4AP

Dear Mr Boreland:

I am writing to express my concern about how the potential closure of Exploris will impact me personally and to urge you to do everything in your power to keep it open and in the public domain.

Exploris provides a focus for local area tourism, contributing up to £ 3 million per year to the local economy in the Portaferry and Strangford area. Portaferry is already a noted area of rural deprivation, many local businesses have been forced to close or move to more urban areas, since the recent economic downturn. If Exploris was to close, the remaining commercial enterprises in Portaferry would all suffer dramatic losses.

Exploris is an important centre for education and marine conservation, which helps deliver the Government's statutory obligations to protect the seal population in Strangford Lough. The unique seawater system in the aquarium brings Strangford Lough up onto land where everyone can enjoy its wonders. It is an aquarium for all the people in Northern Ireland.

We see a better future for Exploris. A new approach to marketing and investment in the displays and visitor experience can make Exploris more financially viable. It is an asset to the Borough and all the people who live here.

From:

Date:

Mr Mark H Durkan
Minister for Environment
Northern Ireland Assembly
Ballymiscaw, Stormont
Belfast BT4 3XX

Dear Mr Durkan:

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