



5 February 2025

Committee Chair: Councillor M Brady

Committee Vice-Chair: Alderman J McGrath

Committee Members: Aldermen – L Boyle and S Ross

Councillors – M Cooper, P Dunlop, J Gilmour, R Lynch,
T McGrann, V McWilliam, M Ní Chonghaile, A O'Lone,
L Smyth, S Ward and S Wilson

Dear Member

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Community Development Committee will be held in the **Council Chamber, Mossley Mill on Monday 10 February 2025 at 6.30 pm.**

You are requested to attend.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Baker".

Richard Baker, GM MSc
Chief Executive, Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council

PLEASE NOTE: Refreshments will be available in the Café from 5.20 pm

For any queries please contact Member Services:

Tel: 028 9448 1301

memberservices@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk

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3 PRESENTATION

3.1 CP/CD/449 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE GRANT PROGRAMMES – REVIEW 2025

1. Purpose

A presentation will be provided by Anna Boyle, the Funding Unit Manager. The purpose of this presentation is to provide Members with an update on the Community Development Directorate Grant Programmes following a comprehensive review.

2. Background

Members are reminded that the Community Development Directorate distributes grant funding to Community/Voluntary Organisations and individuals on an annual basis.

3. Previous Decisions of Council

In April 2024 the Policy and Governance Committee approved the establishment of a Grant Funding Unit. The Grant Funding Policy was approved by Council in January 2025.

4. Key Issues

The Grant Funding Policy will be implemented by the Grant Funding Unit and departments with responsibility for the awarding and administering of grant funding. To ensure full compliance of the grant funding policy and to create consistency across schemes, all grant funding programmes were reviewed including Community, Arts, Culture and Tourism Grant Programmes with several recommendations proposed.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that the presentation be noted.

Prepared by: Joanne Hamilton-Whyte, PA Director of Community Development

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Development

4 ITEMS FOR DECISION

4.1 CP/CD/449 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE GRANT PROGRAMMES - REVIEW 2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval for the Community Development Directorate Grant Funding Programmes following review.

2. Introduction/Background

A vital role performed by the Community Development Directorate is the provision and dispersal of grant funding to the community and voluntary sector and individual residents to support a variety of worthwhile activity. The support provided by the Community Development grant funding provides a significant return for residents of the Borough and supports the Council to deliver its corporate objectives. As part of the establishment of a Grant Funding Unit a review of grant funding has been ongoing to ensure that the funding programmes operated by the Directorate meet the needs of the community and continue to enhance the quality of life of residents.

3. Previous Decisions of Council

In April 2024 the Policy and Governance Committee approved the establishment of a Grant Funding Unit including the appointment of a Grant Funding Unit Manager.

A grant funding corporate workshop was held on 19 December 2024 when the Funding Unit Manager outlined the progress toward the establishment of the Grant Funding Unit by April 2025.

The Grant Funding Policy was approved by the Policy and Governance Committee in January 2025.

The current Community Development grant funding programmes were approved by the Community Planning Committee in September 2022 and the Arts and Culture Grant Programmes were approved by the Committee in April 2022.

The Tourism Event Grant Funding Programme and the Tourism Flagship Event Grant Funding Programme were approved by the Committee in January 2025.

4. Community Development Grant Funding Programme Proposals

All of the Council's grant funding programmes have been reviewed as part of the establishment of a centralised approach to the administration of grant funding which will be delivered by the Grant Funding Unit.

The responsibility for grant funding programme design continues to be the responsibility of the relevant sections of each Directorate that operates funding programmes. Elected Member approval continues to be required for all grant

funding programmes both in terms of the design of the programmes and funding awards.

The following Community Development Directorate Grant Funding Programmes have been reviewed and some modifications are proposed for Members consideration as follows:

Table 1.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT				
Grant Programme	Purpose	Budget 2025/26	Proposed Change	Reason for Change
All grant programmes			A benchmarking exercise was conducted across NI Council's and it is proposed the scoring threshold to be increased to 60%. This also aligns with Leisure grant programmes scoring threshold which has been in place since 2015	Consistent approach to Grant Funding
Capital Premises and Equipment	To support Community groups manage their own premises and have access to essential equipment	£120,000	Maximum awards of: £15,000 premises £5,000 equipment	Better meet evidenced demand, which has been in the main for support with equipment
Community Facilities, Programmes and Activities	To support groups to cover facilities/ premises, community programmes and insurance	£556,870	50% funding paid upfront 50% funding following vouch 2 Year funding call will open once every 2 years. 80% of the budget will be ring fenced each year for multi-year commitments. A single year funding call will open each year for 20% of the budget will be ring fenced	Improved budget management and governance Reduction of multiyear three year funding to two years retains benefits of multi-year funding whilst ensuring there is adequate provision for new applications.
Christmas Celebration Event Grant	To deliver their own Christmas celebration events such as Switch Ons, Carol Service	£14,000	Remove match funding requirement and increase maximum award to £1,000	Eliminate match funding as it caused confusion and resulted in groups receiving insufficient funding.

ARTS, CULTURE, TOURISM AND EVENTS				
Grant Programme	Purpose	Budget	Proposed Change	Reason for Change
All grant programmes			A benchmarking exercise was conducted across NI Council's and it is proposed the scoring threshold to be increased to 60%. This also aligns with Leisure grant programmes scoring threshold which has been in place since 2015	Consistent approach to Grant Funding
Arts and Heritage Grants to groups and individuals	To support projects that develop artistic talent and knowledge, showcase the arts and promote participation and inclusion, celebrate shared heritage, and contribute to the understanding of minority languages and cultural diversity.	£25,000* *£2,500 to be ringfenced to support up to 10 individual bursaries to attend Irish Language Summer Schools	Change Title to Cultural Grant Aid and Bursaries programme	Support for an individual is now classified as a bursary rather than a grant. Demand for Irish Language Summer Schools evidenced in 2024 by 77 applications to a pilot programme.
Community Festival Funding	To support community groups to deliver their own festivals	£135,570	<p>Maximum award of £5,000 per year for festivals funded for 2 years, which attract up to 5,000 participants.</p> <p>No longer include an option of £10,000 for events attracting over 5,000.</p> <p>2 Year funding call will open once every 2 years. 80% of the budget will be ring fenced each year for multi-year commitments.</p> <p>A single year funding call will open each year for 20% of the</p>	<p>Threshold levels more in line with similar schemes operated by other Councils and appropriate for vast majority of applicants.</p> <p>Tourism Event Grant (as approved by Committee in January 2025) of up to £15,000 available for events which will attract in excess of 5,000</p> <p>Improved budget management Increased benefit to groups who only wish to apply for one year funding</p>

			budget will be ring fenced	
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Summary of Proposed Changes

- Scoring Threshold – A benchmarking exercise was conducted across other Councils and it is proposed the scoring threshold to be increased from 50% to 60%. A 60% scoring threshold for Community Development Grants also aligns with Leisure, ensuring consistency in approach for Council grant programmes.
- Multi-year funding where it exists to be reduced from three years to two years with a call made at the end of each funding cycle for multi-year applications. Annual calls for one year of funding will continue to be made. This is proposed to retain the benefits of multi-year funding whilst ensuring there remains ample opportunity for new applicants.
- Arts and Heritage – The arts and heritage grant aid programme to become the Cultural Grant Aid and Bursaries Programme.
- Community Festival Funding – The maximum award for this programme to be £5,000 for festivals attracting up to 5,000 participants. Larger events will, where appropriate, be signposted and eligible to apply to the Tourism Event Fund as approved by the Committee in January 2025.
- Grant Vouching – It is proposed to pay 50% of most grant awards up front and the second 50% when vouching has been completed to reduce the risk to the Council. Exceptions will continue to apply, such as Community Festival Funding where 75% of payments will be made up front. For all grants and bursaries totalling £1,000 or less, a single 100% upfront payment will be made.
- Community Capital Premises and Equipment Grant – Given evidenced demand to date it is proposed to reduce the maximum community premises grant from £25,000 to £15,000. The capital equipment grant maximum award will remain at £5,000. A budget of £120,000 will support up to four premises awards and twelve equipment awards in 2025/2026.
- Christmas Celebration Grant – It is proposed to increase the maximum award to £1,000 and remove the requirement for match funding.

5. Finance

Provision of £1,101,618 has been made in the Community Development Directorate 2025/2026 revenue estimates for the delivery of the Department's grant funding programmes. A further £120,000 has been allocated in a capital budget for the Community Capital Premises and Equipment grant programme.

The proposed changes to the programmes will have no impact upon the budget allocation.

6. Governance

Responsibility for the design and delivery of the Community Development grant funding programmes remains with the Community Development Directorate. The Grant Funding Unit will support relevant officers in relation to the significant administration required to operate all of the grant funding programmes.

Any new grant funding programmes or future modifications to existing grant funding programmes will continue to be reported to the Community Development Committee for approval. Application calls and proposed funding awards will also continue to be reported to the Committee for approval.

The proposed changes to the grant funding programmes have been recommended in order to improve arrangements for the benefit of applicants and achieve a more consistent approach to grant funding across Directorates.

Members are advised that a Section 75 Equality Screening exercise, Rural Proofing and Data Processing Impact Assessment have been carried out in relation to the Grant Funding Policy.

Each grant funding programme has its own specific grant guidance document and copies are **to follow** for Members' information.

A grant funding workshop will be held for Elected Members on an annual basis to ensure the ongoing engagement of Elected Members in relation to grant funding programmes across the Council.

7. Summary

The Community Development Directorate operates a range of grant funding programmes which provide vital support to the community to deliver programmes, activities and events which enhance the quality of life for residents.

As part of the establishment of a centralised administrative approach to grant funding through the establishment of a grant funding unit community and culture grant funding programmes have been reviewed with some modifications proposed.

8. Recommendation

It is recommended that the proposed modifications to the Community Development Directorate grant funding programmes be approved.

Prepared by: Anna Boyle, Funding Unit Manager

Agreed by: Ronan McKenna, Head of Community Development & Simon Goldrick, Head of Arts, Culture, Tourism and Events

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Development

4.2 CP/CP/113 BARNARDO'S - THE THRIVE PROJECT

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with the Thrive 2024/2025 Q3 Performance Report.

2. Introduction

The Thrive Project is a collaboration of local parents, schools, community and voluntary organisations and statutory agencies working together to help children and young people in Macedon and Threemilewater DEA's to achieve their full potential and have the best start in life.

3. Previous Decision of Council

Members are reminded it was agreed at the April 2024 Community Development Committee, to provide £25,000 financial assistance for the 2024/25 Service Level Agreement between the Council and the Education Authority on behalf of the THRiVE Project with a quarterly performance report brought to future meetings of the Committee.

Members are also reminded that the 2024/25 Quarter 2 Performance Report was approved at the November 2024 Community Development Committee and is based upon performance measures in the Service Level Agreement.

4. Financial Position

It was agreed at the April 2024 Community Development Committee to provide £25,000 in financial assistance to THRiVE for 2024/25 subject to a quarterly performance report being provided.

5. Governance

Elected Members from both the Macedon DEA and the Threemilewater DEA were nominated to serve on the THRiVE Board at the Annual Council Meeting on 03 June 2024 with Cllr Gilmour and Cllr Mallon nominated for their respective DEA's to serve on the Board.

Officers continue to work with the THRiVE Project and Community Planning partners to manage the performance of the Project. Quarterly performance reports will continue to be reported to the Community Development Committee.

Members are reminded that a presentation on the THRiVE Project was made to the October Community Development Committee.

6. Summary

The Quarter 3 Report is **enclosed** for Members' information and is based upon performance measures in the Service Level Agreement. Officers have been advised that Quarter 3 targets have been met.

7. Recommendation

It is recommended that the THRiVE Project Quarter 3 2024-25 performance report be approved.

Prepared by: Will McDowell, DEA Engagement Coordinator

Agreed by: Ronan McKenna, Head of Community Development

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Development

4.3 CP/CD/444 ANTRIM AND NEWTOWNABBEY SENIORS' FORUM

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors' Forum Quarter 3 2024-25 performance report.

2. Introduction/Background

Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors Forum aims to relieve poverty, advance education and promote the preservation and protection of health among seniors (50+) in the Borough and its environs.

They provide facilities and programmes in the interests of social welfare for the education, recreation and leisure time for senior citizens. Officers have continued to work with the Forum and Community Planning partners (NIHE, PHA, NHSCT) to manage the service level agreement.

3. Previous Decision of Council

Members are reminded that at the April 2024 Community Development Committee it was agreed to provide funding of £15,000 through a service level agreement for the 2024/25 financial year to the Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors Forum. Officers have continued to work with the Forum and Community Planning partners (NIHE, PHA and NHSCT) to manage the service level agreement and performance of this Group.

Members are also reminded it was agreed at the July 2022 Council Meeting that a quarterly performance report be provided to the Community Planning Committee, from September 2022 onwards.

The 2024/25 Quarter 2 Performance Report was approved at the November Community Development Committee and is based upon performance measures in the Service Level Agreement

4. Financial Position/Implication

Members are advised provision of £15,000 financial support for the Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors Forum has been provided for in the 2024/25 Community Planning budget. Other Community Planning partners also confirmed their financial commitment to continue to support this group as outlined below:

Community Planning Partner	Financial contribution to Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors Forum 2024/25
Northern Health & Social Care Trust	£15,000
Public Health Agency	£15,000
Northern Ireland Housing Executive	£15,000

A Service Level Agreement between Council and Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors' Forum for 2024/25 has been developed.

5. Governance

Officers continue to work with the Forum and Community Planning partners to manage the Service Level Agreement and performance of this Group. A quarterly performance report is provided to the Community Development Committee.

6. Summary

The Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors' Forum 2024-25 Quarter 3 Report is **enclosed** for Members' information and is based upon performance measures in the Service Level Agreement. Officers can confirm that Quarter 3 targets have been met.

7. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors' Forum Quarter 3 2024-25 performance report be approved.

Prepared by: Conor Cuning DEA Engagement Manager

Agreed by: Ronan McKenna Head of Service Community Development

Approved by: Ursula Fay Director Community Development

4.4 CP/CD/482 BONFIRE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME 2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Members approval for the delivery of the Bonfire Management Programme in 2025.

2. Background

The Bonfire Management Programme has been in place since 2016 and is reviewed annually. The Programme seeks to achieve the following key objectives in relation to the delivery of family fun events in the vicinity of bonfire sites:

- To work with and support local communities to bring about improvements in bonfire management;
- To further reduce any adverse health and environmental impacts of bonfires;

In addition, the Programme in the longer terms aims to:

- Reduce the use of flags, images and effigies;
- Promote wider cultural links throughout the Borough and
- Tackle sectarianism, racism, homophobia and other forms of prejudice.

There are 26 recognised bonfire sites included within the Bonfire Management Programme, with 4 sites on Council owned land namely:

- Rathcoole – Rathmullan Drive
- Doagh – Anderson Park
- Rathfern
- Randalstown - Neillsbrook

Full details of all 26 sites are **enclosed** for Members information, with the two of the 26 sites who will not participate in the programme in 2025 highlighted in green.

3. Previous Decision of Council

The Bonfire Management Programme is reviewed on an annual basis and the Programme for 2024 was approved at the March 2024 Community Planning Committee. An update report on the delivery of the Bonfire Management Programme in 2024 was approved by the Community Development Committee in September 2024.

The Bonfire Management Programme was first approved by the Community Planning and Regeneration Committee in February 2016 and has been reviewed on an annual basis since this time.

4. Bonfire Management Programme – Key Performance Information

Since the Bonfire Management Programme was introduced in 2016 the following progress has been made:

- There has been an overall reduction in the number of bonfires taking place;
- Seven bonfires have moved from a traditional bonfire to use of a beacon;
- Tangible environmental improvements in the management of bonfire sites in terms of environmental issues and waste have been achieved with images **enclosed**.

The NIFRS report that there has been a 57% reduction in the number of bonfire related call outs from the inception of the programme.

The PSNI report that there has been an 81.25% reduction in the number of bonfire related incidents they have dealt with between 2022 and 2024. They were unable to provide data before 2022.

There has been a significant reduction in any issues of fly-tipping relating to bonfire sites and delivery of prompt post event clean ups has significantly improved.

In 2024 the Council supported the delivery of 23 family fun events associated with bonfire sites with funding of £3,500 per event used by officers to organise the various events in partnership with local groups. Attendance at each of the events ranged from 100 to 300.

5. Bonfire Management Programme 2025

Officers deliver the Bonfire Management Programme in partnership with the PSNI, NIFRS and NIHE and meet with representatives as part of the ongoing review of the programme. There is a consensus from these agencies that the programme has achieved significant progress as evidenced by the data provided.

Officers also met with bonfire group representatives in October 2024 as well as Elected Members, to discuss the delivery of the programme in 2024.

It was generally agreed by all of the above that the Bonfire Management Programme has achieved progress and remains fit for purpose in the absence of any legislative framework or guidance being developed by Executive Departments.

Proposed Dates for the 2025 Bonfire Management Programme

In preparation for the delivery of the 2025 Bonfire Management Programme, copy **enclosed** for Members' information, Officers are preparing online registration packs for completion by all potential participating sites. Sign up events have been scheduled to take place in Antrim Civic Centre and Mossley Mill on Thursday 3 April and Friday 4 April 2025 respectively and the collection date has been proposed as Friday 16 May 2025.

Interagency site inspections, which will be carried out by Officers and Statutory Partners, are proposed as follows:

Pre-Collection Inspection – Thursday 15 May 2025 (Council Officer Only)

First Inspection – Friday 30 May 2025

Second Inspection – Friday 20 June 2025

Final Inspection and Family Fun Event Visits – Friday 11 July 2025

Early indications suggest that 24 sites will sign up to participate in this year's programme. This will be an increase from 23 sites in 2024 with Mallusk Gardens anticipated to join the Bonfire Management Programme in 2025.

6. Financial Position

Members are advised that £84,000 for the family fun events and £87,000 for the provision of beacons including maintenance and repair has been included in the Community Development Estimates for 2025/26 for the delivery of the programme.

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) has indicated that they may be in a position to provide £50,000 of funding, similar to that awarded in 2024, towards the cost of the programme, which would reduce the cost to the Council to £121,000. A formal letter of offer is yet to be received.

In addition, financial assistance of £6,000 has been secured under the District Council Good Relations Programme, to deliver a programme entitled "12 Weeks In 1690". This course will provide an historical background to the events surrounding the 12 July Celebrations and will help build cultural competence and confidence with a view to encouraging participants to engage with other cultures.

The course will be delivered in Antrim Civic Centre on Thursday 27 February and Thursday 6 March and in Mossley Mill on Thursday 20 and 27 March 2025. The programme will conclude with a visit to the Siege Museum and Tour of the Walls in Londonderry on Saturday 22 March 2025. Three representatives from each of the 24 bonfire sites signing up to the programme will be invited to attend.

7. Governance

In order to be eligible for the Council's funding support to deliver family fun events bonfire groups must meet the following criteria in full:

- a) Be properly constituted and include a decision-making process and aims and objectives and activities that are acceptable to the Council;
- b) Must ensure that appropriate insurance cover where required is taken out and maintained for the duration of the Event. It is the responsibility of the Group to seek advice on any insurance liabilities relating to the event/activity. Evidence of this shall be presented to the Council if requested.
- c) Produce an annual statement showing the Group's financial position for the relevant period;

- d) Agree to the Council's monitoring, evaluation and training requirements as appropriate.
- e) Be one of the Bonfire Sites recognised by the Council (List of recognised groups/sites at Appendix A Bonfire Management Programme 2025). No new sites will be included, as agreed when the Programme was initially approved.

The programme also contains funding guidance and terms and conditions as well as clauses in relation to any non-compliance and potential impact upon funding.

Officers are aware that at some sites, there are isolated but ongoing issues relating to the burning of flags on bonfires. Officers have raised this directly with groups on an ongoing basis, who, in turn, have expressed their genuine frustration that in spite of their efforts, they have been unable to eliminate this unwanted activity entirely.

8. Equality Screening

The Bonfire Management Programme was equality screened in May 2018 and since then there have been no material changes to the programme this screening still applies.

9. Summary

The Council has been delivering the Bonfire Management Programme since 2016 and the programme has achieved significant progress to date with officers and group representatives committed to achieving further improvements.

The 2025 Bonfire Management Programme, including significant dates and activities is proposed for delivery in 2025 including aspects of governance and the estimated programme budget of £171,000. The budget of £171,000 has been allocated in the 2025/2026 Community Development budgets for delivery of this programme, with £50,000 funding from the NIHE anticipated in the coming months. If secured the budget can be reduced to £121,000.

10. Recommendation

Members review and approve the proposed 2025 Bonfire Management Programme, including aspects of governance and funding conditions, and the estimated budget of £171,000.

Prepared by: Jonathan Henderson, Community Services Co-ordinator

Agreed by: Ronan McKenna, Head of Community Development

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Development

4.5 CP/CD/476 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANT AID PROGRAMME SMALL GRANTS FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS 2024/25

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Members approval in relation to the Community Development Small Grants Programme funding awards being recommended.

2. Background

The Small Grants Programme provides financial assistance to groups within the Borough of up to £1,000 towards seeding costs, public and employer's liability insurance, small items of equipment or an activity.

3. Previous Decision of Council

The Small Grants Programme was approved by the Council in October 2014 as part of the Council's Community Development Grant Aid Programme.

Members are advised that groups who apply for a small grant are not permitted to apply for any other funding available under the wider Community Development Grant Aid Programme during the course of the 2024/25 financial year.

In December 2019 Members agreed that from 1 April 2020 all Small Grants be assessed on the basis of Pass/Fail against eligibility criteria and not subjected to a scored assessment process. All proposed awards are subject to a signed disclosure from the group confirming that all appropriate supporting documentation is in place and can be provided on request or the offer of funding will be withdrawn.

4. Financial Implication

Members are reminded that the budget allocation for the 2024/25 Community Small Grants Programme, is £20,000.

During the month of January one application was received and assessed by Officers and details are **enclosed** for Members' information.

5. Summary

It is proposed to award one Small Grant funding award to the successful applicant as outlined.

Community Development Small Grants will remain open as a rolling programme with applications being reported to the Community Development Committee on a monthly basis.

6. Recommendation

It is recommended that the one Small Grant Funding Award of £1,000 be approved.

Prepared by: Jonathan Henderson, Community Services Co-ordinator

Agreed by: Ronan McKenna, Head of Community Development

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Development

4.6 AC/EV/025 BALLYCLARE MAY FAIR

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Members approval for the minutes of the Ballyclare May Fair Working Group meeting of 8 January 2025 as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.

2. Background

Members are reminded that the role of the Ballyclare May Fair Working Group is to promote, develop and organise the annual Ballyclare May Fair. The specific role of the May Fair Working Group is set out as follows:

- To advise the Council on the programme for the May Fair
- To organise delivery of the May Fair
- To promote participation in the May Fair by the Ballyclare community and wider Borough community
- To explore opportunities for sponsorship and additional funding for the May Fair
- To provide advocacy for the May Fair and achieve collaboration of a range of stakeholders into the design and delivery of the May Fair
- To contribute expertise, skills and knowledge from a range of sectors to the benefit and continuous improvement of this annual event so that Ballyclare DEA achieves maximum benefit from its delivery.

The Working Group meets monthly from September to June each year and reports to the Community Development Committee. Membership consists of all Ballyclare DEA Elected Members, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, and up to five non-elected voluntary members who are actively involved in the local community.

3. Previous Decision of the Council

The revised Working Group Terms of Reference were approved at the December 2023 Community Planning Committee.

4. Working Group Meeting

Members are advised that the Ballyclare May Fair Working Group met on 8 January 2025 in Ballyclare Town Hall. The minutes of the meeting are enclosed.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that the minutes of the Ballyclare May Fair Working Group meeting of 8 January 2025 be approved as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.

Prepared by: Joanne Hamilton-Whyte, PA to Director of Community Development

Agreed by: Simon Goldrick, Head of Arts, Culture, Tourism and Events

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Development

4.7 AC/GEN/112 VE DAY 80TH ANNIVERSARY

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval for a series of commemorative events to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day.

2. Introduction/Background

Victory in Europe (VE) Day is the day commemorating the formal acceptance by the World War II Allies of Germany's unconditional surrender of its armed forces on Tuesday, 8 May 1945; it marked the official end of World War II in Europe. Victory in Japan (VJ) Day, which effectively marked the end of World War II, is commemorated on 15 August each year.

2025 marks the 80th anniversary of VE Day, and events are expected to take place throughout the UK to mark the occasion. VE Day and VJ Day 2025 are likely to be the last major events marking the 80th anniversary of World War II, following the 80th anniversary of D-Day in June 2024 which formed the theme of Armed Forces Day at Jordanstown Loughshore Park. As part of Armed Forces Day, a D-Day memorial was unveiled by the Lord Lieutenant and the Mayor on 22 June 2024.

3. Proposed VE Day 80th Anniversary Events

Following discussions with Lieutenant Colonel Kevin Thomas MBE RE and Pageant Master Bruno Peek CVO OBE OPR, the following programme to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day is proposed:

Wednesday 7 May

- Opening of World War II exhibition in the Garden Heritage Room at Antrim Castle Gardens (until 7 June). This exhibition will incorporate a wide variety of World War II artefacts including uniforms, equipment, maps and documentation, some with links to the local area.
- Opening of Holocaust exhibition in the Old Museum Space at Mossley Mill (until 7 June). This exhibition will include holocaust artefacts, testimonies and information panels.
- Post-Primary School workshops at both the WWII exhibition and the Holocaust exhibition (until 7 June)
- Beating the Retreat given by the Band of the Royal Irish Regiment in Mossley Mill Civic Square at 7.00pm. This free event will be open to the public, with veterans and members of local Royal British Legion branches invited as guests of honour.

Thursday 8 May

- 9am: short ceremony to raise the specially commissioned VE Day 80 flag at Antrim Civic Centre and Mossley Mill
- 6.30pm: all Churches in the Borough will be encouraged to ring their bells as part of a national initiative to honour the casualties of World War II

- 9.30pm: beacon-lighting ceremony with bugler and piper at Mossley Mill and Antrim Castle Gardens

Sunday 11 May

- VE Day Party in the Park in Antrim Castle Gardens. It is proposed to move the annual Party in the Park from August to May and theme it around VE day: live music will have a 1930s / 1940s theme, attendees will be encouraged to wear 1940s-style fashion, bunting and flags will reflect the original VE Day celebrations, and World War II equipment will be sourced and displayed (field guns, replica vehicles and aircraft etc). In addition, the military have agreed to set up a tri-service military village at the event. VE Day Party in the Park would be ticketed, with an entrance fee of £2.50 per person, 50p of which would go to the Mayor's charities. The highlight of the event would be an attempt to break the Guinness World Record for the world's largest tea dance, during which hundreds of people will be encouraged to dance together to Glenn Miller's *In the Mood*, played on stage by the PM Big Band. The current world record, set in Glasgow in 2010, involved 306 participating couples: with more than 4,500 attendees at the 2024 Party in the Park, this should be easily surpassed on VE Day, and would attract significant media interest.
- In addition, special flowerbed discs marking VE Day 80 will be located in flowerbeds across the Borough as for previous similar notable occasions.

4. Financial Position/Implication

A budget of £25,000 is proposed to cover the cost of organising the VE Day Party in the Park, and this would be supplemented by an estimated net ticket income of £6,500. The anticipated indicative expenditure for this event would be:

Infrastructure costs (stage, barriers, toilets, generators etc)	£6,000
Animation and entertainment costs	£11,000
Marketing and communications costs	£1,500
Accessibility costs	£2,000
Stewarding and staff costs	£5,000
Technical costs	£3,000
Traffic management costs	£1,500
First aid costs	£1,500
Total costs	£31,500
Anticipated ticket income	£6,500
Council contribution	£25,000

A budget of £25,000 is already in the draft 2025/26 estimates for Party in the Park in August 2025, and it is proposed to move this to fund the VE Day celebration event.

An additional budget of £5,000 is also proposed to cover all other costs (support for the two exhibitions, purchase of two VE Day flags, fees for buglers and pipers etc), and this has been included within the 2025/26 estimates.

5. Summary

The 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe (VE) Day is on 8 May 2025. A programme of events to mark the occasion is proposed, including two exhibitions, a Beating the Retreat display given by the Band of the Royal Irish Regiment, beacon lighting and flag raising ceremonies, and a VE Day Party in the Park for 4,500 members of the public, during which an attempt would be made to break the Guinness World Record for the largest ever tea party.

6. Recommendation

It is recommended that the proposed programme to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day in May 2025, and the proposed budget of £30,000 included in the existing draft 2025/26 estimates, be approved.

Prepared and Agreed by: Simon Goldrick, Head of Arts, Culture, Tourism and Events

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Development

4.8 AC/GEN/037 ARTS AND HERITAGE GRANT AID PROGRAMME

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval for an Arts and Heritage Grant funding award.

2. Introduction/Background

The aim of the Arts and Heritage Grant Aid Programme is to provide support to individuals and constituted groups based in the Borough to participate in, develop and promote a range of art forms and heritage projects.

Arts grants are available for projects under the following categories:

- New group seeding
- The production of artwork
- Participation in specialist training or study
- The delivery of an event or festival, which must be held in the Borough and open to the public
- The attendance or participation in an arts event either by invitation or qualification

Heritage grants are available for projects under the following categories:

- New group seeding
- The production or development of a heritage product, such as publication or exhibition which must relate to local history
- Participation in specialist training or study
- The delivery of a heritage event, which must be held in the Borough and open to the public

To be successful, applicants must score a minimum of 50% in their application and all proposed awards are subject to the receipt of all relevant supporting documentation. The programme operates on a rolling basis linked to the financial year or until the funding for the year is exhausted.

3. Previous Decision of Council

Members are reminded that a revised Arts and Culture Grant Aid Programme was approved by the Community Planning Committee in April 2022.

4. Application for 2024/2025 Arts and Heritage Grant Aid Programme

One application has been received and assessed by officers under the appropriate funding category and maximum award available.

A summary of the application is set out below along with the proposed award:

Group / Individual Name	Funding Category	Funding Purpose	Score	Proposed Amount Awarded
Major Sinclair Memorial Pipe Band	Arts Support for Groups - the attendance or participation in an arts event either by invitation or qualification	<p>The Major Sinclair Memorial Pipe Band was established in 1957, and is based in Doagh, Ballyclare. The Band is seeking funding of £1,000 to support the transportation of instruments to the Virginia International Tattoo in April 2025. 50 members will be attending this prestigious event, many of whom are residents of the Borough.</p> <p>Established in 1997, the Virginia International Tattoo, a signature event of the Virginia Arts Festival, is an annual celebration of music and international goodwill. Every year, the Tattoo welcomes over 1,000 performers from all over the world in a display of military bands, drill teams, massed pipes and drums, Celtic dancers, choirs, and more. It is the largest tattoo in the United States, drawing an international audience each year. An important central component of the Virginia International Tattoo is its accessibility to local young people. Each year, nearly 12,000 area students have the opportunity to experience the Tattoo through in-school performances and student matinees.</p> <p>The Major Sinclair Memorial Pipe Band aims to encourage social inclusion and cultural diversity within the Arts and Heritage sector with a particular focus on Traditional Arts, Intercultural Arts, and Music. The Band's participation in the Virginia International Tattoo provides an excellent opportunity to showcase both the Band and the Council to an international audience. Further positive publicity will derive from the BBC's planned coverage of the Band's participation in the Tattoo.</p>	75%	£1000

5. Financial Position

The budget available for Arts and Heritage Grants in 2024/2025 is £14,000. Grants totalling £2,907.50 have been previously approved by the Committee, and the total amount proposed for the above award is £1,000. If approved,

this would leave a balance of £10,092.50 to fund any future applications in the current financial year.

6. Summary

An Arts and Heritage Grant Aid application has been received from The Major Sinclair Memorial Pipe Band to support the transportation of instruments to the Virginia International Tattoo in April 2025.

7. **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Arts and Heritage Grant funding award as detailed, totalling £1,000, be approved.

Prepared by: Leeann Murray, Arts Development Officer

Agreed by: Simon Goldrick, Head of Arts, Culture, Tourism and Events

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Development

4.9 CP/GEN/052 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANT AID PROGRAMME RECOMMENDATIONS 2025/2026

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Members approval in relation to proposed financial awards under the Community Development Grant Aid Programme for 2025/26.

2. Background

The Community Development Grant Aid Programme provides financial assistance to groups within the Borough towards the costs of running their Community Facilities and delivering their Programmes and Activities over a 3 year period.

Programmes funded must have Community Development as a primary objective and must develop a strong, healthy and vibrant community, encouraging maximum participation and improving the lives of people living within the Borough.

3. Previous Decision of Council

Members are reminded that it was approved at the Community Planning Committee in September 2022 that the new Community Development Grant Aid Programme Awards would be made for up to three years. A pass threshold of 50% applies to applications to the Programme and groups are not required to demonstrate match funding. Members should also note that proposed awards are subject to the receipt of all relevant supporting documentation, or the offer of funding will be withdrawn.

4. Call for Applications 2025/26

A call for applications under the Community Development Grant Aid Programme for the period 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026 opened on Monday 21 October 2024 and closed on Monday 16 December 2024. To support applications to this programme, Officers delivered two grant workshops and offered one-to-one support to all groups upon request.

There is £476,869.50 committed to support year 2 and year 3 funding awards previously approved. An allocation of £80,000 has been designated for this call for new applications for one year's financial assistance in order to streamline all grants to align with the establishment of the new Funding Support Unit in April 2025.

In total 22 applications were received and assessed by a panel of Officers with 18 applications totalling £97,229.84 achieving the required 50% pass threshold, details of which are **enclosed** for Members information.

5. Financial Implication

The total estimated budget for the 2025/26 Community Development Grant Aid Programme is £768,448 as provided for in the 2025/26 estimates, of which £50,428 (similar to the amount awarded in 2024/25) is anticipated from the Department for Communities (DfC) under its Community Support Programme for 2025/26 and the remaining £718,020 from the Council.

The total amount requested from all 18 applications that successfully achieved the 50% pass threshold is £97,229.84, resulting in a potential budget overspend of £17,229.84. It is proposed to fund all successful requests at 100% and reduce other budgets by the additional £17,229.84.

Members are reminded that funding is subject to satisfactory annual monitoring and evaluation.

As in previous years, Officers will arrange to meet with any unsuccessful groups to provide feedback on their applications and to signpost to other relevant funders.

6. Summary

In total 22 applications were received and assessed by a panel of Officers with 18 applications totalling £97,229.84 achieving the required 50% pass threshold.

There is a budget allocation of £80,000 designated for this grant call.

It is proposed to fund all successful applications.

7. Recommendation

It is recommended that the 18 applications totalling £97,229.84 and a reduction in other budgets of the additional £17,229.84 be approved.

Prepared by: Jonathan Henderson, Community Services Co-ordinator

Agreed by: Ronan McKenna, Head of Community Development

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Development

4.10 AC/EV/003 CRAFT NI PROPOSAL FOR GARDEN SHOW IRELAND 2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval to appoint Craft NI to deliver the artisan craft elements of Garden Show Ireland 2025, which is scheduled to take place from 13-15 June 2025 at Antrim Castle Gardens.

2. Introduction/Background

Garden Show Ireland is one of Northern Ireland's leading garden festivals, and has been held in Antrim Castle Gardens each year since 2014 with the exception of 2020 and 2021 when Covid prevented the event from taking place. In 2024, despite extremely poor weather, Garden Show Island attracted more than 17,000 visitors.

The event is a three-day celebration of flowers, food and fun for the whole family, incorporating talks and demonstrations given by horticulturists including the Show Ambassador David Domoney, show gardens and displays, music and entertainment, food-to-go, and traders selling plants, horticultural equipment and furniture, and artisan crafts, food and drinks.

For the past two years, Craft NI have been appointed to manage the artisan craft stalls at the event. Craft NI is the sector-led body for the promotion and development of the design-led contemporary craft industry in Northern Ireland. Craft NI supports and promotes the craft industry as an integral, entrepreneurial, and vibrant part of the region's economic and cultural infrastructure. Its key partners include regional government and agencies, local government, cultural organisations, universities and colleges, private businesses, and industry. In 2024, Craft NI sourced and managed 15 artisan craft traders for Garden Show Ireland.

3. Previous Decision of Council

The appointment of Craft NI to manage artisan craft traders at Garden Show Ireland 2024 was approved at the February 2024 Community Planning Committee.

4. Key Issues

Following discussions with officers, Craft NI has confirmed its interest in once again sourcing and managing 15 high-quality craft makers for Garden Show Ireland 2025. These craft makers will sell their products to the public and provide live craft demonstrations.

Under the terms of the proposal:

- Craft NI will charge each craft maker £250 to participate.
- 50% of the fee will be retained by Craft NI as a management fee.
- 50% of the fee will be paid to the Council (this amounted to £1,813 in 2024).
- Craft NI has committed to ensuring that local craft makers based within the Borough are encouraged and supported to participate, with a target of 40% of traders coming from within the Borough.

5. Financial Position/Implication

If approved, it is anticipated that the gross income from Craft NI will be approximately £1,813. This anticipated income is included in the draft budget for Garden Show Ireland 2025 and is reflected in the draft 2025/26 budget estimates.

6. Summary

The artisan craft element of Garden Show Ireland has been managed successfully by Craft NI since 2023, and this generated £1,813 of income for the event in 2024. Craft NI have provisionally agreed to source and manage 15 artisan craft traders for the 2025 event on the same terms as 2024. The continued partnership with Craft NI will ensure that Garden Show Ireland 2025 benefits from a high-quality craft sector presence, contributing to the event's overall success. Craft NI's expertise in the sector, along with their ability to attract and manage skilled craft makers, makes them a valuable partner for this event.

7. Recommendation

It is recommended that the proposal to appoint Craft NI to deliver the artisan craft element of Garden Show Ireland 2025 be approved.

Prepared by: Chris Lynn, Culture and Events Co-Ordinator

Agreed by: Simon Goldrick, Head of Arts, Culture, Tourism and Events

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Development

4.11 AC/THB/008 BALLYCLARE TOWN HALL – FLUTE BAND REQUEST

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Members for Ballyclare Memorial Flute Band to apply for an alcohol licence to sell and consume alcohol in Ballyclare Town Hall in March 2025.

2. Background

Members are advised that the Ballyclare Memorial Flute Band have made a request to hire Ballyclare Town Hall on Saturday 15th March 2025 from 1pm-11:30pm for an indoor cultural day and flute band celebration.

Ballyclare Memorial Flute Band have requested permission to apply for a license to sell alcohol at their event. The consumption and sale of alcohol is permitted with agreement by Council if the relevant licence is obtained by the event organiser.

3. Previous Decision of Council

Members are advised Ballyclare Memorial Flute Band were granted permission at the January 2023 Community Planning Committee to apply for an alcohol licence to sell alcohol in Ballyclare Town Hall for an event in March 2023.

Members are advised a number of previous similar requests to the Council seeking permission to serve and sell alcohol at functions in Ballyclare Town Hall have been approved.

4. Financial Position/Implication

The usual hire rates will be applied to this booking.

5. Summary

A request has been received from Ballyclare Memorial Flute Band to apply for alcohol licence to sell and consume alcohol in Ballyclare Town hall at a cultural event in March 2025.

6. Recommendation

It is recommended that the request from the Ballyclare Memorial Flute Band to apply for an alcohol licence to sell alcohol in Ballyclare Town Hall on Saturday 15 March 2025 be approved.

Prepared by: Joanne Hamilton-Whyte, PA to Director of Community Development

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Development

4.12 CP/PP/004 PEACEPLUS LETTER OF OFFER

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Members approval on the offer of PEACEPLUS Local Community Action Plan funding from Special EU Programmes Body.

2. Introduction/Background

Members are reminded that PEACEPLUS is the €1.1 billion cross-border funding programme created to strengthen peace and prosperity within and between the border counties of Ireland and Northern Ireland. PEACEPLUS is the successor programme to both Peace IV and INTERREG VA. The Council is one of 17 Peace Partnerships across Northern Ireland and the Border Counties.

Members are reminded that the aim of Theme 1 'Building Peaceful and Thriving Communities', is to unite communities and help them rebuild and learn from a difficult past. Under Theme 1 and Investment Area 1.1 'Co-designed Local Community Action Plans', Local Councils across Northern Ireland and the Border Counties have been invited to submit applications to the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) to secure funding to deliver against the actions identified in each Local Community Action Plan.

3. Previous Decision of Council

Members are reminded that the draft PEACEPLUS Co-designed Local Community Action Plan, and the outcome of the Section 75 Equality Screening and Rural Proofing carried out for the Plan were approved at the March 2024 Community Development Committee.

Members are also reminded that it was reported to the October 2024 Community Development Committee, that Council received correspondence from SEUPB on 1 October 2024, which approved grant funding of €5,103,757, subject to all pre-funding conditions being met.

4. Letter of Offer

Members are advised all pre-funding conditions have now been met and correspondence **enclosed** has been received from SEUPB offering financial assistance totalling €5,103,757, which is approximately £4.4m, towards the delivery of the Council's PEACEPLUS Local Community Action Plan.

The Letter of Offer was reported to the PEACEPLUS Partnership on 28 January 2025 and the Council's Chief Executive and PEACEPLUS Partnership Chairperson have completed the signed acceptance forms to meet the SEUPB's deadline of 19 February 2025.

5. Financial Implication

SEUPB financial assistance totalling €5,103,757, which is approximately £4.4m, has been provided towards the delivery of the Council's PEACEPLUS Local Community Action Plan, and has been included in the 2025/26 Council estimates for the delivery of the Plan.

6. Governance

The PEACEPLUS Partnership oversaw the design and implementation of a co-designed process used to inform the development of an over-arching PEACEPLUS Action Plan.

Members are reminded that it was agreed at the February 2022 Community Planning Committee that the Membership of the PEACEPLUS Partnership was as follows:

- 12 Elected Members nominated by D'Hondt and representative of each DEA;
- 4 Statutory Partners from Education Authority, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Police Service of Northern Ireland and Northern Health and Social Care Trust to be nominated by the Statutory Partners;
- 7 Social Partners with one from each DEA appointed by public advertisement and selection process.

The PEACEPLUS Partnership, is governed by a constitution and a Partnership Agreement.

Members are reminded that the PEACEPLUS Partnership operates as a Working Group of Council.

7. Summary

The Council has received an offer for funding of €5,103,757, approximately £4.4m, from SEUPB for the costs associated with the PEACEPLUS Local Community Action Plan.

8. Recommendation

It is recommended that acceptance of the offer of PEACEPLUS Local Community Action Plan funding from the SEUPB of €5,103,757 be retrospectively approved.

Prepared by: Julia Clarke, Peace Programme Co-ordinator

Agreed by: Ronan McKenna, Head of Community Development

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Development

4.13 CP/PP/006 PEACEPLUS PARTNERSHIP MINUTES

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with the minutes from the PEACEPLUS Full Partnership Meeting held on 28 January 2025.

2. Introduction/Background

Members are reminded that the PEACEPLUS Partnership operates as a Working Group of Council.

As such the minutes of the following PEACEPLUS Partnership meeting,

- Full Partnership meeting minutes 28 January 2025

are **enclosed** for consideration.

3. Previous Decision of Council

Members are reminded that the minutes of the PEACEPLUS Annual General Meeting and Full Partnership Meeting on 29 October 2024 were approved as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting at the November 2024 Community Development Committee.

Members are reminded that the draft PEACEPLUS Co-designed Local Community Action Plan, and the outcome of the Section 75 Equality Screening and Rural Proofing carried out for the Plan were approved at the March 2024 Community Development Committee.

4. Governance

The PEACEPLUS Partnership oversaw the design and implementation of a co-designed process used to inform the development of an over-arching PEACEPLUS Local Community Action Plan.

Members are reminded that it was agreed at the February 2022 Community Planning Committee that the Membership of the PEACEPLUS Partnership was as follows:

- 12 Elected Members nominated by D'Hondt and representative of each DEA;
- 4 Statutory Partners from Education Authority, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Police Service of Northern Ireland and Northern Health and Social Care Trust to be nominated by the Statutory Partners;
- 7 Social Partners with one from each DEA appointed by public advertisement and selection process.

The PEACEPLUS Partnership, is governed by a constitution and a Partnership Agreement.

5. Summary

The PEACEPLUS Partnership operates as a Working Group of Council. The draft minutes from the Full Partnership meeting on 28 January 2025 are provided for Members approval.

6. Recommendation

It is recommended that the minutes of the PEACEPLUS Full Partnership Meeting, as detailed, be approved as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.

Prepared by: Julia Clarke, Peace Programme Co-ordinator

Agreed by: Ronan McKenna, Head of Community Development

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Development

4.14 CP/GR/202, CP/GR/203, CP/GR/204 GOOD RELATIONS GRANT AID PROGRAMME 2024-2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval in relation to the Good Relations Grants Funding Programme awards being recommended.

2. Background

The Good Relations Grants Programme provides financial assistance to groups within the Borough of up to £2,000 towards activities, events and programmes that align with the aims of the Council's Good Relations Action Plan. The Good Relations Grants Programme opened for applications on 4 October 2024 and closed on 31 January 2025.

3. Previous Decisions by Council

The Good Relations Grants Programme, was approved at September 2024 Community Development Committee as part of the Council's revised Good Relations Action Plan 2024-25.

Five successful Good Relations Grants applications requesting a total of £10,000 were approved at November 2024, and January 2025 Community Development Committees.

4. Financial Position/Implication

Members are reminded that the total budget for the 2024/25 Good Relations Grant Programme is £16,000 in the 2024/25 Community Development budgets.

All Good Relations Grants are assessed against eligibility criteria and a scored assessment process. Applicants are required to score a minimum of 50% for an application to be recommended for approval.

During the month of January 2025 five applications were received and assessed by Officers, with 3 successful applications totalling £5,900 recommended for approval. The project details are **enclosed** for Members' information.

All proposed awards are subject to a signed disclosure from the group confirming that all appropriate supporting documentation is in place and can be provided on request or the offer of funding will be withdrawn.

5. Summary

It is proposed to award three Good Relations funding awards to the successful applicants as outlined.

The 2024/25 Good Relations Grant Aid Programme has now closed for applications, The call for 2025/26 Good Relations Grants Aid will open on 1 April 2025.

6. Recommendation

It is recommended that the three Good Relations Grant applications requesting a total of £5,900 be approved.

Prepared by: Jen Cole Good Relations Coordinator

Agreed by: Ronan McKenna, Head of Community Development

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Development

4.15 CP/CP/243 ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS (EVAWG) – CHANGE FUND 2025/2026

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Members approval in relation to proposed financial awards under the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) Change Fund 2025/26.

2. Background

Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) is one of the Programme for Government priorities and The Executive Office (TEO) has been mandated to coordinate a cross sectoral response that is intersectional and delivers across the whole of government and society in Northern Ireland.

The EVAWG Strategic Framework was developed by TEO with a public consultation exercise on the Strategic Framework and Action Plan carried out between July and October 2023.

On 5 September 2024 The Executive agreed its draft Programme for Government (PfG) for 2024 to 2027 with Ending Violence Against Women and Girls one of the nine priorities of the PfG.

The EVAWG Strategic Framework 2024 – 2031 was then launched by the First Minister and Deputy First Minister on 16 September following a Ministerial Statement to the Assembly.

TEO are providing the Council £110,000 for 2025/26 to deliver a community Change Fund to support groups and organisations deliver projects in the Borough, which will support groups and organisations operating in the Borough deliver projects which support EVAWG.

The Change Fund is intended to mobilise grassroots action, support innovative delivery and maximise the impact of community led initiatives. Projects supported by the Change Fund must include a focus on Outcome 1 of the EVAWG Strategy:

- Changed attitudes, behaviours and culture – so that everyone in Society understands what violence against women and girls is, including its root causes and plays an active role in preventing it.

Funded projects must demonstrate how project proposals increase awareness and understanding of what violence against women and girls is, including its root causes.

In addition to Outcome 1, projects can also demonstrate how their project proposals contribute to Outcomes 2 and/or 3 as follows:

Outcome 2 – Healthy, respectful relationships – everyone in society is equipped and empowered to enjoy healthy, respectful relationships.

Outcome 3 – Women and girls feel and are safe everywhere – organisations and institutions across government and society embed the prevention of violence against women and girls in all that they do, so that women and girls feel and are safe everywhere.

The Change Fund community grant funding programme offers funding in tiers as follows:-

- Tier 1 – Grants up to £1,500
- Tier 2 – Grants up to £10,000
- Tier 3 – Grants up to £25,000

In terms of who could apply to the fund applications were accepted from community and voluntary sector organisations who are not for profit organisations and support a wide range of social, environmental and economic outcomes. Organisations can be registered charities and eligible organisations could include, not only community groups but also sports, youth, arts and faith organisations as examples.

Projects must be delivered in the financial year 2025/2026.

3. Previous Decision of Council

Members are reminded that it was agreed at the November 2024 Community Development Committee that the request from The Executive Office to work in partnership in relation to the delivery of the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Framework and Action Plan be approved.

This included the acceptance of Momentum Funding of £50,000 from TEO to provide awareness raising activities from January 2025 to 31st March 2025 and the launch of the Change Fund in January 2025 with successful projects commencing from 1 April 2025.

4. Call for Applications 2025/26

A call for applications under the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls – Change Fund for the period 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026 opened on 6 January 2025 and closed on 31 January 2025.

To support applications to this programme, Officers delivered three grant workshops and offered one-to-one support to all groups upon request.

In total 9 applications were received and assessed by a panel of Officers with 7 successful applications totalling £109,486.10 achieving the required 50% pass threshold, details of which are **enclosed** for Members information.

5. Financial Implication

The total budget for the 2025/26 Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Change Fund is £110,000 as provided for in the 2025/26 estimates, of which £10,000 will be utilised for administering this grant fund programme through

the Grant Funding Unit, and the remaining £100,000 to be allocated as grant funding to successful applicants.

The total amount requested from all 7 applications that successfully achieved the 50% pass threshold is £109,486.10, resulting in a potential budget overspend of £9,486.10. It is proposed to fund all successful requests at 100% and reduce other Community Development budgets by the additional £9,486.10.

Members are reminded that funding is subject to satisfactory annual monitoring and evaluation.

Officers will arrange to meet with any unsuccessful groups to provide feedback on their applications and to signpost to other relevant funders.

6. Summary

In total 9 applications were received and assessed by a panel of Officers with 7 applications totalling £109,486.10 achieving the required 50% pass threshold.

There is a budget allocation of £100,000 designated for this grant call.

It is proposed to fund all successful applications.

7. Recommendation

It is recommended that the 7 successful applications to the EVAWG Change Fund totalling £109,486.10 for the delivery of projects in 2025/2026, be approved.

Prepared by: Stefanie Buchanan, Community Development Manager

Agreed by: Ronan McKenna, Head of Community Development

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Development

4.16 CP/CP/007 CONSULTATION FOR AUTOMATIC SUPPORT BEING PROVIDED UNDER THE HELP WITH HEALTH COSTS SCHEME FOR UNIVERSAL CREDIT RECIPIENTS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to obtain Members' instructions in relation to the Department of Health's consultation on support being provided under the help with health costs scheme for universal credit recipients.

2. Introduction/Background

The Help with Health Costs scheme provides individuals, primarily on low incomes, with help towards the cost of dental treatment, eyesight tests, glasses or contact lenses, and travel costs for Health and Social Care (HSC) treatment, on referral by a doctor or dentist. Individuals in receipt of certain legacy benefits are entitled to help from the scheme without having to make an application that is, they are 'automatically passported'.

This is not the case for individuals in receipt of Universal Credit, as the legislation has not been amended to reflect its introduction in Northern Ireland, therefore it is not an automatically passporting benefit.

3. Key Issues

Members are advised that correspondence **enclosed** had been received from Department of Health advising of a public consultation in relation to the potential changes to the eligibility criteria for automatic support being provided under the Help with Health Costs scheme for Universal Credit recipients.

This consultation seeks the views on the proposed eligibility criteria, with the aim of ensuring that those most in need automatically receive help to access these very important healthcare services. Until changes to the eligibility criteria are introduced, those receiving Universal Credit can continue to receive support through the Department's Low Income Scheme.

The consultation opened on 27 January and will close on 10 March 2025.

The Department of Health wishes to hear from a wide range of interested persons and organisations.

The consultation documents and associated survey are available online via <https://consultations2.nidirect.gov.uk/doh-1/consultation-on-help-with-health-costs/>

Members are advised that they may wish to respond on a corporate, individual or party-political basis.

4. Recommendation

Members' instructions are requested.

Prepared by: Conor Cuning DEA Engagement Manager

Agreed by: Ronan McKenna Head of Service Community Development

Approved by: Ursula Fay Director Community Development

5 ITEMS FOR NOTING

5.1 CP/CD/426 CHRISTMAS TOY SCHEME 2024

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the 2024 Christmas Toy Scheme.

2. Introduction

The Christmas Toy Scheme was first introduced in 2021 and has operated annually since this time. The Scheme was established to provide support to local families at Christmas by relieving financial burdens whilst also positively contributing to sustainability through recycling of pre-loved toys.

The scheme supports the upcycling of toys to both support those impacted by cost of living pressures and to promote the 'reuse' message of the Councils Sustainability Action Plan.

The scheme has operated in partnership as follows:

- with community and voluntary organisations
- with Habitat for Humanity (NI) through delivery of a number of 'pop up' shops and
- with the donation of preloved toys at the Councils Household Recycling Centres.

3. Previous Decision of Council

Members are reminded that the Christmas Toy Scheme was first approved by the Council in September 2021, and the Christmas Toy Scheme 2024 was approved by the Community Development Committee in October 2024 and delivered in partnership with Community and Voluntary Organisations, Habitat for Humanity (NI) and the Council's Recycling Centres.

4. Christmas Toy Scheme 2024

A social media campaign was carried out seeking expressions of interest from community and voluntary organisations interested in supporting the delivery of a scheme. The following organisations agreed to be delivery partners for the 2024 Christmas Toy Scheme.

Organisation/Group	DEA
A Safe Space to Be Me	Airport
Listening Ear	Macedon
Fitmoms & Kids	Glengormley Urban
Queen's Park Women's Group	Glengormley Urban
Mid Antrim Animal Sanctuary	Antrim
Antrim School of Music	Antrim

Marks and Spencer - Abbeycentre	Macedon
Muckamore Parish Development Association	Antrim – Pop Up Toy Scheme
Habitat for Humanity (NI)	All DEA's
The Legendary Character Club	Macedon

Another social media campaign was launched at the beginning of November to encourage donations of pre-loved toys directly into the local community schemes or directly at any one of five Council's Household Recycling Centres.

Two pop-up shops were hosted by Habitat for Humanity as follows:

- Tuesday 3rd December 2024 – Muckamore Community Centre, Antrim
- Thursday 5th December 2024 – Ballyclare Town Hall, Newtownabbey

The Christmas Toy Scheme delivered the following outcomes in 2024:

- Over 650 local families supported by the Community partners which is an 8 % increase on uptake in 2023;
- 5,525 new and pre-loved toys collected from recycling centres.
- Over 6,078 kgs of toys diverted from landfill.
- £1500 worth of new toys donated to Community Advice Antrim and Newtownabbey following donations from Marks and Spencer's, Newtownabbey and The Legendary Character Club.

Additional information highlighting the impact of the 2024 Christmas Toy Scheme is **enclosed** for Members' information.

5. Financial Implication

There are no financial implications arising from delivery of this project.

6. Summary

The 2024 scheme has exceeded the performance of the 2023 scheme and a proposal for a Christmas Toy Scheme for 2025 will be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

7. Recommendation

It is recommended that the update on the Christmas Toy Scheme 2024 be noted with a proposal for delivery of the scheme in 2025 to be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

Prepared by: Will McDowell, DEA Engagement Coordinator

Agreed by: Ronan McKenna, Head of Community Development

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Development

5.2 CP/CD/433 CENSUS 2021

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the Census 2021 Public microdata-teaching sample for Northern Ireland.

2. Introduction/Background

The Census collects information every 10 years about people and households in Northern Ireland. It is used by central and local government, health authorities and many other organisations to plan and run future services.

3. Previous Decisions of Council

Members are reminded that at the June 2022 Community Planning Committee the first results from Census 2021 were reported following publication on 24 May 2022. The first release of data consisted of headline population statistics by age, sex, number of households with usual residents, and communal establishment population.

Members are reminded at the January 2025 Community Development Committee an additional update [regarding](#) the Census 2021 General Report update [was reported](#).

4. Census 2021 Update

Members are advised that on 16 January NISRA published the Census 2021 public microdata-teaching sample for Northern Ireland.

The file is a random sample of anonymised records covering 1% of people in Census 2021. It contains a limited set of variables, of particular use in teaching, and is freely available for anyone to download on the NISRA website.

Further information on public microdata-teaching sample are available on the NISRA website; <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/census-2021-public-microdata-teaching-sample-northern-ireland>

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Census 2021 Public Microdata Teaching sample be noted.

Prepared by: Conor Cuning, DEA Engagement Manager

Agreed by: Ronan McKenna, Head of Community Development

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Development

5.3 AC/GEN/010 CHANGE IN NOMINATION BY SINN FÉIN TO THE BOROUGH ARTS AND CULTURAL ADVISORY PANEL

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is for Members to note the change in nomination by Sinn Féin to the Borough Arts and Cultural Advisory Panel.

2. Introduction

The establishment of the Borough Arts and Cultural Advisory Panel for the Council term was approved at the Council meeting in June 2023. The Panel is made up of one Elected Member from each Political Party and 12 non-elected independent members.

3. New Nomination

Councillor Goodman has advised of the undernoted change in nomination:

Body	Nomination made in June 2023	New Nomination
Borough Arts and Cultural Advisory Panel	Councillor Michael Goodman	Councillor Lucille O'Hagan

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that the change in nomination to the Borough Arts and Cultural Advisory Panel by Sinn Féin for the remainder of the term be noted.

Prepared by: Liz Johnston, Deputy Director of Governance

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Development