



**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE HELD
AT ANTRIM CIVIC CENTRE
ON MONDAY 2 DECEMBER 2024 AT 6.30 PM**

- In the Chair** : Councillor V McWilliam
- Committee Members
(In person)** : Aldermen – P Bradley, L Clarke, J McGrath and J Smyth
Councillors – J Burbank, R Foster, J Gilmour, AM Logue, H Magill, A McAuley, E McLaughlin, M Ní Chonghaile, and M Stewart
- Non Committee
Members
(In Person)** : Alderman – M Magill,
Councillors - Archibald-Brown, M Cooper, S Cosgrove and B Webb
- Non Committee
Members
(Remote)** : Councillors – A Bennington, P Dunlop, R Lynch and L O'Hagan
- Officers
(Present)** : Director of Sustainability – M Lavery
Director of Parks & Leisure Operations - M McDowell
Head of Parks Operations - P Mawhinney
Head of Leisure Operations – D O'Hagan
Head of Property Services– D Blair
ICT Systems Support Officer– C Bell
Member Services Officer – E Skillen
Member Services Manager – A Duffy

CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the December Operations Committee meeting and reminded all present of the audio recording procedures.

1 APOLOGIES

None

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Items 4.1 and 6.2 – Councillor R Foster

3 PRESENTATION

3.1 PBS/PS/016 ESTATE SERVICES ENERGY UPDATE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this presentation was to provide Members with an update on energy management across all Council facilities.

2. Introduction

The Head of Estate Services provided a presentation summarising the key focus areas on energy management.

Following responses to Members' queries the Chairperson and Members thanked the Head of Estate Services for his presentation.

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor Burbank and agreed that

the presentation be noted.

NO ACTION

*Alderman Clarke left the Chamber at Item 4.1.
Having declared an Interest in Item 4.1, Councillor Foster left the Chamber.*

4 ITEMS FOR DECISION

4.1 L/LEI/002/VOL4 LEISURE GRANT AID PROGRAMME

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek approval for the recommendations set out within the third call of the Leisure Grant Aid Programme.

2. Introduction

For the period 1 August to 31 October, a total of 37 applications had been submitted. All 37 applications had been scored with a table setting out details and recommendations circulated for Members' reference. Upon approval of the listed grants, the remaining balances in each funding category were outlined below:

Category	No. of apps	Budget	Approved spend to date 24/25	No. of apps.	Grants proposed	Funding Balance remaining (subject to approval of application)
					(£)	
Capital Grants	0	£20,000	£0	0	0	£20,000
Grants to Clubs	4	£45,000	£15,758	2	£2,665	£26,577
Grants to Athletes	32	£50,000	£31,148	15	£12,044	£6,808
Grants to Coaches and	4	£5,000	£1,790	9	£1,737	£1,226
Sports Event Grant	7	£40,000	£15,037	5	£21,019	£3,944
Defibrillator Grant	2	£10,000	£2,700	3	£4,368	£2,932
Allocation total	49	£170,000	£90,206 (includes £23,773 from previous financial year)	34	£41,833	£37,961
Fitness suite Gold	7	20 Applications	7 applications	3	2	11 applications
Total approved spend to date including this call, if approved £132,039						

3. Financial Position/Implication

The approved budget for the 2024/25 programme was £170,000.

Should approval be granted for the grants listed, the remaining balance would total £37,961.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

the Leisure Grant Aid Programme, covering the period from 1 August – 31 October 2024, be approved.

ACTION BY: Kevin Madden, Sport and Physical Activity Manager and Conor McCallion, Leisure Development Manager

Councillor Foster returned to the Chamber.

4.2 PK/GEN/035/VOL4 PARKS AND OPEN SPACES SUB-GROUP

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek approval for the most recent Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Group meeting held on 12 November 2024.

2. Summary

At the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Group meeting on 12 November 2024, Members considered a detailed report which provided a range of updates from the Parks section. The minutes of the meeting had been circulated for Members' consideration.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Councillor Stewart and agreed that

the minutes of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Group meeting held on 12 November 2024 be approved.

ACTION BY: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

Alderman Clarke returned to the Chamber.

4.3 EH/EHS/LS/004 APPLICATION FOR GRANT OF AN AMUSEMENT PERMIT FOR MR MICHAEL MULGREW-332 ANTRIM ROAD, NEWTOWNABBEY, BT36 5EQ

1. Purpose

The purpose of the report was to seek Members' approval for grant of an Amusement Permit for Mr Michael Mulgrew for 332 Antrim Road, Newtownabbey, BT36 5EQ.

2. Introduction

An application had been received for the grant of an Amusement Permit

Amusement Permit	Location of Premises	Type(s)and hours of Amusement Permit	File Number	New Application or Renewal
Mr Michael Mulgrew	332 Antrim Road, Newtownabbey BT36 5EQ	Authorising Gaming, by means of gaming machines Monday to Sunday 9am to 12am	LS.AP.4	New Application

In line with Council protocol for the hearing of Amusement Permits applications, approved in December 2016, the application must be considered at the Operations Committee meeting.

The Committee can decide the following:

- a) Grant the licence;
- b) Grant the licence with specific additional terms, conditions and restrictions;
- c) Refuse the licence;

- d) Defer an application for further consideration or to obtain further information.

If the Committee made a decision against an Officer's recommendation, then Members must state their reasons for doing so. In such circumstances, a recorded vote would be taken.

3. Main Report

An application had been received for the Grant of an Amusement Permit for Mr Michael Mulgrew. This permit issuance was a change of operator. The Application process involved public consultation in a local newspaper for a period of 28 days from the date of 25 October; to date no objections had been received. Statutory consultation with Police Service of Northern Ireland sub-divisional commander had been served by the applicant on 30 October 2024.

Appropriate character and financial standing of Mr Michael Mulgrew had been demonstrated by references submitted to Council. The premises at 332 Antrim Road, Newtownabbey, to which the Amusement Permit applied, had previously been permitted and licensed by Council for gaming use over several years. There were no concerns regarding the suitability of its location.

The operating hours for the premises were detailed below:

Monday to Sunday 09:00 to 00:00

Following a review of the Amusement permit protocol, Council approval was now required in advance of granting a permit.

4. Summary

Mr Michael Mulgrew had submitted an application for the grant of an Amusement Permit for 332 Antrim Road, Newtownabbey, BT36 5EQ. As per the Council protocol for the granting of an Amusement permit, a decision by Members was required regarding the approval of the Permit.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour

Seconded by Councillor McAuley and agreed that

an Amusement Permit be approved to the applicant, Mr Michael Mulgrew, 332 Antrim Road, Newtownabbey, BT36 5EQ.

with the following conditions:

(a) That all relevant licensing requirements are met;

(b) That statutory consultees have no objections to approval.

ACTION BY: Kelly Squance, Environmental Health Officer

4.4 WM/WG/002 WINTER GRITTING UPDATE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members on requested amendments to Winter Gritting areas for 2024/25.

2. Background

At the November Operations Committee, Members requested that two additional areas be considered for inclusion in the Winter Operations Plan. A copy of the updated maps for Ballyrobert and Straid had been circulated for Members' information which outlined the proposed areas to be gritted.

The original aim of the Council gritting service in towns and villages was to assist retailers by improving access during adverse weather conditions. It should be noted that there were no retailers in the areas proposed for gritting in Straid.

3. Financial Implications

There would be additional costs in adding these two areas to the gritting schedule. The final cost was dependent on the severity of the winter but it was envisaged that the inclusion of the two new areas would be approximately £3,000 per annum based on 25 services in the year.

Proposed by Councillor Burbank
Seconded by Councillor Magill and agreed that

the additional gritting in Ballyrobert only be approved.

ACTION BY: Darren Purdy, Head of Waste Operations

4.5 WM/WM/037/VOL2 REVIEW OF BULKY WASTE COLLECTIONS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to recommend to Members proposed changes to the bulky waste collections service.

2. Background

The bulky waste collection service was extensively used by residents within the Borough. Collections were booked by residents through the online booking system or by phone with approximately 16,000 bookings in 2023-24, with a predicted increase this current year.

The service was provided by three vehicles and six staff across the Borough, which currently ran over a four-day week at a cost of approximately £335,000 per annum; this equated to £20 per bulky collection.

The current policy outlined waste was only accepted from residents in the

Borough, with a limit of three items collected per visit. Currently, there were no restrictions on the number of collections a resident could request in a year.

The table below showed the number of bulky collections requested and closed in 2023-2024 and up to September 2024.

Year	Bulkies Requested
2023/24	15,802
2024/25 to Sept (Projected for 2024/25)	8,589 (17,118)

3. Key Issues

While Council was keen to keep the Bulky Collection Service accessible to all residents, data indicated continued high levels of usage from residents with over 20% using the service on an annual basis. While most residents were requesting one bulky per year, nearly 2,000 households (12%) did register multiple service requests.

The number of bulky requests was increasing annually and now required additional Council resources, through supplementary crews and voluntary overtime, to maintain current service targets. Without a reduction in bulky requests, further staff and a vehicle would be required to meet the demand at an approximate cost of £100,000 per annum.

Officers had reviewed other Council's bulky provision and all but one had a form of restriction through charging or the number of bulky waste collections allowed.

Council	Fee	No of items collected
Mid East Antrim	Items priced based on size	3
Ards & North Down	£30.00/collection	6
Lisburn & Castlereagh	£10.00 – charge applies to 4 th collection	3
Mid Ulster	£5.40/collection	3
Newry Mourne Down	£12.00/collection	3
Causeway Coast & Glens	£5.00/item	-
Armagh Banbridge Craigavon	£10.20/lift	3

4. Proposed Options

As a result of the current and future pressures on the bulky waste services, the following options had been proposed to control the amount of bulky waste collections requested by residents:

- a) Maintain the existing measures for the Bulky Collection Service - 3 items per collection, no limit on the number of collections;
- b) Introduction of a restriction for residents - one collection in a 12 month period for a maximum of 3 items with a £10 charge for any bulky collection thereafter in the 12 months;

- c) Introduction of a collection fee for residents - £10 for up to 5 items;
d) Cost neutral service with the introduction of a collection fee for residents - £20 for up to 5 items.

The four options were outlined below with the costs of introducing the options and the advantages and disadvantages for each:

	Cost of implementation	Advantages	Disadvantages
Option a Maintain the existing measures for the Bulky Collection Service - 3 items per collection, no limit on the number of collections	Further resources required to keep the service at current levels of collection, redeployment from Street Cleansing and overtime costs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change or restrictions for users; No adverse publicity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current levels of usage will continue; Potential resulting in more resources required at a financial cost; Extended waits for collection.
Option b Introduction of a restriction for residents - one collection in a 12 month period for a maximum of 3 items with a £10 charge for any bulky collection thereafter in the 12 months	<p>Further resources may still be required, redeployment from Street Cleansing and overtime costs;</p> <p>Cost to review the online booking system to restrict number of collections;</p> <p>May realise income from the additional bulky requests of approximately £14,000 per annum.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should result in an improvement in collection waiting times; Slight reduction in usage; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is likely to only reduce the multiple bulky requests and annual increase of bulky requests may continue.
Option c Introduction of a collection fee for residents - £10 for up to 5 items	<p>Cost to review the online booking system to process payments;</p> <p>Potential income of £120,000 per annum.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved waiting times for collection; Reduce expenditure (fuel, vehicle and staffing); Allow additional resources to be redeployed to street cleansing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change to the service arrangements; May lead to adverse publicity.
Option d Cost neutral service with the	Cost to review the online booking system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved waiting times for collection; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant change to the

introduction of a collection fee for residents - £20 for up to 5 items	to process payments; Potential income of £160,000 per annum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce expenditure (fuel, vehicle and staffing); • Allow additional resources to be redeployed to street cleansing. 	service arrangements; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May lead to adverse publicity.
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5. Financial Implications

At present, the cost of the current service was approximately £335,000 with Options 2-4 providing savings on the current costs.

6. Summary

The demand for and the cost of providing the bulky collection service was increasing annually and there was a concern that without amendments to the service, significant additional resources would be required. As a result, it was proposed to amend the current bulky waste collection service by introducing a fee of £10 for any request with an increase in the number of items allowed for collection from three to five, Option (c).

It is projected that this amendment to the bulky waste service would reduce operating costs and provide an income to Council to partially cover the cost of the service. If agreed, it was proposed to introduce the new bulky waste service from April 2025.

Members' direction was sought on the preferred option.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Councillor Logue that

the preferred option for the new bulky waste collection service from April 2025 be approved for option B.

A further proposal was put to the Meeting

Proposed by Councillor McAuley
Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and proposed that

the preferred option for the new bulky waste collection service from April 2025 be approved for option C. This proposal was subsequently withdrawn by Councillor McAuley and Councillor Gilmour.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Councillor Logue and agreed that

the preferred option for the new bulky waste collection service from April 2025 be approved for option B *Introduction of a restriction for residents – one collection in a 12-month period for a maximum of 3 items with a £10 charge for any bulky collections thereafter in the 12 months.*

ACTION BY: Leanne Smits, Waste Operations Manager

4.6 WM/WM/037/VOL2 SUPPLY OF CADDY LINERS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to recommend to Members a change in the supply of caddy liners to residents to provide greater control of their distribution.

2. Background

Council currently provided a free of charge provision of food waste caddy liners for kitchen caddies as an incentive of recycling household food waste and to implement behavioural changes in reducing food waste going to landfill.

Residents normally received rolls of liners (30 bags per roll) by attaching a red tag to the handle of their brown bin from Council sites or alternatively, the bags could be collected from the Civic Centres and some community facilities. The cost of providing caddy liners was approximately £185,000 per annum.

3. Key Issues

There was a lack of control over the distribution of caddy liners especially through the red tag system with some residents permanently leaving the tags on their bins. As a result, Officers had been considering a range of options that maintained the free of charge supply of liners to residents but controlled their distribution.

Proposed Options:

	Advantages	Disadvantages	Cost of implementation
Option 1 Maintain the existing measures for the caddy liner provision - FOC service to residents where stock can be supplied at any time.	No change to the current service; No adverse publicity.	Lack of control on distribution; Continuing high levels of distribution and expense; Potential for shortages as a result of supplier delivery times.	No additional cost – maintain current spend of £185,000.
Option 2 Two rolls of liners provided free directly to the household via brown bin collection in spring and autumn (30 bags in a roll) each year and	Maintains free provision of caddy liners; Reduces misuse of service; Easier to maintain stock control.	There would be a perception from the public that Council is withholding caddy liners.	Potential cost avoidance of £70,000 per annum

availability to collect further rolls (foc) from Civic Centres and Leisure Centres.			
Option 3 Two rolls of liners provided free directly to the household via brown bin collection in spring and autumn (30 bags in a roll) each year and availability to purchase further rolls from Council facilities charged at £1.00 per roll.	Maintains free provision of caddy liners for most residents; Reduces misuse of service; Easier to maintain stock control; Opportunity for income generation.	May lead to adverse publicity; Could result in a slight reduction in food waste recycling.	Potential cost avoidance of £90,000 per annum and income of £30,000 from sale of bags.

4. Financial Implication

At present, the cost of the current service was approximately £185,000 with Option 2 and 3 reducing this to £105,000 and £65,000 respectively.

4. Summary

The cost of providing caddy liners was increasing annually and there had been concern that a lack of control was leading to additional costs being incurred. As a result, it was proposed to amend the distribution method of the caddy liners by providing every household a free roll of liners twice a year as outlined in Option 2, with further liners available, free of charge, from Council and community facilities.

The caddy liners would be placed on the brown bins following collection during the designated delivery week which would be advertised beforehand to encourage presentation of brown bins. Supplies of caddy liners would be placed at designated Council and community facilities with residents restricted to one roll per person. This method of distribution would be introduced from April 2025.

Proposed by Councillor Ní Chonghaile
Seconded by Councillor Logue that

The revised distribution of caddy liners in line with Option 1, to maintain the existing measures of free provision of caddy liners to residents.

On the proposal of Option 1 being put to the meeting and a recorded vote having been requested by Councillor Ní Chonghaile Members voted as follows:

In favour of the Proposal 4 Members viz	Against the Proposal 10 Members viz	Abstentions 0 Members viz
Councillors – Logue, McLaughlin, Ní Chonghaile and Stewart	Aldermen – Bradley, Clarke, McGrath and Smyth Councillors – Burbank, Foster, Gilmour Magill, McAuley and McWilliam	

On the proposal for Option 1 being put to the Committee, 4 Members voted in favour, 10 against and 0 abstentions it was agreed that

the proposal for Option 1 be declared not carried.

Proposed by Councillor Foster

Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

the revised distribution of caddy liners in line with Option 2, two rolls of liners provided free directly to the household via brown bin collection in spring and autumn (30 bags in a roll) each year and availability to collect further rolls (foc) from Civic Centres and Leisure Centres. It was further agreed that additional measures be introduced for those residents with assisted lifts and the process of how to access additional liners be promoted in Borough Life.

ACTION BY: Lynsey Daly, Head of Waste Strategy & Sustainability

4.7 PK/GEN/180 PROPOSED CHANGES TO LEISURE SERVICES CHARGES 2025/26

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to present options for changes to Leisure Services charges for the 2025/26 financial year.

2. Background

Pricing for Leisure Services was reviewed annually ahead of each financial year. A comprehensive Schedule of Charges, incorporating any proposed adjustments, was subsequently submitted for Council approval.

3. Pricing Review

The 2025/26 review considered the following factors:

- Significant increases in costs, particularly for staff and utilities.
- Ongoing capital investment in Council's Leisure Centres
- The high demand for leisure services, in particular at Antrim Forum and the Valley Leisure Centre

4. Proposed Options

The following options were proposed for the 2025/26 financial year:

Option 1:

- Increase in all leisure membership categories by £2 per month
- Increase in all golf membership categories by £30 per annum
- Inflationary increase in all other pricing

Option 2:

- Inflationary increase in memberships and all other pricing

5. Financial Considerations

It was estimated that the income generated from each option was as follows:

- Option 1 - £395,000
- Option 2 - £160,000

In response to a Member's query the Director of Parks and Leisure Operations advised that a separate report on annual inflationary charges would be brought to a Policy and Governance Committee at a later date.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth

Seconded by Alderman Bradley and agreed that

the preferred option 2 for inflationary increase in memberships and all other Leisure Services charges for the 2025/26 financial year be approved.

ACTION BY: Matt McDowell, Director of Parks and Leisure Operations

4.8 **PK/GEN/180 PROPOSED CHANGES TO BEREAVEMENT SERVICES CHARGES 2025/26**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek approval for the proposed changes to Bereavement Services charges for the 2025/2026 financial year.

2. Background

Pricing for Bereavement Services was reviewed annually ahead of each financial year, with a full Schedule of Charges, including any adjustments, subsequently submitted for Council approval.

3. Pricing Review

The 2025/26 review considered:

- Significant increases in costs, particularly for staff and utilities.
- Council's resident cremation rate being the second-lowest in the UK.

- The absence of a levy for burials on weekends and public holidays, despite additional costs incurred by Council.

4. Proposed Changes

The following changes were proposed for the 2025/26 financial year:

	Current	Proposed
Purchase of Grave (Resident)	£300	£350
Purchase of Grave (Non -Resident)	£1500	£1600
Re-Opening Of Grave (Resident)	£280	£350
Re-Opening Of Grave (Non-Resident)	£1100	£1200
Cremation (Resident)	£550	£650
Cremation (Non-Resident)	£950	£1000
Weekend & Bank Holiday Levy	N/A	£200

5. Financial Considerations

If approved, it was estimated that the income generated from the changes would be £205,000.

Proposed by Councillor Foster

Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

the proposed changes to Bereavement Services charges for the 2025/26 financial year be approved.

ACTION BY: Matt McDowell, Director of Parks and Leisure Operations

Aldermen Bradley left and returned to the Chamber during Item 4.9.

4.9 PK/CP/001/VOL4 CARPARK CHARGES

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to present Members with options for carpark charges for the 2025/26 financial year.

2. Background

In 2015, ownership of 11 carparks was transferred from the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) to Council. The carparks and their locations were as follows:

Location	Town/Village
Railway Street	Antrim
Market Square	Ballyclare
Whiteabbey Village	Whiteabbey
Castleway (Central)	Antrim
Harrier Way	Ballyclare
Bridge Street, Dublin Road	Antrim
Portglenone Road	Randalstown
John Street	Randalstown
Farmley Road	Glengormley
A2 Shore Road	Whiteabbey
Castle Street	Antrim

Currently, only three carparks charged for parking at a rate of £0.20 per hour. These were highlighted above for Members' reference.

In 2023/24, these three carparks generated approximately £70,000 in total income, which included parking fees and penalty charge notices (PCNs) issued for non-compliance. An external contractor managed these carparks, receiving a payment of between 40% - 50% of income annually for cash collection, traffic warden patrols, and issuing PCNs.

3. Proposed Options

The following options were proposed for the 2025/26 financial year:

- Option 1: Maintain the current arrangement (do nothing).
- Option 2: Increase the hourly rate at the three existing chargeable carparks from £0.20 to £0.40.
- Option 3: Introduce charges at five additional carparks (highlighted above) and increase the hourly rate from £0.20 to £0.40.

4. Financial Considerations

It was estimated that the income generated from each option would be as follows:

- Option 1 - £70,000
- Option 2 - £140,000
- Option 3 - £650,000

Under Option 3, continuing with the current management model, would incur additional costs for increased traffic warden patrols and PCN administration. Furthermore, implementing charges at five new car parks would require infrastructure investments, including ticket machines and enabling works, estimated at £100,000 (these costs would be capitalised). Officers were also exploring alternative solutions, such as technology-based systems, to reduce these car park management costs.

Members' direction was sought on the preferred option. The Director of Parks and Leisure Operations addressed several queries about potential exclusions and variations in the proposed parking charge options.

The Director also highlighted a formatting error in the list of car parks proposed for charges, clarifying that John Street in Randalstown is proposed to be chargeable, not Portglenone Road.

Members expressed concerns about introducing parking charges at Castle Street, Antrim, as the car park is frequently used by staff from the health service and also nearby public sector offices.

Additionally, the Director committed to investigating potential legal implications for the Council related to introducing charges at John Street car park in Randalstown.

Proposed by Alderman McGrath
 Seconded by Councillor McAuley and agreed that

the preferred Option 3 for car park charges for the 2025/26 financial year be approved.

On the proposal of Option 3 being put to the meeting and a recorded vote having been requested by Alderman Smyth Members voted as follows:

In favour of the Proposal Members viz 7	Against the Proposal Members viz 7	Abstentions Members viz 0
Alderman - McGrath Councillors – Burbank, Foster, Gilmour, Stewart, McAuley and McWilliam	Aldermen – Bradley, Clarke, and Smyth Councillors - Logue, Magill, McLaughlin, and Ni Chonghaile,	

On the proposal for Option 3 being put to the Committee, 7 Members voted in favour, 7 against and 0 abstentions, the Chairperson used her casting vote and it was agreed that

the proposal for Option 3 to introduce charges at four additional carparks at Castleway (Central), Castle Street, Harrier Way and Farmley Road, and increase the hourly rate from £0.20 to £0.40 for car park charges for the 2025/26 financial year be declared carried with an amendment by the proposer and seconder to defer a decision on John Street car park pending further information relating to its use as a Park & Ride facility.

ACTION BY: Matt McDowell, Director of Parks and Leisure Operations

Amended please refer to decision taken by Council 16 December 2024.

Councillor Logue left the Chamber and returned during Item 5.1.

5 ITEMS FOR NOTING

5.1 WM/WM/033 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM PERFORMANCE UPDATE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to advise Members that Council had successfully maintained the Environmental Management System (EMS), accredited to ISO14001 standard, in order to reduce the organisation's impact on the environment. In order to retain the ISO14001 accreditation, the EMS was audited annually by an independent external auditor.

2. Background

The EMS must meet specific criteria including a commitment by Council to meet the requirements of environmental legislation and regulations, preventing pollution and striving for continued improvement in environmental performance.

3. Key Issues

The auditor completed their annual audit in October and had judged that Council had successfully maintained ISO14001 standard. The auditor stated that the continuous improvement displayed by Council was impressive, and the collaborative work across facilities and Departments to improve overall environmental performance was commended.

Another demonstration of Council's environmental performance was the achievement of the Gold Award in the Annual Northern Ireland Environmental Benchmarking Survey 2024.

Proposed by Alderman McGrath
Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.2 EH/EHS/CP/004 TOBACCO TEST PURCHASE EXERCISE – OCTOBER 2024

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to inform Members about the results of test purchasing activities conducted concerning the sale of age-restricted products like cigarettes and tobacco.

2. Background

Councils in Northern Ireland had a statutory duty to enforce the legislation relating to the sale of certain age-restricted products such as cigarettes and tobacco products. Under the Health and Personal Social Services (Northern

Ireland) Order 1978, it was illegal to sell cigarettes or tobacco to anyone under 18. Since 1 February 2022, it was also an offence to sell nicotine inhaling products (e-cigarettes and e-liquids) to anyone under 18 as set out in The Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2016.

The Public Health Agency fund the employment of Tobacco Control Officers (TCO's) who work on behalf of District Councils in Northern Ireland to promote compliance with tobacco control legislation and to provide advice on compliance.

TCO's must conduct at least 70 visits annually to retailers, including test purchases, to ensure compliance with age-restricted sale legislation. In April 2024, advisory letters were sent to 141 retailers, and TCO's conducted 177 advisory visits from January to April 2024. Test purchase exercises had been completed in April and August 2024 and reported to Members in June and November 2024.

3. Key Issues

In October 2024, TCO's conducted another test purchase exercise across sixteen retailers, with a young person under 18 attempting to buy either tobacco products or nicotine inhaling products. Fifteen retailers fully complied with the age restriction laws, but one sold a nicotine inhaling product (vape) to the underage individual. This retailer was notified of the offence and agreed to provide additional training for staff on age-restricted sales, as well as receiving a written warning in accordance with Council's Enforcement Policy.

4. Summary

This was the third phase of planned test purchase exercises for 2024/2025, targeting 70 retailers. In this round, a written warning was issued to the owners of the retail shop which had sold a nicotine inhaling product (vape) to a person under the age of 18.

Proposed by Alderman McGrath
Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.3 EH/PHWB/012 POSITIVE AGEING MONTH OCTOBER 2024

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to advise Members of the seven Positive Ageing Month 'Tea and Treats' events held throughout the Borough by Environmental Health, delivered by the Age Friendly Officer from the Health and Wellbeing team.

2. Introduction

The Environmental Health section leads the Age Friendly agenda, celebrating Positive Ageing Month in October in recognition of the contributions that those over 50 years old make to our Borough.

3. Key Issues

Seven 'Tea and Treats' events were held across each District Electoral Area, focusing on the Take 5 steps to wellbeing. Activities included boccia, curling, quizzes, and refreshments. Attendees shared insights on ageing in the Borough. A total of 304 residents participated, with 100% finding the events beneficial and 78% valuing social connections most.

A Positive Ageing Month Booklet, which listed over 100 community groups and events, had been distributed both online and through 1,000 printed copies. The booklet was available online at;

[\(https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/residents/community-initiatives/age-friendly/positive-ageing-month/\)](https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/residents/community-initiatives/age-friendly/positive-ageing-month/)

In addition to 'Tea and Treats', several other events were held, including a health fair at Antrim Library, a food program at Barron Hall for individuals living alone, dementia training for residents and staff, and the 'Hop Aboard' day trip, on the train to Coleraine.

To highlight the contributions of community groups, four social media videos were created featuring participants from Greystone Library, St Bernard's Thursday Club, Sixmile Hub, and Breakaway Blues Community Group. These videos showcased efforts to reduce isolation and loneliness among older adults and had gained over 6,000 views.

For those unable to attend Positive Ageing Month events, the Council website provided an Age Friendly section with the 'News For You' magazine and an 'Ask the Age Friendly Officer' feature, where older residents could submit questions to the Age Friendly Officer. A link was provided below;

[\(https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/residents/community-initiatives/age-friendly/ \)](https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/residents/community-initiatives/age-friendly/)

4. Financial Position

The Public Health Agency provided £1,000 to fund the seven 'Tea and Treat' events.

5. Summary

Seven 'Tea and Treat' events were held throughout October to celebrate the contribution that older people make to the Borough with 100% positive feedback received. Social connections were the most valued aspect for 78% of participants.

Proposed by Alderman McGrath

Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

The Chairperson agreed that a short recess would be taken at this point and the Meeting reconvened at 8.29 pm.

Alderman Bradley left the meeting at this point.

5.4 PT/CI/065 BUSINESS PLAN 2024/25, BI-ANNUAL UPDATE REPORT

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to recommend to Members to note the performance progress against the 2024/25 Business Plans for Parks, Leisure & Estate Services and Sustainability.

2. Background

Part 12 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 had put in place a framework to support the continuous improvement of Council services.

Specifically, the duties in the Act related to Section 84(1), 85(2) and 85(9) whereby Council had a statutory duty to make arrangements to:

- Secure continuous improvement;
- Secure achievement of its improvement objectives; and
- Exercise its functions so that any Departmental specified standards were met.

3. Previous Decision of Council

The 2024/25 Business Plans for Parks, Leisure & Estate Services and Sustainability had been approved in March 2024, with a subsequent agreement to provide performance updates against the Business Plans every six months.

4. Key Points

A six-month performance update on the 2024/25 Business Plans for Parks, Leisure and Estate Services and Sustainability, as of September 2024, were circulated.

Actions completed to date included:

- Publication of the Council Climate Action Plan
- Introduction of booking system for medium and large vans at Household Recycling Centres
- Delivery of Age Friendly events
- Completion of Antrim Forum refurbishment

- Completion of Monkstown 3G training pitch
- 29 Green Flags accreditations throughout Council's Parks & Open Spaces
- Multiple awards across Ulster in Bloom, Britain in Bloom, NI Best Kept, Ireland Best Kept

Proposed by Alderman McGrath

Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

the performance progress update against the 2024/25 Business Plans for Parks, Leisure & Estate Services and Sustainability be noted.

NO ACTION

7 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

The Chairperson confirmed that she was happy to take any other relevant business at this point and requested that where possible Members advise her in advance of the meeting of items they wish to discuss.

- 7.1** In response to Members' queries the Director of Sustainability, Operations agreed to consider and report back to a future Committee meeting on the implications of provision of an additional depot for street sweepers in the Newtownabbey area.

ACTION BY: Michael Laverty, Director of Sustainability

- 7.2** In response to a Member's request the Director of Parks and Leisure, Operations agreed that a report would be brought to the next Council Meeting for noting to include details of the financial implications discussed in Item 4.9.

ACTION BY: Matt McDowell, Director of Parks and Leisure, Operations

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED 'IN CONFIDENCE'

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour

Seconded by and agreed Alderman McGrath

that the following Committee business be taken In Confidence and the livestream and audio recording would cease at this point.

6 ITEMS IN CONFIDENCE

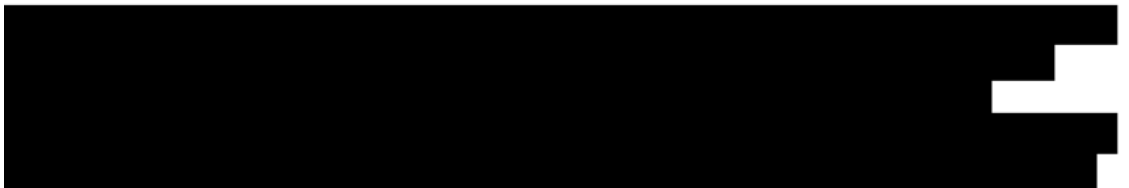
- 6.1 IN CONFIDENCE L/LEI/OO/009 ST MARY'S FOOTBALL CLUB – FEASIBILITY STUDY 1.**

Purpose

The purpose of this report was to provide an update on the recent feasibility study for establishing an Intermediate Standard home ground for St. Mary's Football Club (FC) at the V36 and to develop an Outline Business Case for the preferred option.

2. Background

In 2016, in response to a request from St. Mary's FC, the Council agreed to explore potential locations for a home pitch for the Club via sale, lease, or partnership and report back with viable options. The 2023 Council-approved Pitch Strategy reinforced the need for collaboration with the Club to achieve this goal.



3. Summary of Feasibility Study

The circulated feasibility study appraised options for outdoor playing pitches at the V36 in Newtownabbey. It evaluated the current facilities, demand, and potential improvements to accommodate Irish Football Association (IFA) Intermediate Standard football. Key points included:

Current Situation:



Options Evaluated:

- Option 1: Upgrade the existing hockey pitch to a 3G surface compliant with IFA standards at an estimated cost of
- Option 2: Upgrade Grass Pitch No. 5 to a 3G surface and build compliant changing facilities at an estimated cost of
- Option 3: Upgrade Grass Pitch No. 5 as a natural turf pitch with compliant facilities at an estimated cost of

Challenges and Considerations:

- Option 1 would displace hockey entirely, conflicting with Sport NI's requirement to avoid net loss of facilities.
- Options 2 and 3 retain hockey facilities and allow expanded usage for Intermediate Standard football.

Preferred Outcome:

- Option 3 is favoured for affordability and alignment with community needs while preserving facility diversity.

In summary, the report recommends upgrading Pitch 5 at V36 to intermediate standards while retaining it as a Council asset. Leasing or transferring the pitch would be discouraged to address broader community needs and avoid setting a precedent. A formal arrangement was proposed for St. Mary's FC and Greencastle Rovers to alternate priority use, ensuring both clubs would have access to facilities that aligned with their aspirations.

4. Next Steps

Since the preferred option was not currently included in the Council's Capital Programme, it was proposed that it advanced to the development of an Outline Business Case. This approach would ensure that, if external funding became available or the project was prioritised within the Capital Programme, it could be considered for investment.

Proposed by Councillor McLaughlin
Seconded by Councillor Ní Chonghaile that

an Outline Business Case Option 1 for upgrading Grass Pitch 5 at V36 to meet Intermediate Football standards be approved.

On the proposal being put to the meeting and a recorded vote having been requested by Councillor Ní Chonghaile, Members voted as follows:

In favour of the Proposal Members viz 4	Against the Proposal Members viz 9	Abstentions Members viz 0
Councillors – Logue, McAuley, McLaughlin and Ní Chonghaile	Aldermen –, Clarke, McGrath and Smyth Councillors – Burbank, Foster, Gilmour, Magill, McWilliam and Stewart	

On the proposal for Option 1 being put to the Committee, 4 Members voted in favour, 9 against and 0 abstentions it was agreed that

the proposal for Option 1 be declared not carried.

A further proposal was put to the Meeting

Proposed by Councillor McAuley

Seconded by Alderman McGrath and agreed that

an Outline Business Case for options 2 and 3 regarding the upgrading of Grass Pitch 5 at V36 to meet Intermediate Football Standards be approved as follows:

- **Option 2: Upgrade Grass Pitch No. 5 to a 3G surface and build compliant changing facilities at an estimated cost of**
- **Option 3: Upgrade Grass Pitch No. 5 as a natural turf pitch with compliant facilities at an estimated cost of**

ACTION BY: Deaglan O'Hagan, Head of Leisure Operations

Alderman McGrath left the meeting at Item 6.2

Having declared an interest in Item 6.2 Councillor Foster left the Chamber.

6.2 IN CONFIDENCE L/LEI/629 BALLYCLARE RUGBY CLUB - THE CLOUGHAN PROJECT

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members on the progress of *The Cloughan Project* and to seek Member's direction on the next steps.

2. Background

The development of a 3G pitch in Ballyclare had been part of the Council's Capital Programme since 2019. In July 2019, a workshop with Ballyclare DEA Members identified five potential locations, with two preferred options emerging: The Cloughan (home of Ballyclare Rugby Football Club) and Dixon Park (home of Ballyclare Comrades Football Club).

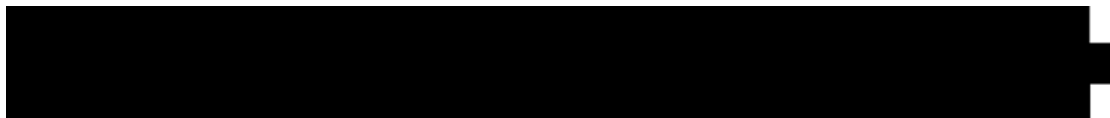
Ballyclare Rugby Club's proposal was part of Sport Northern Ireland's (NI) Multi-Facility Fund, offering up to £1m for Community Sports Hubs that provided four sporting facility types. In this case the sports were Rugby, Football, Hockey, and Cricket. The £1m funding from Sport NI along with a contribution provided work to the existing rugby and cricket facilities, as well as the resurfacing of a disused hockey pitch to a synthetic surface. Council's approved contribution was £ for development of a 3G pitch for football, subject to an investment decision when tenders for work had been returned.

In October 2022, Council approved:

- Lease negotiations commence for land at The Cloughan at a peppercorn rent for a 3G s pitch, contingent on Ballyclare Rugby Club securing £1m from Sport NI.
- A Deed of Assignment with Sport NI and the Rugby Club for Council to deliver additional hub facilities.

- Operational management arrangements ensuring priority bookings for Ballyclare Comrades.

In January 2023, Ballyclare Rugby Club advanced to final stage of Sport NI's programme which was planning and procurement, with works scheduled to commence February 2024.



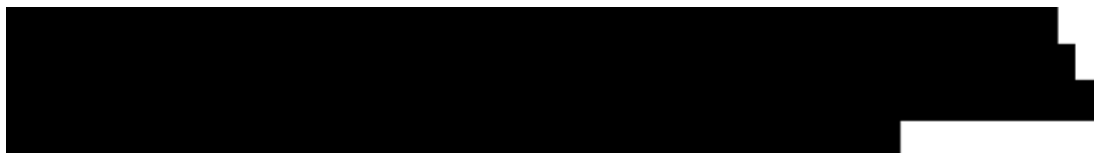
3. Current Position

In November 2023, Council confirmed its role as the main contracting body for The Cloughan Project. However, design work was delayed until March 2024 due to contract novation issues. Furthermore, a change in location and increase in size of the pitch to facilitate rugby, resulted in a pre-tender estimate of £ [redacted] being further revised through value engineering, resulting in a revised cost of £ [redacted] for the 3G pitch, up from the initially approved £ [redacted]

4. Financial Commitment

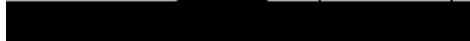
To date, £ [redacted] had been spent by Council on the Integrated Consultancy Team. An additional £ [redacted] would be required for planning and completing the tender process.

5. Risks



1. Summary

The Cloughan Project, including Council's plan to develop a 3G pitch at Ballyclare Rugby Club contingent on £1m funding from Sport NI for other project elements, had faced cost increases from £ [redacted] to £ [redacted] due to delays, inflation, and design changes. So far, £ [redacted] had been spent, with an additional £ [redacted] required for planning and tenders.



In response to Members' queries the Director of Parks and Leisure Operations outlined that estimated costs become more accurate as the project progresses through the various stages of the capital development process.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Councillor Magill that

the Cloughan Project to continue to Stage 3 'Investment Decision' at the revised estimated cost of £ [redacted] be approved.

On the proposal being put to the Meeting and a recorded vote having been requested by Alderman Smyth, Members voted as follows:

In favour of the Proposal Members viz 8	Against the Proposal Members viz 2	Abstentions Members viz 1
<p>Aldermen –, Clarke, and Smyth</p> <p>Councillors – Burbank, Gilmour, Magill, McAuley, McWilliam and Stewart</p>	<p>Councillors – McLaughlin and Ní Chonghaile</p>	<p>Councillor - Logue</p>

On the first proposal being put to the Committee, 8 Members voted in favour, 2 against and 1 abstention it was agreed that

the proposal was declared carried and it was agreed that

the Cloughan Project to continue to Stage 3 'Investment Decision' at the revised estimated cost of £ be approved.

ACTION BY: Deaglan O'Hagan, Head of Leisure Operations

Councillor Foster returned to the Chamber at this point.

6.3 IN CONFIDENCE WM/WM/37/VOL2 REVIEW OF CLEANSING CHARGES 2025-2026

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to set out the Cleansing Charges for the coming financial year 2025-2026.

2. Background

A review of cleansing charges was carried out annually for:

- Trade Waste Collection Service;
- Waste Collection Containers;
- Re-Chargeable Cleansing Work.

The Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997 places a duty on each district council to arrange for the collection of commercial waste from premises within its district if requested by the occupier of such premises to do so.

Anyone who requested Council to provide a commercial waste collection service was liable to pay a reasonable charge for the collection and disposal of such waste. Council charged commercial waste customers on a volumetric basis for the collection of their commercial waste (i.e. per bin size).

A schedule of Proposed Charges was circulated for Members' consideration. 3. Key Issues

1. Trade Waste Collection Service

It was proposed to increase waste collection charges by 2.5% in 2025-26 which equated to £0.16 per uplift of a 240L bin and £0.39 per uplift of a 1100L bin. This price increase would generate approximately £12,500 of additional income whilst maintaining competitive rates.

Undercurrent waste legislation, all movements of waste must be controlled through a Waste Transfer Note (WTN), which was provided by Council on behalf of the trade customer. As previously, the cost of the WTN would be included in the collection rate. There was no increase in the cost of the WTN.

2. Waste Collection Containers

It was proposed to increase the sale prices for 180L and 240L residual bins and recycling containers with an inflationary based increase. All 180L and 240L black bins would increase by £1.00, with recycling containers increasing by £0.50.

The increases would result in a small amount of additional income but it should be noted that income from bin sales would be significantly reduced as residents got new containers through the waste harmonisation project.

3. Re-Chargeable Cleansing Work

At present Council did not charge for bulky waste collections, provided the waste items could be removed within 15 minutes although this current position was subject to another report. It was proposed to apply an inflationary based increase, in line with other waste charges, with rates starting at £28.00 for collections taking between 16 and 30 minutes to complete. It should be noted that Council only received a small number of these per year.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour

Seconded by Councillor McAuley and agreed that

the Review of Cleansing Charges for 2025-2026 be approved.

ACTION BY: Lynsey Daly, Head of Waste Strategy and Sustainability

6.4 **IN CONFIDENCE** PK/BIO/019/VOL4 CORRESPONDENCE FROM DEPARTMENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE – GREENWAY AND ACTIVE TRAVEL PROJECT UPDATE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to provide an update on recent DfI correspondence regarding Active Travel funding and to develop a business case for a proposed section of the Mallusk/Hightown to Gideon's Green.

2. Background

Correspondence from the Department for Infrastructure's (DfI) Active Travel Team (circulated for Members' reference) outlined grant funding opportunities for Greenway and Active Travel projects for 2024-25.

Over the past 18 months, Council Officers had worked with DfI's Active Travel Team to advance priority Greenway and Active Travel initiatives. In July 2022, Council approved the submission of two priority projects: the Mallusk/Hightown to Gideon's Green Active Travel Route and the Doagh to Larne Greenway. While the Doagh to Larne Greenway had progressed significantly, with a new shared bridge completed at Memorial Park, Ballyclare, land ownership challenges limited its eligibility for the current funding round.

3. Funding Criteria

DfI offers funding for up to 100% of total capital costs for Active Travel projects, spread over two financial years. Eligible projects must incur at least 50% of expenditure by March 31, 2025, with the remainder in 2025/26.

It was proposed to submit a business case to DfI for development of a section of the Valley Park segment of the Mallusk/Hightown to Gideon's Green Active Travel route (map circulated) at an estimated cost of £ . If approved, a further investment decision would be required and the formal acceptance of the Letter of Offer from the Department.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour
Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed that

the submission of a business case to DfI for a section of the Valley Park segment of the Mallusk/Hightown to Gideon's Green Active Travel Route be approved.

ACTION BY: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED OUT OF 'IN CONFIDENCE'

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Alderman Smyth and agreed

that the remainder of Committee business be taken in Open Session.

The Chairperson advised that audio-recording would recommence at this point.

There being no further Committee business, the Chairperson thanked everyone for their attendance and wished all a Happy Christmas and prosperous New Year. The meeting concluded at 9.25pm.

MAYOR

Council Minutes have been redacted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation, and legal advice.