



**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
HELD IN ROUND TOWER CHAMBER, ANTRIM CIVIC CENTRE
ON MONDAY 3 FEBRUARY 2025 AT 6.30 PM**

- In the Chair** : Councillor V McWilliam
- Committee Members
(In person)** : Aldermen – L Clarke, J McGrath and J Smyth
Councillors – J Burbank, R Foster, J Gilmour,
AM Logue, A McAuley, E McLaughlin, H Magill,
M Ní Chonghaile, M Stewart and S Ward
- Committee Members
(Remote)** : Alderman P Bradley
Councillor M Cooper
- Non Committee
Members
(In person)** : Councillor B Webb
- Non Committee
Members:
(Remote)** : Councillors M Brady, R Lynch and L O'Hagan
- Presenters in
Attendance
Officers Present** : Director of Parks & Leisure Operations - M McDowell
Director of Sustainability – M Lavery
Head of Parks Operations - P Mawhinney
Head of Waste Strategy & Sustainability – L Daly
Head of Leisure Operations – D O'Hagan
Borough Lawyer – P Casey
ICT Systems Support Officer – C Bell
Funding Unit Manager – A Boyle
Member Services Officer – L Irwin

CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

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

1 APOLOGIES

Councillor AM Logue

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Item 4.5 – Alderman J Smyth

The Chairperson expressed her gratitude to those staff who had worked at an operational level to maintain council services during the recent Storm Éowyn. In response to a Member's request, the Director of Parks and Leisure Operations agreed to consult with the Director of Finance and Governance on how best Members could contribute to a review of the storm's impact and the response from the Council and other relevant agencies.

3 PRESENTATION

3.1 L/LEI/002/VOL3 LEISURE GRANT AID PROGRAMME - REVIEW 2025

1. Purpose

A presentation was provided by Anna Boyle, Funding Unit Manager, with an update on the Grant Funding Hub and the proposed changes for the Leisure Grant Aid Programme.

Several Members' questions were addressed after which the Chairperson thanked the Funding Unit Manager for her presentation.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour
Seconded by Alderman Smyth and agreed that

the presentation be noted.

4 ITEMS FOR DECISION

4.1 L/LEI/002/VOL3 LEISURE GRANT AID PROGRAMME

1. Purpose

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

2. Introduction

For the period 1 November – 31 December, a total of 8 applications were submitted. All 8 applications had been scored with a table setting out details and recommendations which was circulated for Member's 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	6	£45,000	£18,423	1	£10,000	£16,577
Grants to Athletes	47	£50,000	£43,192	4	£4,808	£2,000
Grants to Coaches and Officials	13	£5,000	£3,527	1	£325	£1,148
Sports Event Grant	12	£40,000	£36,056	1	£1,372	£2,569
Defibrillator Grant	5	£10,000	£7,068	1	£1,360	£1,572
Allocation total	83	£170,000	£132,039 (includes £23,773 from previous financial year)	8	£17,865	£20,093
Fitness suite Gold Card	14	20 Applications	14 Applications	0	0	6 applications
Total approved spend to date including this call, if approved £149,904						

3. Financial Position/Implication

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

Should approval be given for the grants listed, the remaining balance would total £20,093.

Proposed by Councillor McLaughlin
Seconded by Alderman Smyth and agreed that

approval be granted for the Leisure Grant Aid Programme, covering the period from 1 November – 31 December 2024.

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

4.2 L/LEI/002/VOL3 MARY PETERS TRUST

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek approval to the Mary Peter's Trust request for funding to support young athletes within the Borough.

2. Introduction

Members were reminded that the Mary Peters Trust provided financial support to young athletes from across Northern Ireland. Within the Borough the range of sporting disciplines supported in 2024/25 included Golf, Motorcycling, Gymnastics, Para Triathlon and Yachting. Correspondence had been received from the Mary Peters Trust, requesting financial support for its funding to local athletes. This correspondence was circulated for Members' reference.

3. Previous Decision of Council

Council support from 2018 to 2024 was £2,000 per annum, increasing to £2,500 in 2024/25.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour
Seconded by Councillor Ward and agreed that

a contribution of £2,500 funding to the Mary Peters Trust to continue with funding athletes from the Borough be approved.

ACTION BY: Kevin Madden, Sport and Physical Activity Manager

4.3 PK/GEN/022 NOMINATION FOR IRELANDS BEST KEPT TOWNS AWARDS 2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek approval for Council to support the nomination of Randalstown for the Best Kept Ireland Towns Awards 2025.

2. Background

Ireland's "Best Kept Town" was a prestigious all-island competition that showcased the very best of community pride and environmental excellence. This unique contest pitted top-performing villages and towns from Ireland's renowned "Tidy Towns" competition against the winners of Northern Ireland's "Best Kept" competition. It highlighted efforts to enhance local areas through cleanliness, sustainability, and aesthetic improvements.

In 2024 Randalstown was named the overall winner of Ireland's Best Kept Town and also won the title of Ireland's Best Kept Small Town.

3. Nominations for 2025

Correspondence had been received from the Northern Ireland Amenity Council requesting that Council support the nomination of Randalstown for the Best Kept Ireland Towns Awards 2025 in the category of "Best Kept Small Town".

Judging for the awards would take place throughout May with an awards ceremony held at Farmleigh House in Dublin being scheduled for June 2025.

Proposed by Councillor Burbank
Seconded by Alderman Clarke and agreed that

approval be granted for Council to support the nomination of Randalstown for the Best Kept Ireland Towns Awards 2025.

ACTION BY: Paula Robinson, Executive Officer to Director of Parks and Leisure Operations

4.4 PK/GEN/035/VOL5 PARKS AND OPEN SPACES SUB GROUP

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the most recent Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Group meeting held on 14 January 2025.

2. Summary

At the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Group meeting on 14 January 2025, Members considered a detailed report which provided a range of updates from the Parks section. The minutes of the meeting were circulated for Members' consideration.

Proposed by Alderman Clarke
Seconded by Alderman Smyth and agreed that

the minutes of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Group meeting held on 14 January 2025 be approved.

ACTION BY: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

Having declared an interest in item 4.5 Alderman Smyth left the Chamber.

4.5 PK/GEN/217 CELEBRATING THE ANNIVERSARY OF 1ST MUCKAMORE SCOUT GROUP AND BURNSIDE ORANGE HALL

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek approval for the installation of a celebratory disc in recognition of 1st Muckamore Scout Group's 100th anniversary and Burnside Orange Hall's 150th anniversary in 2025.

2. Introduction/Background

1st Muckamore Scout Group and Burnside Orange Hall were celebrating a significant milestone anniversary in 2025, with their 100th and 150th anniversary respectively.

3. Previous Decision of Council

Council had previously approved the placement of celebratory and anniversary discs throughout the Borough in recognition of the significant achievements or milestones of local individuals, clubs, and community organisations.

4. Financial Implication

The installation of two anniversary celebratory discs would cost circa £350. The proposed location for the disc for the scout group was at Alexander Irvine Park in Antrim and at the junction of Burnside Road for the Orange Hall.

Proposed by Alderman Clarke
Seconded by Councillor Magill and agreed that

the installation of the anniversary celebratory disc for 1st Muckamore Scout Group and Burnside Orange Hall be approved.

ACTION BY: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

Alderman Smyth returned to the Chamber following item 4.5.

4.6 **WM/WM/037/VOL2 ANNUAL CONTRIBUTIONS – SUSTAINABLE NORTHERN IRELAND**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek approval to retain the current level of funding to Sustainable Northern Ireland (SNI) for the coming financial year.

2. Background

SNI worked with a range of stakeholders, including local councils, with the aim of promoting a sustainable low carbon future. Correspondence had been received from SNI (circulated) and it was proposed to contribute financial support of £6,000 for the incoming financial year, as was done last year.

Members were reminded that Council has provided support to SNI for a number of years and the membership gives access to quarterly networking forums, best practice case studies/decision making tools, training and consultation responses. SNI provided valuable access to information which was useful to the Sustainability Working Group.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour

Seconded by Councillor McAuley and agreed that

the continuation of the current level of funding of £6,000 to Sustainable Northern Ireland for 2025/2026 be approved.

ACTION BY: Claire Evans, Climate, Waste and Sustainability Officer

4.7 WM/S/003 SUSTAINABILITY WORKING GROUP MINUTES

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek approval for the minutes of the Sustainability Working Group.

2. Background

The meeting of the Sustainability Working Group was held on 3 December 2024 and a copy of the minutes were circulated for Members' approval.

At the meeting, Members were updated on the following:

- 1) Carbon Literacy Training options for Elected Members;
- 2) New Staff who have joined the Sustainability Directorate;
- 3) Update on the publication of the Climate Change Action Plan;
- 4) External Environmental Management System Audit update;
- 5) Family Reuse Fayre Event update;
- 6) Winter Woolies Campaign 2024 update.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth

Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed that

the minutes of the Sustainability Working Group held on 3 December 2024 be approved.

ACTION BY: Claire Evans, Climate, Waste and Sustainability Officer

4.8 L/LEI/002/VOL4 LEISURE GRANT AID PROGRAMME - REVIEW 2025

1. Purpose

This report sought approval for the proposed recommendations to the Leisure Grant Aid Programme following a comprehensive review.

2. Introduction/Background

Members were reminded that Council's Leisure Grant Aid Programme distributes £170,000 of grant funding to Sports Clubs, Athletes, Coaches and National Governing Bodies on an annual basis.

3. Previous Decision of Council

At the Policy and Governance Committee in April 2024 it was agreed to establish a Grant Funding Unit which would be initiated by recruitment of the Funding Unit Manager who is responsible for:

- An in-depth review of best practise in relation to Grant Funding
- The Development of a Grant Funding Policy
- An in-depth review of Council's existing arrangements and funding mechanism
- The development of the Council's Grant Funding Programmes including criteria, eligibility and outcomes
- The structure and resourcing of the proposed Grant Funding Unit

4. Key Issues

The Grant Funding Policy was approved at the Policy and Governance Committee in January 2025. The Policy would 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 the Leisure Grant Aid Programme with several recommendations proposed.

Some proposed changes relate to bursary schemes for individuals, award amount thresholds and criteria. A summary of the proposed changes was outlined in Table 1.

Table 1

Category	Current	Proposed change	Rationale
Grants to Athletes	<p>Paid 100% following vouch</p> <p>Maximum award £1,500</p> <p>Scored</p>	<p>Move to a Bursary Scheme</p> <p>Maximum award £1,000</p> <p>Move scoring to Pass/Fail</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bursary - An award provided to an individual based on meeting a pre agreed criteria to support with personal development or success • Reduce bureaucracy – athletes currently claim approximately 80% of their grant • Reduce risk profile

Coaches and Officials	<p>Paid 100% following vouch</p> <p>Maximum award £750</p> <p>Criteria – From the Borough</p> <p>Funding for travel costs to competitions if officiating</p> <p>Scored</p>	<p>Move to a Bursary Scheme</p> <p>Decrease maximum award from £750 to £250</p> <p>Criteria – Add must coach within the Borough</p> <p>Funding for course costs only (must be an accredited course)</p> <p>Move scoring to Pass/Fail</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bursary - An award provided to an individual based on meeting a pre agreed criteria to support with personal development or success <p>In line with all other grants</p>																				
Fitness Suite Gold Card	Scored	Move scoring to Pass/Fail	In line with all other grants																				
Capital Grants for Sports Clubs	Capital Grant only	<p>Introduce new Technical Assistance strand - £10,000</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="820 913 1182 1476"> <thead> <tr> <th>Criteria</th> <th>Score</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Compliance with Good Governance</td> <td>20%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Demonstration of need</td> <td>30%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>What beneficial outcomes will be created by your project?</td> <td>30%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>How does the project meet the needs of the Council's Corporate Plan?</td> <td>20%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Criteria	Score	Compliance with Good Governance	20%	Demonstration of need	30%	What beneficial outcomes will be created by your project?	30%	How does the project meet the needs of the Council's Corporate Plan?	20%	<p>Demonstration of need from Sports Clubs – current gap</p> <p>Scoring reviewed to suit both grant strands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical Assistance • Capital Grant Scheme 										
Criteria	Score																						
Compliance with Good Governance	20%																						
Demonstration of need	30%																						
What beneficial outcomes will be created by your project?	30%																						
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Grants to Sports Clubs	<p>Scoring Criteria</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="443 1514 793 1984"> <thead> <tr> <th>Criteria</th> <th>Score</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Compliance with Good Governance</td> <td>10%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Key achievements over last 12 months</td> <td>40%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Levels of membership</td> <td>20%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>How will the grant enhance club development</td> <td>30%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Criteria	Score	Compliance with Good Governance	10%	Key achievements over last 12 months	40%	Levels of membership	20%	How will the grant enhance club development	30%	<p>Scoring Criteria</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="820 1514 1182 1984"> <thead> <tr> <th>Criteria</th> <th>Score</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Compliance with Good Governance</td> <td>20%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Key achievements over last 12 months</td> <td>20%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Levels of membership</td> <td>20%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>How will the grant enhance club development</td> <td>40%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Criteria	Score	Compliance with Good Governance	20%	Key achievements over last 12 months	20%	Levels of membership	20%	How will the grant enhance club development	40%	<p>Key achievements weighted too heavily for this category and is not applicable to most projects. Weighing reapportioned to Compliance with Good Governance and the enhancement of Club development</p>
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	Paid 100% following vouch	50% funding paid upfront 50% funding paid following vouch	Easier management of cash flow within Organisations																								
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Criteria	Score																										
Compliance with Good Governance	10%																										
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Economic benefits to the Borough	10%																										
Defibrillator Grant	Movable and fixed AED's	Application must be for an AED and associated casing	More beneficial to the Community and is fully accessible																								
Grants to Sports Clubs Sports Event Grants Defibrillator Grant	Paid 100% following vouch	50% funding upfront 50% funding paid following vouch	Consistent approach to Grant Funding Easier management of cash flow within Organisations																								
All Schemes (where applicable)	Scoring for Grants to Coaches and Officials set at 70% threshold	Scoring set to 60% threshold	Consistent approach to Grant Funding																								
All Schemes	Costs are eligible from date of submission of application, subject to retention of receipts	Costs are eligible from date of Council approval	Good Governance practice Consistent																								

			approach to Grant Funding
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Each funding scheme had its own individual Grant Guidance document, a draft copy of the guidance notes including the proposed changes were circulated for Members' information.

5. Financial Position/Implication

Members were reminded that the total annual budget for the Leisure Grant Aid Programme was £170,000. The proposed changes would not affect the overall budget allocation for the programme.

6. Governance

The proposed Leisure Grant Aid Programme recommendations played a pivotal role in ensuring robust governance by supporting the implementation and compliance of the new grant funding policy.

These recommendations aimed to align the programme with policy objectives and would create consistency across all schemes.

Proposed by Alderman McGrath
 Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed that

the proposed changes to the Leisure Grant Aid Programme be approved.

ACTION BY: Anna Boyle, Funding Unit Manager

4.9 EH/PHWB/018 PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY CORPORATE PLAN 2025- 2030

1. Purpose

The Public Health Agency (PHA) had launched a consultation on a draft Corporate Plan for 2025–2030, outlining how it intended to achieve its mission of protecting and improving population health and social well-being while reducing health inequalities.

2. Background

The draft Corporate Plan was a strategic document that outlined the PHA's direction and priorities for the next five years, covering the period from 2025 to 2030. Developed with input from various stakeholders, the plan aligns with the vision set forth in *Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together* by the Minister of Health and addresses key priorities identified by the Department of Health (DoH). These priorities include the *Making Life Better* Public Health Framework and the Draft Programme for Government Framework 2024–2027. Additionally, the plan takes into account current financial constraints as well as ongoing reforms and restructuring within the Health and Social Care (HSC) system.

As a key strategic partner, the PHA collaborated with the Council on several initiatives, including Home Accident Prevention, Age-Friendly projects, and Energy Efficiency programs. Additionally, the PHA played a significant role in supporting the Council's Community Plan.

The draft Corporate Plan defined the PHA's purpose, vision, values, and public health priorities, which were organised into four main areas: Protecting Health, Starting Well, Living Well, and Aging Well.

A link to the consultation can be found at;

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/about-us/consultations/current-consultations/draft-pha-corporate-plan-2025-2030-consultation>

Some of the key priorities for 2025-2030 that relate to the Council include;

- implement the World Health Organisation (WHO) Age-friendly movement across Northern Ireland
- reduce and prevent falls and home accidents, including the development and implementation of a regional model for safer mobility
- increase levels of physical activity and promote opportunities to stay active
- work with key partners to identify and reduce levels of loneliness and social isolation and to improve mental health and emotional wellbeing
- create the conditions for people to adopt healthier behaviours and reduce the risks to health caused by low physical activity, smoking and vaping, poor diet
- promote the health benefits of breastfeeding and encourage support for breastfeeding mothers;
- work with others to promote the safeguarding and protection of children and young people.

A draft consultation response (circulated) had been prepared in collaboration with Environmental Health across all of the Councils in Northern Ireland.

4. Summary

The Public Health Agency had launched a consultation on a draft Corporate Plan. The draft Corporate Plan defines the PHA's purpose, vision, values, and public health priorities, which were organised into four main areas: Protecting Health, Starting Well, Living Well, and Aging Well. The plan set out priorities and how PHA would measure them through various indicators under each strategic theme.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour
Seconded by Alderman Clarke and agreed that the

draft consultation response be approved.

ACTION BY: Alison Briggs, Deputy Head of Environmental Health - Health and Wellbeing

5 ITEMS FOR NOTING

5.1 L/GEN/070 NET PROMOTER SCORE – QUARTER 3 2024/25 RESULTS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to provide a quarterly update on the Net Promoter Score for Council's Leisure Centres.

2. Introduction

To collect customer feedback and assess satisfaction, the Council's Leisure Section used digital software to calculate a Net Promoter Score (NPS). This score was derived from randomly sampling customers who visited the leisure centres and asking them to rate the facilities on a scale of 1 to 10. Additionally, a follow-up question asked for the reasons behind their rating, providing valuable insights for management to consider and address.

3. Quarter 3 Results

Key results for the quarter 3, 1 October 2024 to 31 December 2024:

- Total survey requests: 2,052
- Total responses: 391
- Response rate: 19%
- NPS: 66
- "Staff," "Facilities," and "Courtesy" consistently remained the top three areas mentioned by customers.
- "Staff" and "Courtesy" received the most positive feedback scores
- Ballyearl remains the highest scoring Centre with a score of 72 in quarter 3.

Performance was monitored daily, monthly, and quarterly, with the current 12 month rolling score of 63, slightly below the cumulative annual target of 65. The current rolling three-month score was 66 showing a positive trend.

The NPS performance remained significantly higher than the UK leisure industry average of 34.

Proposed by Councillor Magill

Seconded by Councillor Ní Chonghaile and agreed that

the report be noted and that a breakdown of the net promoter scores for each leisure centre be included in future updates.

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

5.2 L/LEI/SD/018 HEALTH INTERVENTION ACTION PLAN - UPDATE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to provide a Quarter 3 update on Council's Health Intervention Action Plan for 2024-25

2. Introduction/Background

Members were advised that Council approved the Health Intervention Action Plan (2022-27) in November 2022, a copy was circulated for Members' reference. The plan was designed to increase regular and sustainable participation in exercise across all age groups, with the wider aim of tackling wider health issues in vulnerable and inactive groups.

3. Results in Quarter 3 2024/25

Officers developed and coordinated delivery of a range Council-led programmes as well as working in collaboration with relevant partner organisations, to facilitate the effective delivery of the Action Plan. During Quarter 3 a total of 6,207 participated in these programmes, 7% above the quarterly target, 4% ahead of cumulative target with a detailed breakdown as follows:

Programmes	24/25 Annual Target	Q3 Target	Q3 Actual	YTD Total
Physical Activity Referral Scheme (PARS)	200	50	33 completers	99 completers
Move More Cancer Rehabilitation and Rehabilitation Programme	150	38	23 completers	82 completers
Age Friendly (Live Long, Fall's Prevention, Walking Netball, Aqua Fit and Nordic Walking)	20,000	5,000	5215	15,228
Exercise for Mental Health Programme	900	225	393	1,210
Pulmonary Maintenance Programme	800	200	90	363
Cardiac Rehabilitation and Maintenance Programmes	600	150	295	740
Programmes for People with a Disability	400	100	149	377
Veterans (New)	60	15	9	9

4. Funding

Breakdown of external funding confirmed for 2024-25 to assist in the delivery of programmes:

Programme	Funded by	Total
Physical Activity Referral Schemes (PARS)	PHA	£31,461
Walking Football Programme	NHSCT	£1,890
Falls Prevention Steady and Strong Programme – due Q3	NHSCT	£1,850

Move More (Cancer Rehabilitation Programme)	Macmillan	£5,000
Total		£40,201

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
 Seconded by Alderman McGrath and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.3 WM/WM/037/VOL2 HABITAT FOR HUMANITY CHRISTMAS TOY COLLECTION

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members on the Habitat for Humanity Christmas Toy Collections.

2. Background

Members were reminded that collection points for the donation of good quality pre-loved toys for families for Christmas operated again in 2024 at each of the five Household Recycling Centres in partnership Habitat for Humanity.

3. Summary

Following a huge success of the Christmas Toy Collection scheme over the past four years, it was recognised that there was a continued significant demand and need for the scheme. Collections were started in November 2024, allowing more time for residents to donate pre-loved toys. As in previous years, the collected toys were repaired, cleaned and sold on at reduced prices in Habitat for Humanity's ReStore shops and in addition, two pop-up shops were established in conjunction with the Community Planning team.

The scheme, now in its fifth year had become recognised among residents and our community groups. This year, the scheme attracted the attention of BBC who showcased the best practice of Council working in partnership with Habitat for Humanity and community groups to provide an initiative to assist families in a sustainable way.

Habitat for Humanity were again delighted with the quality, range and types of toys donated and in total 5,525 toys were collected, providing toys for children in many families across the Borough and diverting over 6 tonnes of waste from landfill, an increase from last year's collections and diversion rates.

Any toys remaining after the Christmas period had been donated by Habitat for Humanity to local groups identified by the Community Planning team, including play-groups, nurseries and Women's Aid, to ensure that all toys donated reached children in the Borough.

Due to the demonstrated need for the initiative and the growing success, collections would be arranged again in 2025, in partnership with Community Planning, commencing in November at each recycling centre.

Proposed by Alderman McGrath
Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.4 EH/PHWB/002 ELECTRIC BLANKET SWAP REVIEW

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to inform Members of the electric blanket swap events held across the Borough.

2. Background

Members were reminded that a Home Accident Prevention Officer worked within the Environmental Health section, with one of their key roles to reduce the number of home accidents. Building on the success of the 2023 electric blanket exchange events, four electric blanket swap events were held in December 2024 with the aim to mitigate fire hazards associated with faulty blankets.

3. Key Issues

Old or damaged electric blankets pose a significant fire risk, contributing to over 5,000 fires annually in the UK. To address this risk, Environmental Health organised four electric blanket exchange events at Mossley Mill, Antrim Civic Centre, Crumlin Leisure Centre, and Sixmile Leisure Centre.

At these events, residents could trade their old electric blankets for a rechargeable hot water bottle and a thermal fleece bedsheet. A total of 104 electric blankets were exchanged. Attendees also had the opportunity to engage with Environmental Health staff, who provided valuable advice on staying safe, warm, and healthy during the winter.

The events were promoted via the Council's website, social media channels, the Age Friendly Magazine 'News For You', and the Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors Forum. Additional provisions were made for those unable to attend including home visits.

The Council website provided information and advice to residents on electric blanket safety. <https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/residents/residents-community-information/community-advice/home-accident-prevention/electric-blanket-saf/>

4. Summary

In December 2024, four electric blanket safety events were held across the Borough. Residents were given the opportunity to exchange old or damaged electric blankets for a rechargeable hot water bottle and a thermal fleece bedsheet. A total of 104 electric blankets were exchanged at these events.

Proposed by Alderman McGrath
Seconded by Alderman Smyth and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.5 EH/EHS/015 TEST PURCHASE EXERCISE – SUNBED UNDERAGE SALES

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to remind Members that Councils in Northern Ireland had a statutory duty to enforce the provisions of The Sunbeds Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and to present the results of a test purchase exercise conducted within the Borough.

2. Introduction

The Sunbeds Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 prohibited the use, sale, and rental of sunbeds to individuals under the age of 18. This legislation was enacted due to increasing evidence linking sunbed use to serious health risks, including skin cancer, particularly among young people. Studies indicated that childhood sunburn and exposure to ultraviolet radiation from sunbeds significantly heightened the risk of developing skin cancer later in life.

3. Key Issues

The Public Health Agency had recommended that all sunbed-operating premises be subject to a test purchase by councils at least once every two years.

The objectives of the test purchase exercise were:

- To evaluate business operators' awareness of the legislation;
- To assess compliance with The Sunbeds Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, particularly regarding the prohibition of sunbed use by individuals under the age of 18.

In 2024, advisory letters were sent to the 19 premises that offer sunbeds for use operating within the Borough. These letters reminded businesses of their duties and legal requirements under the Act and informed them of a planned test purchasing exercise within the next 12 months to assess compliance with underage sales requirements.

The letter also included links to downloadable guidance for sunbed businesses,

including access leaflets and posters: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/sunbeds-policy-guidance-and-information-sunbed-operators-and-users>.

As previously reported, a test purchase exercise was conducted in July 2024 at nine premises within the Borough, with eight of these premises successfully complying with the legislation.

A second test purchase exercise was conducted in October 2024, with a further 11 premises visited, including a revisit to one of the premises from the previous round of test purchasing. Environmental Health Officers visited these premises accompanied by a young person aged under 18 years, who attempted to purchase a sunbed session. Out of the 11 premises visited, 8 demonstrated compliance with the legislative requirements, while 3 failed to meet the requirements.

Decisions regarding enforcement actions were made in accordance with the Council's enforcement policy. Two of the premises sold sunbed sessions to an underage individual were served with Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) of £250 each. An additional FPN of £250 was issued to one of these premises for failing to display the legally required Health Information Notice at the point of sale. All FPNs have been paid in full.

Investigations revealed that the third non-compliant premises had recently changed ownership. As the new owners had not received an advisory visit from Environmental Health to explain their legal responsibilities under the legislation, it was deemed inappropriate to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. Instead, a written warning was issued in accordance with the enforcement policy, and an educational visit was conducted to ensure the new management understood their obligations.

4. Summary

A sunbed test purchase exercise was carried out in October 2024, during which 11 premises were visited.

In summary, three premises as part of the test purchase made a sale to a young person. In line with the Council's Enforcement Policy, three fixed penalty notices were issued on two premises. The third premises was issued a written warning, as there was a change in ownership from when the other premises were provided an advisory visit on the legislative requirements.

Proposed by Councillor McLaughlin
Seconded by Alderman Smyth and agreed that

the report be noted.

ACTION BY: Michael Laverty, Director of Sustainability

Councillor Foster left the Chamber following item 5.5.

7 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

- 7.1 In response to queries from Members, the Director of Sustainability undertook to bring a report for Members' consideration in relation to the booking system for vans. It was agreed that a six month review will be undertaken when sufficient data had been collected for analysis.

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED 'IN CONFIDENCE

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Alderman Smyth and agreed

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

6 ITEMS IN CONFIDENCE

6.1 **IN CONFIDENCE** PK/REG/013, PK/GEN/197 CEMETERY BURIAL CAPACITY UPDATE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to provide an update on the burial capacity within Council's cemeteries.

2. Background

Members would be aware that quarterly updates were provided to the Operations Committee relating to the current burial capacity within Council owned cemeteries.

3. Current Position

The capacity as of 31st December 2024, for Council's Cemeteries and Gardens of Remembrance was detailed as follows:

Cemetery	No. of plots remaining	Current Average no. of plots sold PER YEAR (based on 3yr average)	Estimated remaining burial capacity (years)
Carnmoney	0	0	0
Ballyclare	530	100	5.3
Rashee	348	10	34
Sixmile	2074	80	26
Crumlin	405	15	27
TOTAL	3357	205	16

Garden of Remembrance Plots <i>(for burial of ashes only)</i>	No. of plots remaining	Average no. of plots sold (based on 3 year average)	Estimated remaining burial capacity (years)
Carnmoney	47	55	1
Ballyclare	119	2	60
Mallusk	15	0	15

Members were advised that issues had been reported in some sections of Crumlin and Rashee which would reduce the capacity in these cemeteries. Officers had commenced a mapping review of the remaining capacity in all Council cemeteries (except Carnmoney) with a comprehensive update to be brought to a future Committee when complete.

Officers were also in the process of developing an Outline Business Case for a new cemetery in the urban area of Newtownabbey, which would be presented to the Council for approval in the first quarter of the next financial year.

Following queries from Members, the Director of Parks and Leisure Operations agreed to seek an update on issues at Rashee and Crumlin Cemeteries, and review the conditions of Carnmoney Cemetery following the storm.

Proposed by Alderman McGrath
 Seconded by Councillor Magill and agreed that

the report be noted.

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

Councillor Foster returned to the Chamber during item 6.1.

Alderman McGrath left the meeting at this point.

6.2 IN CONFIDENCE L/LEI/855 OLD BLEACH BOWLING CLUB

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek approval to amend the lease of Old Bleach Bowling Club by adding a clause permitting alterations to the building.

2. Introduction

Old Bleach Bowling Club, based in Randalstown, held a lease for exclusive use of Council facilities, which included an outdoor bowling green and a pavilion. The pavilion was a prefabricated structure equipped with an oil-fired heating system and electrical sockets.

3. Previous Decision of Council

In April 2023, Council awarded Old Bleach Bowling Club a Technical Assistance Grant, allowing the club to develop a business plan for the redevelopment of its existing building.

Subsequently, the club requested a lease extension to support long-term planning and secure potential funding opportunities. The Council approved a new lease for Old Bleach Bowling Club in September 2024.

4. Key issues

The Club had recently sent correspondence (circulated) outlining the limitations and challenges they faced under the current lease detailed as follows:

1. Alterations

The current lease prohibited the Club from constructing new buildings, joining the property with neighbouring land, or making any additions or alterations. This restricted the club to maintaining the existing facilities, preventing any improvements.

2. Energy Costs and Environmental Impact

The heating and electricity costs amounted to approximately £5,000 per year. While grants were available for installing solar panels, heat pumps, and improved insulation, the existing building could not support these upgrades.

3. Insurance

Although the club had insurance for the building, it would not cover a full replacement in the event of significant damage, as the structure was considered too high-risk.

Proposed by Alderman Clarke

Seconded by Alderman Smyth and agreed that

approval be granted to amend the lease of Old Bleach Bowling Club by adding a clause permitting alterations to the building.

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

6.3 **IN CONFIDENCE** FI/PRO/TEN/505 PROVISION OF TREE SURGERY SERVICES CONTRACT PERIOD 11 MARCH 2025 – 31 MARCH 2028 WITH THE OPTION TO EXTEND FOR UP TO A FURTHER 24 MONTHS (SUBJECT TO PERFORMANCE AND REVIEW)

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to obtain approval for the appointment of suitably qualified and experienced organisation to provide tree surgery services to the Council for the contract period.

2. Introduction/Background

In the Council's parks, open spaces and other sites, and at the direction of Parks, the contractor would be responsible for tree maintenance, tree felling/removal, maintenance of hedges, pest and disease control and other tree related works. The level of spend on this contract was approximately [REDACTED] per annum.

This tender opportunity was made available on eSourcingNI on 6 November 2024. Eight tender responses were opened via the eSourcingNI Portal on 6 December 2024 and referred to the evaluation panel for assessment. The tenders were evaluated on a two-stage basis as follows:

STAGE 1 – SELECTION STAGE

The tenders were evaluated on a pass/fail basis for tenderer's professional conduct, economic and financial standing, previous relevant experience, management systems and practices, technical capacity and capability of the operatives, and declarations and form of tender. One tender failed to meet the requirements of this stage and did not proceed further. The remaining seven tenders met the requirements of Stage 1 of the evaluation process and proceeded to Stage 2.

STAGE 2 – AWARD STAGE

Sub-Stage 1 – Technical Assessment

The tenders were evaluated on a pass/fail basis for compliance with the specification and confirmation that they can provide the emergency cover function. All tenders met the requirements of this stage and proceeded to the next stage of evaluation.

Sub-Stage 2 – Quality & Commercial Assessment

The tenders were evaluated on the basis of management of the contract and customer focus (10%), capacity to deliver (10%), quality of service (20%), social value (10%), and cost (50%). The recommendation is as follows:

Supplier	Quality Assessment (out of 50%)	Cost Assessment (out of 50%)	Total % Score	Estimated Total Cost per Annum (£) (excl. VAT)
SPR McGowan Ltd	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	94%	£[REDACTED]

The Director of Parks and Leisure Operations agreed to explore with the Director of Finance and Governance the possibility of providing the full list of those submitting tenders for contracts.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Alderman Clarke and agreed that

having achieved a score of 94%, SPR McGowan Ltd be appointed to provide tree surgery services for the period of 11 March 2025 – 31 March 2028, with an option to extend for up to a further 24 months at the tendered rates.

ACTION BY: Melissa Kenning, Procurement Manager

6.4 IN CONFIDENCE FI/PRO/TEN/566 PROVISION OF HOUSEHOLD KERBSIDE SORT RECYCLING AND FOOD WASTE COLLECTION SERVICES CONTRACT PERIOD 1 MAY 2025 – 30 APRIL 2030 WITH THE OPTION TO EXTEND FOR UP TO A FURTHER 60 MONTHS (SUBJECT TO PERFORMANCE AND REVIEW)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Councillor Ward and agreed that

[REDACTED]

ACTION BY: Melissa Kenning, Procurement Manager

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED OUT OF 'IN CONFIDENCE'

Proposed by Alderman Clarke
Seconded by Councillor Ward 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 the meeting concluded at 7.37pm.

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.