



29 January 2025

Committee Chair: Councillor V McWilliam

Committee Vice-Chair: Councillor A McAuley

Committee Members: Aldermen - P Bradley, L Clarke, J McGrath and J Smyth

Councillors – J Burbank, R Foster, J Gilmour, AM Logue, E McLaughlin, H Magill, M Ní Chonghaile, M Stewart and S Ward

Dear Member

**MEETING OF THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE**

A meeting of the Operations Committee will be held in the **Round Tower Chamber, Antrim Civic Centre on Monday 3 February 2025 at 6.30 pm.**

You are requested to attend.

Yours sincerely

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

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

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

**For any queries please contact Member Services:**  
Tel: 028 9448 1301

[memberservices@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk](mailto:memberservices@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk)

## **A G E N D A**

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### **3 PRESENTATION**

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

##### **1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this presentation is to provide Members with an update on the Grant Funding Hub and the proposed changes for the Leisure Grant Aid Programme.**

##### **2. Introduction**

Members are advised that Anna Boyle, Funding Unit Manager will make a short presentation on a review of the Leisure Grant Aid Programme

##### **3. Recommendation**

**It is recommended that the presentation be noted.**

Prepared by: Anna Boyle, Funding Unit Manager

Agreed by: Deaglan O'Hagan, Head of Leisure Operations

Approved by: Matt McDowell, Director of Parks and Leisure Operations

## 4 ITEMS FOR DECISION

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

#### 1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is 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 have been scored with a table setting out details and recommendations enclosed for Member's reference. Upon approval of the listed grants, the remaining balances in each funding category are 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
<b>Allocation total</b>	83	£170,000	<b>£132,039</b> (includes £23,773 from previous financial year)	<b>8</b>	<b>£17,865</b>	£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 is £170,000.

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

#### 4. Recommendation

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

Prepared by: Kevin Madden, Sport and Physical Activity Manager and Conor McCallion, Leisure Development Manager

Agreed by: Deaglan O'Hagan, Head of Leisure Operations

Approved by: Matt McDowell, Director of Parks and Leisure Operations

## 4.2 L/LEI/002/VOL3 MARY PETERS TRUST

### 1. Purpose

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

### 2. Introduction

Members are reminded that the Mary Peter's Trust provides financial support to young athletes from across Northern Ireland. Within the Borough the range of sporting disciplines supported in 2024/25 includes Golf, Motorcycling, Gymnastics, Para Triathlon and Yachting. Correspondence has been received from the Mary Peters Trust, requesting financial support for its funding to local athletes. This correspondence is **enclosed** 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.

### 4. Recommendation

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

Prepared by: Kevin Madden, Sport and Physical Activity Manager

Agreed by: Deaglan O'Hagan, Head of Leisure Operations

Approved by: Matt McDowell, Director of Parks and Leisure Operations

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

##### **1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report is 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" is a prestigious all-island competition that showcases the very best of community pride and environmental excellence. This unique contest pits top-performing villages and towns from Ireland's renowned "Tidy Towns" competition against the winners of Northern Ireland's "Best Kept" competition. It highlights 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 has been received from the Northern Ireland Amenity Council requesting that Council supports the nomination of Randalstown for the Best Kept Ireland Towns Awards 2025 in the category of "Best Kept Small Town".

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

##### **4. Recommendation**

**It is recommended that approval be granted for Council to support the nomination of Randalstown for the Best Kept Ireland Towns Awards 2025.**

Prepared by: Paula Robinson, Executive Officer to Director of Parks and Leisure Operations

Agreed by: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

Approved by: Matt McDowell, 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 are **enclosed** for Members' consideration.

##### **3. Recommendation**

**It is recommended that the minutes of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Group meeting held on 14 January 2025 be approved.**

Prepared and Agreed by: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

Approved by: Matt McDowell, Director of Parks and Leisure Operations

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

##### 1. Purpose

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

##### 2. Introduction/Background

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

##### 3. Previous Decision of Council

Council has 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 will cost of circa £350. The proposed location for the disc for the scout group is at Alexander Irvine Park in Antrim and at the junction of Burnside Road for the Orange Hall.

##### 5. Recommendation

**It is recommended that the installation of the anniversary celebratory disc for 1<sup>st</sup> Muckamore Scout Group and Burnside Orange Hall be approved.**

Prepared and Agreed by: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

Approved by: Matt McDowell, Director of Parks and Leisure Operations

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

##### 1. Purpose

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

##### 2. Background

SNI works with a range of stakeholders, including local councils, with the aim of promoting a sustainable low carbon future. Correspondence has been received from SNI (**enclosed**) and it is proposed to contribute financial support of £6,000 for the incoming financial year, as we did last year.

Members are 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 provides valuable access to information which is useful to the Sustainability Working Group.

##### 3. Recommendation

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

Prepared by: Claire Evans, Climate, Waste and Sustainability Officer

Agreed by: Lynsey Daly, Head of Waste Strategy and Sustainability

Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Sustainability

## 4.7 WM/S/003 SUSTAINABILITY WORKING GROUP MINUTES

### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is 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 are (**enclosed**) 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.

### 3. Recommendation

**It is recommended that the minutes of the Sustainability Working Group held on 3 December 2024 be approved.**

Prepared by: Claire Evans, Climate, Waste and Sustainability Officer

Agreed by: Leanne Smits, Waste Strategy and Sustainability Manager

Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Sustainability

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

### 1. Purpose

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

### 2. Introduction/Background

Members are 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 will be implemented by the Grant Funding Unit and departments with responsibility for the awarding and administering of grant funding. To ensure full compliance of the grant funding policy and to create consistency across schemes, all grant funding programmes were reviewed including 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 is outlined in Table 1.

**Table 1**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Current</b>	<b>Proposed change</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
Grants to Athletes	Paid 100% following vouch  Maximum award £1,500	Move to a Bursary Scheme  Maximum award £1,000	• <b>Bursary</b> - An award provided to an individual based on meeting a pre agreed

	Scored	Move scoring to Pass/Fail	<p>criteria to support with personal development or success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce bureaucracy – athletes currently claim approximately 80% of their grant</li> <li>• Reduce risk profile</li> </ul>										
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"> <li>• <b>Bursary</b> - An award provided to an individual based on meeting a pre agreed criteria to support with personal development or success</li> </ul> <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"> <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</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	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"> <li>• Technical Assistance</li> <li>• Capital Grant Scheme</li> </ul>
Criteria	Score												
Compliance with Good Governance	20%												
Demonstration of need	30%												
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How does the project meet	20%												

		the needs of the Council's Corporate Plan?																											
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		50% funding paid upfront 50% funding following vouch	Consistent approach to Grant Funding Easier management of cash flow within Organisations
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

Each funding scheme has its own individual Grant Guidance document, a draft copy of the guidance notes including the proposed changes are **enclosed** for Members' information.

#### 5. Financial Position/Implication

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

#### 6. Governance

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

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



## **7. Recommendation**

**It is recommended that the proposed changes to the Leisure Grant Aid Programme be approved.**

Prepared by: Anna Boyle, Funding Unit Manager

Agreed by: Deaglan O'Hagan, Head of Leisure Operations

Approved by: Matt McDowell, Director of Parks and Leisure Operations

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

### 1. Purpose

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

### 2. Background

The draft Corporate Plan is a strategic document that outlines 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 collaborates with the Council on several initiatives, including Home Accident Prevention, Age-Friendly projects, and Energy Efficiency programs. Additionally, the PHA plays a significant role in supporting the Council's Community Plan.

The draft Corporate Plan defines the PHA's purpose, vision, values, and public health priorities, which are 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 (**enclosed**) has been prepared in collaboration with Environmental Health across all of the Councils in Northern Ireland.

#### 4. Summary

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

#### 5. **Recommendation**

**It is recommended that draft consultation response be approved.**

Prepared by: Alison Briggs, Deputy Head of Environmental Health - Health and Wellbeing

Agreed by: Colin Kelly, Head of Environmental Health and Wellbeing

Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Sustainability

## 5 ITEMS FOR NOTING

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

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is 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 uses digital software to calculate a Net Promoter Score (NPS). This score is derived from randomly sampling customers who visit the leisure centres and asking them to rate the facilities on a scale of 1 to 10. Additionally, a follow-up question asks 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 remain the top three areas mentioned by customers.
- "Staff" and "Courtesy" receive the most positive feedback scores
- Ballyearl remains the highest scoring Centre with a score of 72 in quarter 3.

Performance is 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 is 66 showing a positive trend.

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

#### 4. Recommendation

**It is recommended that the report be noted.**

Prepared by: Conor McCallion, Leisure Development Manager

Agreed by: Deaglan O'Hagan, Head of Leisure Operations

Approved by: Matt McDowell, Director Parks and Leisure Operations

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

### 1. Purpose

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

### 2. Introduction/Background

Members are advised that Council approved the Health Intervention Action Plan (2022-27) in November 2022, a copy is **enclosed** for Members' reference. The plan is 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 develop and coordinate 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:

<b>Programmes</b>	<b>24/25 Annual Target</b>	<b>Q3 Target</b>	<b>Q3 Actual</b>	<b>YTD Total</b>
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:

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Funded by</b>	<b>Total</b>
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
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£40,201</b>

#### 5. Recommendation

**It is recommended that the report be noted.**

Prepared by: Conor McCallion, Leisure Development Manager

Agreed by: Deaglan O'Hagan, Head of Leisure Operations

Approved by: Matt McDowell, Director of Parks and Leisure Operations

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

#### 1. Purpose

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

#### 2. Background

Members are 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 has 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 have 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 will be arranged again in 2025, in partnership with Community Planning, commencing in November at each recycling centre.

#### 4. Recommendation

**It is recommended that the report be noted.**

Prepared by: Rebecca Clulow, Climate, Waste and Sustainability Officer

Agreed by: Lynsey Daly, Head of Waste Strategy and Sustainability

Approved by: Michael Lavery, Director of Sustainability



## 5.4 EH/PHWB/002 ELECTRIC BLANKET SWAP REVIEW

### 1. Purpose

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

### 2. Background

Members are reminded that a Home Accident Prevention Officer works 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 provides 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.

### 5. Recommendation

**It is recommended that the report be noted.**

Prepared by: James O'Kane, Health and Wellbeing Manager

Agreed by: Colin Kelly, Head of Environmental Health and Wellbeing

Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Sustainability

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

### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is to remind Members that Councils in Northern Ireland have 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 prohibits 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 indicate that childhood sunburn and exposure to ultraviolet radiation from sunbeds significantly heighten the risk of developing skin cancer later in life.

### 3. Key Issues

The Public Health Agency has 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 are:

- 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.

#### 5. Recommendation

**It is recommended that the report be noted.**

Prepared by: Gareth Thompson, Environmental Health Manager (Health and Safety and Consumer Protection)

Agreed by: Colin Kelly, Head of Environmental Health and Wellbeing

Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Sustainability