



**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
HELD IN ROUND TOWER CHAMBER, ANTRIM CIVIC CENTRE
ON MONDAY 1 SEPTEMBER 2025 AT 6.30 PM**

In the Chair	:	Alderman J Smyth
Committee Members (In person)	:	Councillors – J Archibald-Brown, M Cooper, R Foster, J Gilmour, N Kelly, L O'Hagan, M Stewart and S Ward
Committee Members (Remote)	:	Alderman P Bradley Councillors A McAuley and E McLaughlin
Non Committee Members (In person)	:	Councillor B Webb
Non Committee Members: (Remote)	:	Councillor M Ní Chonghaile
Officers Present	:	Director of Parks & Leisure Operations - M McDowell Director of Sustainability – M Lavery Head of Parks Operations - P Mawhinney Head of Waste Operations – D Purdy Head of Waste Strategy & Sustainability – L Daly Head of Leisure Operations – D O'Hagan Head of Estate Services – D Blair ICT Systems Support Officer – C Bell ICT Support Assistant – D Graham Member Services Officer – L Irwin

CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the September Operations Committee meeting and reminded all present of the audio recording procedures. He welcomed Councillor Cooper to the Committee who had been nominated by his party for membership for the next two months.

1 APOLOGIES

Councillor V McWilliam
Councillor AM Logue

Alderman L Boyle

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Item 7.4 – Councillor 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.

The Chairperson welcomed David Blair, Head of Estate Services to make a short presentation on energy management across Council facilities.

Head of Estate Services and Director of Parks & Leisure responded to various Members' queries.

Proposed by Councillor Cooper
Seconded by Councillor Kelly and agreed that

the presentation be noted.

NO ACTION

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 within the 2nd call of the Leisure Grant Aid Programme.

2. Introduction

Members were advised that for the period 1 June – 31 July 2025, 32 applications were received, 3 applications were deemed ineligible and 29 met the criteria for funding. Details of the grant programme criteria were circulated.

A table setting out details and recommendations were circulated for Members' reference. Upon approval of the listed grants, the remaining balances in each funding category were outlined below:

Category	Budget	No. of apps. Call: 1	Approved spend to date 25/26	No. of apps. Call: 2	Grants proposed (£)	Funding Balance remaining (subject to approval of application)
Capital Grants	£40,000	4	£29,750	1	£10,000	£250
Grants to Clubs	£50,000	3	£9,445	4	£27,140	£13,415
Grants to Athletes Bursaries	£40,000	25	£22,739	20	£15,137	£2,124
Grants to Coaches and Officials Bursaries	£5,000	4	£720	0	0	£4,280
Sports Event Grant	£30,000	8	£17,706	2	£2,000	£10,294
Defibrillator Grant	£5,000	2	£1,500	0	0	£3,500
Allocation total	£170,000	46	£81,860	27	£54,277	£33,863
Fitness suite Gold Card	20 Applications	6	4 applications	5	4 eligible	12 applications

3. Financial Position/Implication

The overall budget for the 2025/26 programme was £170,000. £81,860 and was previously approved in July 2025. Should approval be given for the grants listed, the total spend to date would total £136,137, with a remaining balance of £33,863. A further call for applications opened on 1 August and would close on 31 October 2025.

Proposed by Councillor Kelly
Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed that

the Leisure Grant Aid Programme, covering the period from June – July 2025 be approved.

ACTION BY: Anna Boyle, Funding Unit Manager and Conor McCallion, Leisure Development Manager

4.2 **PK/GEN/022 NORTHERN IRELAND AMENITY COUNCIL (BEST KEPT COMMUNITY HERO AWARD)**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek approval for three individual nominations as part of Council's submission to the Northern Ireland Amenity Council (NIAC) 'Best Kept Community Hero' award 2025.

2. Background

The Northern Ireland Amenity Council (NIAC), established to promote the protection and enhancement of the physical environment, played a key role in supporting initiatives such as the Best Kept Awards. NIAC also oversaw the Northern Ireland Amenity Awards, which had become a benchmark for similar environmental competitions across the UK, the Republic of Ireland, and Europe, including prominent programmes such as Tidy Towns and Entente Florale.

As part of the Best Kept Awards, there was a dedicated "Community Hero" category. This category recognised individuals who had played an active role in the competition and had demonstrated exceptional commitment to their community. Nominees should be individuals who have inspired and motivated others to get involved, shown a strong passion for the environment, consistently gone above and beyond in their efforts, and made a tangible, positive difference to their local area.

Each Council was permitted to submit a maximum of three individual nominations. All entries must be submitted by 12 September 2025. The winner would be announced during the Best Kept Awards Ceremony, to be held on Wednesday, 15 October 2025, at The Burnavon Arts Centre in Cookstown.

3. Nominations for 2025

This year nominations had all be actively involved in the 'Best Kept Awards' competition and have a passion for the environment and always go that extra mile and making a positive difference in improving the environment for their community.

Name	Group
1. Lyndsay Wilson	TIDAL in Toome
2. Jackie Wells	Ballynure Friendship Group
3. Noel Hamilton	Friends of Coronation Garden

Proposed by Councillor Kelly

Seconded by Councillor Archibald-Brown and agreed that

the above nominations for the Northern Ireland Amenity Council (NIAC) 'Best Kept Community Hero' award 2025 be approved.

ACTION BY: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

4.3 PK/GEN/177 BELFAST HILLS PARTNERSHIP FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION FROM COUNCIL

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek approval for an annual financial contribution of £19,036 to the Belfast Hills Partnership for a four-year period from April 2026 to March 2030.

2. Introduction/Background

Members would be aware that Council was a key partner in the Belfast Hills Partnership. This Partnership was originally established with the legacy Newtownabbey Borough Council in 2004 and had continued under Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council since its formation in 2015.

The Partnership delivered a broad range of initiatives focused on enhancing local sites, protecting and restoring biodiversity, and fostering community engagement across all age groups. These efforts helped ensure that both residents and visitors could access, enjoy, and benefit from the natural landscape within Antrim and Newtownabbey section of the Belfast Hills. The Belfast Hills spanned approximately 5,500 hectares in total, with 1,243 hectares, representing 22.6% of the area located within the Borough.

As part of its ongoing efforts to support Council's One Million Trees initiative, the Partnership had successfully planted 31,652 trees across 14 hectares of land and established approximately 1,700 metres of new hedgerow. These activities not only contributed to carbon reduction and biodiversity enhancement but also supported long-term climate resilience and ecosystem connectivity within the Borough. In addition to tree planting, the Partnership had played a key role in engaging the local community through the coordination and supervision of volunteer activities at several strategic sites. These included Carnmoney Hill, Valley Park, and Glas-Na-Bradán Wood.

3. Previous Decision of Council

Members were reminded that in November 2023, Council approved an annual funding contribution of £19,036 for a two-year period from 2023 to 2025.

4. Financial Position/Implication

Correspondence, including a newsletter, had been received from the Partnership (copies circulated) requesting that the Council continue its annual financial contribution of £19,036 for a further four-year period (April 2026 – March 2030). The proposed extension would provide the Partnership with greater financial certainty and enable longer-term financial planning.

Proposed by Councillor Kelly

Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed that

the financial contribution of £19,036 per annum to Belfast Hills Partnership for the next four years from April 2026 – March 2030 be approved.

ACTION BY: Nadine Campbell, Parks Development Manager

4.4 PK/GEN/ 217 CELEBRATING THE 35TH ANNIVERSARY OF SAM MOULDINGS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek approval for the installation of a celebratory disc in recognition of the 35th anniversary of SAM Mouldings based in Antrim.

2. Introduction/Background

In 2025, SAM Mouldings proudly celebrated its 35th anniversary, marking over three decades of excellence in the moulding and manufacturing industry. Established in 1990, the company had grown to become a trusted and respected name, recognised for its high-quality products, continuous innovation, and exceptional customer service. As a longstanding local employer, SAM Mouldings had demonstrated an enduring commitment to the Antrim area, contributing significantly to the local economy and community over the past 35 years.

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, community organisations and businesses.

4. Financial Implication

The installation of the anniversary celebratory disc would cost of circa £350. The proposed location for the disc was on Greystone Roundabout.

Proposed by Councillor Kelly

Seconded by Councillor O'Hagan and agreed that

approval for the installation of the anniversary celebratory disc for SAM Mouldings be granted.

ACTION BY: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

4.5 EH/EHS/002 SERVICE DELIVERY OF ANIMAL WELFARE SERVICE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to provide an update to Members on the delivery of the Animal Welfare Service and to seek funding for the continued delivery of the service.

2. Background

Members were reminded, since April 2015, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council (MEA) had acted as the Sub-Regional Lead Council for the delivery of the Animal Welfare Service across the Northern Region (Mid and East Antrim, Antrim and Newtownabbey, and Causeway Coast and Glens).

Historically, the 11 councils in Northern Ireland received 100% funding (£1.25M) from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) to cover the cost of the service. However, DAERA had confirmed in writing (April 2024) that, due to budget reductions, it could no longer provide financial support to Councils.

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council sought a judicial review of DAERA's decision on behalf of the 11 councils. The hearing took place in February 2025, and while an outcome had been expected before summer, no judgement had yet been issued.

3. Previous Decision of Council

In November 2023 and June 2024, Members agreed that Council approved the use of Council funds to finance the Animal Welfare Service during 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 to enable continued service delivery at a cost of approximately £140,000.

4. Key Issues

In April 2024, DAERA advised Councils that an additional resource allocation of £625,000 had been made for 2023-2024. This was distributed among the 11 Councils as a partial contribution towards costs already incurred. However, the allocation did not cover the full cost of service delivery, and Councils were required to contribute from their own budgets.

DAERA had also confirmed that, unless further funding was provided by the Northern Ireland Executive, no finance would be available for 2025-2026 or subsequent financial years. For this Council, the shortfall equated to approximately £140,000 annually.

MEA had requested assurance from Council and Causeway Coast and Glens Council that their 2025-2026 contributions would be transferred to MEA to support continued service delivery. Given that the Animal Welfare Service for non-farmed animals was a statutory responsibility, Officers recommended that Council provided the required contribution as this remained the most cost-effective method of delivery.

The funding requirement had been included in the 2025-26 budgets. When the judicial review outcome had been issued a further report would be presented to Members.

5. Summary

In April 2024, DAERA advised Council that it was withdrawing financial assistance for the Animal Welfare Service. However, no funding had been available since 2024. NI councils had sought a judicial review of DAERA's decision, and this process was ongoing.

At present, MEA provided this service for Council and had requested confirmation that Council wish to continue the agreement in 2025-26. Given that this was a statutory duty of Council and the current arrangement was deemed to be the most efficient way to deliver service, Officers recommended approval of the funding request. Monies had been included in the 2025-26 budget for this service.

Proposed by Councillor Kelly
Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed that

the current delivery mechanism for the Animal Welfare Service through Mid and East Antrim Borough Council at an estimated cost of £140,000 in 2025-2026 be approved.

ACTION BY: Colin Kelly, Head of Environmental Health and Wellbeing

4.6 L/LEI/001 UK ACTIVE AWARDS 2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to provide an update on the submission to the 2025 UK Active Awards and seek approval for nominees to attend the awards in International Convention Centre in Birmingham on Thursday 30 October 2025.

2. Introduction

UK Active was a leisure industry body with over 4,000 members ranging from public, private and third sectors. The UK Active Annual Awards are the largest and most prestigious accolades in the leisure industry, designed to recognise and celebrate excellence and innovation across health, wellbeing and fitness in the UK.

To be shortlisted as a finalist, entries must pass a two-stage assessment process, with the centres undergoing a third stage of a mystery shop deciding the overall winner.

Members were reminded that in 2024, Ballyearl Arts and Leisure Centre was shortlisted, and subsequently retained the Regional Centre of the Year, following the success in 2023 with award of Regional and National Leisure Centre of the Year. In 2022 the Valley Leisure Centre was awarded Regional Leisure Centre of the Year.

3. Awards Ceremony

The award ceremony would take place on 30 October 2025 at the International Convention Centre, Birmingham.

This year, Ballyearl Arts and Leisure Centre had once again been shortlisted as a finalist in both the Regional Leisure Centre of the Year and National Leisure Centre of the Year categories. The Antrim Forum had also reached the finals, reflecting the continued strength of the Borough's leisure facilities.

In addition to facility recognition, acknowledgement had been given to individuals and programmes. Arlene McMinn, Health Intervention Officer, had been nominated for Physical Activity Hero of the Year in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the Council's Health Intervention Programme. Furthermore, the Health Intervention Programme itself had been shortlisted for the Healthy Communities Award.

Members congratulated all the award nominees and wished them well for the forthcoming awards evening.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour
Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed that

the attendance of the Mayor, Chair of the Operations Committee or their nominees and relevant Council Officers at the UK Active Awards Ceremony at the International Convention Centre in Birmingham on 30 October 2025 be approved.

ACTION BY: Conor McCallion, Leisure Development Manager

4.7 WM/WG/002 WINTER GRITTING OPERATIONS 2025-26

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek approval for Winter Gritting Operations 2025-26.

2. Background

From November to April each year, Council implements a Winter Operations Plan to help staff deliver services as safely and efficiently as possible during the winter months. The plan (circulated) included provisions for gritting all Council facilities and designated areas such as town centres and car parks. It also outlined procedures for maintaining waste collection services during adverse weather and for carrying out snow clearance operations.

In addition Council had a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), with the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) Roads regarding the clearance of designated "town centre footways and pedestrian areas" of snow and ice during periods of "heavy snowfall or prolonged" adverse weather. As part of this agreement DfI Roads provided Council with the salt/grit mix free of charge, pays an annual service fee, £2,358, and extended its indemnity to Council.

3. Key Issues

The Plan was activated when there was a strong likelihood of ice, as indicated by Met Office warnings and media weather reports. Once activated, it resulted in the gritting of designated areas, including town and village centres. A copy of the designated areas was (circulated) for Members' information.

As per last year's Winter Operations, it was proposed that gritting operations would be carried out by staff and as well as an external contractor in order to maintain the level of service required over the winter period. It was estimated that it would cost up to £24,000 depending on the severity of the winter.

Community Winter Resilience Kits

Council would continue to offer a limited number of Community Winter Resilience Kits which included a salt spreader, salt, grit box, snow shovels, ice grippers, gloves, and hi-vis vests. These Kits could be requested by individuals and community groups who were willing to provide a gritting or snow clearance service in their local community. Each group or individual receiving a Kit would also be given health and safety guidance notes.

Community Grit Piles

It was proposed to maintain the community grit piles this winter and a list of the locations were included in the Plan, and grit would be supplied in the event of prolonged periods of adverse weather.

At the request of a Member, the Head of Waste Operations undertook to investigate the possibility of adding 'the square' in Doagh to the gritting schedule. In addition, the Director of Sustainability also agreed to look at the potential of using brine as an alternative to rock salt for upcoming winter operations.

Proposed by Councillor Archibald-Brown
Seconded by Councillor Kelly and agreed that

- a) the Winter Operations Plan be noted;**
- b) Additional contractor gritting costs of up to approximately £24,000 be approved.**

ACTION BY: Darren Purdy, Head of Waste Operations

4.8 PK/GEN/057 GREEN FLAG AWARDS 2025 COMMUNITY NOMINATIONS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek approval for nominations for the 2025 Green Flag Community "Best of the Best" Awards

2. Introduction/Background

The Green Flag Award was an internationally recognised benchmark of excellence for parks and green spaces, celebrating sites that were well-managed, welcoming, safe, and environmentally sustainable. Administered by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, the award highlights spaces that not only meet high standards but also actively involve their local communities. Each site was rigorously assessed by trained judges against strict criteria, ensuring that only the best received the prestigious Green Flag status.

As part of this programme, the Community "Best of the Best" Awards shone a spotlight on those exceptional locations that went above and beyond in engaging their local communities. These awards honoured the dedication, creativity, and hard work of community groups and volunteers who helped to make their green spaces truly outstanding.

3. Submissions for 2025

This year's nominees had all been actively involved in the **Green Flag Awards** competition and had made a positive difference by improving the environment for their communities.

Category	Group/Project
Volunteer Team of the Year	Tidy Randalstown, Ballynure Friend Group Carnmoney Community Group
Best Habitat/Biodiversity Project	Creation of Wildflower meadows

The winners of the Community "Best of the Best" Awards would be announced at a virtual award ceremony on 20th November 2025.

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor Kelly and agreed that

the above nominations be approved for submission to the 2025 Green Flag Community "Best of the Best" Awards.

ACTION BY: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

The Supplementary report was taken at this point.

4.9 **WM/WM/037/VOL2 REFUSE AND RECYCLING PUBLIC HOLIDAY COLLECTIONS DECEMBER 2025 – JANUARY 2026**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members approval on the proposed alternative refuse and kerbside recycling collection days for December 2025 – January 2026.

2. Background

As in previous years, Council worked with our Contractors to agree alternative collection dates for refuse and kerbside recycling across the Borough.

3. Key Issues

The arrangements for refuse and kerbside recycling collections for Public Holidays in 2025 had been approved by Council but due to the proposed harmonisation of waste collection services, the details of December 2025 collection could not be finalised.

As Christmas and Boxing Day fell on the Thursday and Friday, the next alternative collection days would be Saturday 27 December 2025 and Sunday 28 December 2025. This was deemed to be more effective than moving the collections to the Monday and Tuesday and knocking other collections on to later in the week as this would cause a significant increase in calls and associated resource demand when put in place.

Discussions had been held to secure access to the waste transfer/treatment facilities and agreement with the collection parties and as a result the proposed alternative collection days were:

Public Holiday	Legacy Antrim Households	Legacy Newtownabbey Households
Christmas Day Thursday 25 th December 2025	No Service - Collections rescheduled to: Saturday 27 th December 2025	No Service - Collections rescheduled to: Saturday 27 th December 2025 ay)
Boxing Day Friday 26 th December 2025	No Service - Collections rescheduled to: Sunday 28 th December 2025 (Wheelie Boxes only) (No Collections required for Black & Brown Bins as a service is Mon-Thurs)	No Service - Collections rescheduled to: Sunday 28 th December 2025 (Covers Black, Brown, & Wheelie Box collections)
New Years Day Thursday 1 st January 2026	No Service - Collections rescheduled to: Saturday 3 rd January 2026	No Service - Collections rescheduled to: Saturday 3 rd January 2026

Officers would liaise with Avenue Recycling and Bryson Recycling to minimise any disruptions to church services on the Sunday.

Residents in the Borough would be advised of these alternate arrangements via the usual means of the Borough Life, social media and via the Council's

website.

4. Financial Implications

There would be a small addition cost will be required to provide the transfer and collection services on the Saturday and Sunday. This was estimated to be approximately £10,000 and could be covered by the current favourable position in the waste management budget.

Proposed by Councillor Kelly

Seconded by Councillor Cooper and agreed that

the collection arrangements for refuse and recycling bin collections for Public Holidays for December 2025 - January 2026, as set out above, be approved.

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

5 ITEMS FOR NOTING

5.1 L/LEI/SD/018 HEALTH INTERVENTION REPORT QUARTER 1 2025-26

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to provide a Quarter 1 update on Council's Health Intervention Action Plan for 2025–26.

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 Action 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. Key Issues

Officers continued to lead and coordinate a diverse range of programmes, working in partnership with relevant organisations to ensure the effective implementation of the Action Plan.

In Quarter 1 of 2025–26, a total of 6,147 participants engaged in Council-supported programmes. The performance against targets is outlined below:

Programmes	25/26 Annual Target	Q1 Target	Q1 Actual
Physical Activity Referral Scheme (PARS)	170	45	39
Move More Cancer Rehabilitation and Rehabilitation Programme	100	25	16
Age Friendly (Live Long, Fall's Prevention, Walking	22,000	5500	4837

Netball, Aqua Fit and Nordic Walking)			
Exercise for Mental Health Programme	2000	500	364
Respiratory Rehabilitation and Maintenance Programme	600	115	168
Cardiac Rehabilitation and Maintenance Programmes	1200	300	352
Programmes for People with a Disability	500	125	188
Pre-Post Natal (new)	100	0	0
Substance mis-use (new)	20	0	0
Veterans	30	0	0

4. New Programmes

Looking ahead to 2025–26, Officers would continue to expand the reach and impact of the Health Intervention Programme.

In Quarter 3, new initiatives would be launched supporting pre- and post-natal health and to address substance misuse. Building on the success of last year, another Veteran's programme would also take place in Quarter 3.

In addition, funding secured from the Public Health Agency would enable the delivery of a bespoke Cancer and Golf Rehabilitation Programme which would take place in Quarter 3.

5. Financial Position/Implication

The Council directly employed three Health Intervention Officers to support delivery of the Action Plan. This work was part-funded through external sources, with the table below providing a breakdown of confirmed external funding for 2025–26.

Programme	Funded by	Total
Physical Activity Referral Schemes (PARS)	PHA	£33,506
Healthy Kids Schools Programme	NHLP	£4000
Cancer & Golf rehab programme	NHLP	£4000
Walking Football Programme TBC	NHSCT	£3,000 TBC
Falls Prevention Steady and Strong Programme TBC	NHSCT	£1,870 TBC
Move More (Cancer Rehabilitation Programme)	Macmillan	£5,000 TBC
Total		£51,376

Proposed by Councillor Archibald-Brown
Seconded by Councillor Kelly and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.2 FI/FIN/004 BUDGET REPORT – PERIOD 4 APRIL 2025 TO JULY 2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to provide financial performance information at period 4 (April 2025 – July 2025) for Parks, Leisure and Estate Services and Sustainability.

2. Introduction/Background

As agreed, quarterly budget reports would be presented to the relevant Committee or Working Group. All financial reports would be available to all Members.

3. Summary

Budget reports for Parks, Leisure & Estate Services and Sustainability for Period 4 – April 2025 to July 2025 were circulated for Members' information.

At present the Parks and Leisure Directorate had a favourable variance of £257k, or 6.4%, against the budgeted financial performance for the period and this was due to:

- Staff vacancies
- Leisure Membership & Golf income higher than budgeted

The Sustainability Directorate had a favourable variance of £300k, or 3.5%, against the budgeted financial performance for the period and this was due to:

- Staff vacancies;
- Lower than estimated waste arisings;
- Delay in payment for Animal Welfare Service.

The overall financial position of the Council would be presented to the Policy & Governance Committee.

The Director of Parks & Leisure Operations agreed to explore the possibility of providing updates on current employee vacancies to Committee on a quarterly basis.

Proposed by Councillor Foster

Seconded by Councillor Cooper and agreed that

the report be noted.

ACTION: Matt McDowell, Director of Parks & Leisure Operations

5.3 EH/EHS/FC/012 DRINKING WATER QUALITY REPORT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to remind Members that Northern Ireland Water published an annual report on water quality for each council, based on compliance with the 2017 Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations (Northern Ireland).

2. Background

Northern Ireland Water's supply area was divided into Water Supply Zones, each serving up to 100,000 people, with seven across the Borough. Random water samples were taken from customer taps and planned samples from Supply Points in each zone. The NI Water Drinking Water report (circulated) detailed water quality in the Council's area, based on compliance percentages from these samples.

The water supplied in all zones within the Council's area complied with all the physico-chemical and microbiological standards laid down in the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017 with only minor issues related to aluminium parameters at Killylane, Ballynure and these were rectified after an audit of the treatment works.

3. Summary

In 2024, the compliance rate at customer taps within the Borough was 99.9%. All zones in the Council's area met the physico-chemical and microbiological standards set by the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017, with only minor exceedances of aluminium levels at Killylane, Ballynure.

It was noted that this study did not include testing for microplastics as there were currently no standards or thresholds in the Regulations for this.

Proposed by Councillor Kelly

Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.4 **EH/PHWB/012 SILVER SUMMER SCHEME**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to inform Members of the Age Friendly initiative "Silver Summer Scheme," which encourages older people to stay active with a week of creative and fun activities.

2. Background

Members were reminded that Environmental Health led the Age Friendly agenda by making the Borough a better place to age. During the summer months, many community groups and programmes for older residents pause their activities, resulting in a lack of accessible, structured opportunities for social engagement and participation. This could lead to increased social isolation and reduced wellbeing among older adults.

3. Key Issues

To address this issue the Health and Wellbeing team within Environmental Health launched the first ever Silver Summer Scheme, a new initiative designed to help older residents stay active, connected, and engaged. Running from 21 to 25 July, this was the only initiative of its kind in Northern Ireland. It offered a week of free, diverse activities, including Nordic walking, gardening, arts and crafts, live entertainment, and social cafés.

The programme was delivered in partnership with the Waste, Leisure, Parks, Arts and Culture teams, arc 21, and Libraries NI, and successfully hosted events across all seven District Electoral Areas (DEAs). Activities included Nordic Walking, Bag Making Workshop, Tea and Tidy Litter Pick, Boccia and Brew, Pebble Art, Picnic and Planting and more. There was no financial impact on Council.

A total of 127 residents took part in the events with 100% of residents enjoying the events with 98% approving of the range of activities offered.

Feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive, with comments such as:

"Keep up what you do, I enjoyed the bingo, music and getting to talk to other people I didn't know."

"The team is very enthusiastic and I would try to support future summer events. There is definitely a gap in summer for people without families."

Building on the success of this year's Silver Summer Scheme, the Health and Wellbeing team was planning an expanded and enhanced Silver Summer Scheme in 2026 to reach even more residents.

For those unable to attend Silver Summer Scheme events, the Council website provided an age friendly section featuring the "News for You" older persons magazine and "Ask the Age Friendly Officer" feature where older residents could submit questions to the Age Friendly Officer. A link was below

<https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/residents/community-initiatives/age-friendly/>

4. Equality and/or Rural Screening Requirements

A Section 75 screening and Rural Needs Assessment had been carried out for the Silver Summer Scheme (circulated).

5. Summary

The Silver Summer Scheme successfully filled a gap in summer engagement opportunities for older residents by delivering a week-long series of free, inclusive events across the Borough. With 127 participants and outstanding feedback, the programme demonstrated a clear need for structured social and wellbeing activities during the summer. Building on this success, the scheme would be expanded in 2026 to further support older residents' health, connection, and enjoyment.

The Director of Sustainability agreed to look at the methods used to ensure Members were notified of Wellbeing events prior to them taking place.

Proposed by Councillor Foster

Seconded by Councillor Archibald-Brown and agreed that

- a) The report be noted;**
- b) The outcome of the Section 75 Equality Screening and Rural Proofing carried out for the Silver Summer Scheme be noted.**

ACTION: Michael Lavery, Director of Sustainability

5.5 **EH/PHWB/005 COST OF LIVING BOOKLET**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to inform Members that a cost of living and wellbeing support booklet entitled 'Live Well Local' had been created by Environmental Health in contribution to the Anti-Poverty work.

2. Background

Members were reminded that during the 2023 review of the Borough's *Love Living Here* Community Plan, poverty was identified as a key concern. In response, the Council agreed in January 2024 to establish a cross-party Anti-Poverty Steering Group.

Working in partnership with statutory agencies, community organisations, and the voluntary sector, the Steering Group had developed a strategic framework, the Anti-Poverty Strategy designed to deliver long-term, sustainable change for residents.

The Strategy focused on:

- Enabling economic opportunities through access to employment and skills development.
- Maximising partnership working by collaborating across sectors to increase impact.
- Promoting social inclusion, ensuring that no one is left behind.

- Improving access to essential services, including financial advice, energy support, and food provision.

Raising awareness and signposting residents to available support was a central element of this work. To assist with this, Environmental Health had produced a resident information booklet entitled '*Live Well Local – Cost of Living and Wellbeing Support*'.

3. Key Issues

The '*Live Well Local*' booklet provided residents with key information and contact details for statutory, community, and voluntary organisations offering support. The content was structured around five pillars: employment and skills, family and wellbeing support, energy support, food support, and financial support.

The booklet was being promoted through the Council's website and social media channels, with hard copies distributed at Council events and made available to residents and community organisations on request. It would be reviewed and updated annually in partnership with members of the Council's Anti-Poverty Steering Group.

The '*Live Well Local*' booklet can be found at;
antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/cost-of-living

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour
 Seconded by Councillor Cooper and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.6 **WM/RC/001 REVIEW OF BOOKING SYSTEM FOR VANS AT HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING CENTRES**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members on the booking system for medium and large vans at Household Recycling Centres.

2. Background

As Members were aware, the new booking system for medium and large vans was introduced to Household Recycling Centres in November 2024.

Household Recycling Centres were extensively used by residents with almost 50% of the waste collected by Council (~ 50,000 tonnes) generated through the Centres. Waste was brought to the Centres by residents predominantly in cars and vans, with approximately 680,000 users per annum.

Since November, anyone visiting the Recycling Centres in a medium or large van had to book into one of the designated slots which allows staff to manage the number of vans on site.

3. Key Issues

As a result of the implementation of the booking system, the following had been reported by staff operating on site

- Less vans on site had given staff more time to spend helping residents in cars.
- Van visits were spread more evenly throughout the day.
- Visiting times for residents had been reduced due to increased access to parking bays and less congestion on site.
- Increased efficiency and effectiveness and a decrease in health and safety risks onsite.

The table below showed the percentage of vans slots used at each of the Recycling Centres since the introduction of the new booking system in November 2024, which would indicate that no users were prevented from using the sites if they were permitted to do so.

Recycling Centre	% Van Slots Used
Bruslee	29.1%
Craigmore	11.6%
Crumlin	16.6%
O'Neill Road	54.4%
Newpark	34.1%

In addition, the table below shows the comparison in tonnes delivered to the Recycling Centres between November and April over the last two years:

	Total Waste Received at Recycling Centres (tonnes)
Nov 2023 – April 2024	24,433
Nov 2024 – April 2025	24,238

The table indicated that there had been a reduction in the amount of waste being received at Council's recycling centres. The reduction in tonnage was approximately 200 tonnes (-1%) and this equated to savings of around £20,000 on treatment/disposal costs. It should be noted that the recycling centres had been experiencing annual increases in waste received with a 6% increase from 2023-24 to 2024-25.

The data collected within the six-month trial period indicated that there was a small number of vans (0.2%) were using the sites on multiple occasions and responsible for 6% of the total number of visits. If the van owner lived in the Borough and was carrying waste that originates from a domestic household, staff would allow access to the recycling centre.

It was proposed that the current booking system was maintained and feedback was sought from users on the current arrangements with a further report to Members after the system had been in operation for 12 months. In addition, Officers could consider measures to reduce the number of van users visiting the Centres on multiple occasions if Members wish.

4. Budgetary Implications

There was a small cost to update and activate of the booking system used during COVID pandemic but this had been recouped by the reduction in the waste received on site.

5. Summary

The booking system for vans was successfully implemented in November 2024 and this had resulted in safer and more efficient operations at the recycling centres. In addition, there had been a small reduction in the tonnage of waste received at the sites. A further report would be presented to Members when the booking system had been in operation for 12 months.

The Director of Sustainability agreed to pass on Members' positive comments to those working at the Household Recycling Centres from constituents and Members who have recently had a positive experience due to staff.

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor Cooper and agreed that

the report be noted.

ACTION BY: Michael Lavery, Director of Sustainability

5.7 WM/RC/001 UPDATE ON CAPITAL WORKS AT CRAIGMORE HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING CENTRE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members on the capital works at Craigmores Household Recycling Centre.

2. Background

Over the last number of years, the condition of the Centre had deteriorated due to the volume of road traffic and heavy machinery that used the facility. This had resulted in the following issues:

- Pot-holed road surface
- Faulty drainage system
- Damage to concrete retaining walls

To address these issues, remedial works were scheduled to commence on 15

September, with an expected completion date of 4 December. The works would be carried out over three phases to minimise disruption to the daily operation of the centre. During this period the site would partially remain open, with access maintained, where possible, to allow continued use of the facilities.

3. Site Works

The works would be conducted under three phases.

Phase One would focus on the repair of the bay walls, installation of a drainage system with new interceptor tank and improvements to the layout. In addition, resurfacing works and the installation of new fencing.

Phase Two would consist of further drainage works, the installation of a new kerbline, and additional resurfacing.

Phase Three would address gully patch repairs, surface strip repairs, and further drainage system repairs.

4. Site Operations During Works

While Phases One and Two were in progress, access to the compactors would be available, however, all bays would be closed for the duration of these works, affecting the receipt of green waste, wood and rubble.

To facilitate service continuity:

- Small amounts of these waste types would still be accepted on site.
- Larger amounts would be redirected to Newpark HRC, where they could be disposed of appropriately.
- Public would be advised through direct messaging on site and social media channels.

When Phase Three commenced, operations would be adjusted to ensure services continue:

- The compactors would be closed.
- Vehicles and skips would be available to accept general waste.
- Small amounts of rubble, wood and building material would also be accepted to minimise inconvenience to the public.

The above plans were flexible and Officers may need to amend as the works developed, with any significant changes communicated to Members and the site users.

5. Financial implications

To maintain partial site operations during Phases 2 and 3, additional resources were required due to the unavailability of compactors. It was proposed to hire two Refuse Collection Vehicles, an agency driver, and four skips for wood and

metal disposal at an estimated cost of £17,000. While financial provision had not been made for these measures, the cost could be absorbed by savings within the waste management budget.

6. Summary

Throughout Phases One and Two, the site would remain open at the compactors, while all bays would be closed. This would limit the Council's ability to take green waste, wood, and rubble. Small amounts would still be accepted, with larger volumes redirected to Newpark HRC.

While we recognise there would be some inconvenience to members of the public, these works were essential for the long-term sustainability of the site. As a result, residents would be advised of the changes to minimise inconvenience during the required works.

Proposed by Councillor Kelly
Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.8 **PBS/PS/016 ENERGY PROJECTS UPDATE**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to provide Members with an update on the Council's Energy Management performance, highlighting completed work, projects currently planned, and longer-term development priorities.

2. Background

Members would be aware that energy across the Council estate was managed by the Estate Services Section, covering consumption, emissions, costs, monitoring, and billing. To support this, a £300k Energy Fund was available for energy efficiency initiatives in addition to stand alone capital-funded projects.

3. Completed Projects

Over the first quarter of the 2025/26 financial year, Estate Services had delivered a series of improvements aimed at reducing costs, emissions, and fossil fuel dependency. Key projects included:

- Heating and Building Management System upgraded at Mossley Mill, Sixmile Leisure Centre, and Theatre at the Mill, with modern Heating Ventilation Air Conditioning (HVAC) controllers installed.
- HVAC profile optimisation at Theatre at the Mill and Mossley Mill to better align energy use with building occupancy.

- Boiler replacement at Antrim Forum, with two high-efficiency, modulating gas boilers installed.
- Reconfiguration of the Combined Heat and Power boiler at Antrim Forum to maximise performance.
- Refurbishment of Sixmile Leisure Centre's biomass boiler, reducing reliance on gas.
- Installation of 8 new EV charging points at the Environmental Services Depot, integrated under a single management system.
- Introduction of charging at 9 Council EV locations, creating a revenue stream to fund ongoing maintenance and expansion.

4. Results

In comparison to Quarter 1 2024/25, energy consumption had fallen by 21.5%, costs by 12.5% (£66k), and CO₂ emissions by 22% in Q1 2025/26.

5. Pending Projects 2025–2026

Looking forward, the Estate Services Section would continue to prioritise the reduction of oil and gas use by rolling out renewable technologies and major plant upgrades. Planned projects included:

- Solar panels at Mossley Mill
- Wind turbine and solar panels at the Environmental Services Depot
- Heating control and BMS upgrades at Valley Leisure Centre, Forum Leisure Centre, and Ballyearl Leisure Centre
- Energy audit of Mossley Mill by the Capital Development Team to assess renewable opportunities (biogas, hydrogen, heat pumps, solar canopies, hydro/wind)
- Expansion of EV charging network, with approximately 21 Council-controlled charge points by December 2025
- HVAC replacements at Antrim Forum and Crumlin Leisure Centre by March 2026
- LED floodlighting upgrades at Antrim Forum, Valley, Crumlin, Allen Park, and Sixmile Leisure Centres, with automated and remote controls
- Expansion of energy monitoring to the top 15 consuming sites, representing 90% of usage
- Consultant reviews of opportunities for wind turbines, heat pumps, and large-scale solar installations, including car park canopies

6. Future Development

In addition to the projects above, longer-term opportunities to further strengthen energy management have been identified. These included:

- Investigating building fabric thermal improvements (for example Sixmile Leisure Centre)
- Maximising heat recovery in ventilation systems at major sites

- Extending automated metering for energy and water to enable benchmarking and performance tracking
- Monitoring and replacing plant and equipment (boilers, coils, generators, pumps) to maintain efficiency
- Implementing a pool cover replacement programme to reduce heating costs across leisure centres

Proposed by Councillor McLaughlin
Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

6 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

- 6.1** In response to a query from a Member, the Head of Parks Operations advised that he had spoken to the farmer who rented the field on the Doagh Road and they were content with the current grass level, however he agreed to follow up in relation to the grass which was overgrown at the rear of the field.

ACTION BY: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

- 6.2** In response to a Member wishing to make a formal complaint against Directors about a perceived lack of support in relation to a graffiti incident, the Director of Parks & Leisure Operations indicated that it was himself that had arranged for the graffiti to be removed promptly.

Councillor Cooper left the Chamber at this point.

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED 'IN CONFIDENCE

Proposed by Councillor Ward
Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed

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

ITEMS IN CONFIDENCE

7.1 IN CONFIDENCE 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 owned cemeteries.

2. Introduction/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

As of 31st July 2025, the capacity for Council's Cemeteries and Gardens of Remembrance was detailed as follows:

Cemetery	Previous Report up to 30th April 2025	No. of plots remaining (up to 31st July 2025)	Current Average no. of plots sold PER YEAR (based on 3yr average)	Estimated remaining burial capacity (years)
Ballyclare	512	494	100	5
Rashee	343*	341*	10	34
Sixmile	2062	2040	80	25
Crumlin	670	668	26	25
TOTAL	3587	3531	210	17

Garden of Remembrance Plots (for burial of ashes only)	Previous Report up to 30th April 2025	No. of plots remaining (up to 31st July 2025)	Average no. of plots sold (based on 3 year average)	Estimated remaining burial capacity (years)
Carnmoney	34	48**	55	0.7
Ballyclare	117	115	5	5
Mallusk	15	15	0	0
TOTAL	151	150	60	2.5

*Rashee Cemetery was still under review, a report was expected from HED in due course.

**A further 2 rows had been checked and marked out in the Garden of Remembrance in Carnmoney Main. This made the total number of plots able to be accommodated in the section 135. Of these 87 had been allocated (up to 31st July).

Officers were currently developing a Business Case for a new cemetery within the urban area of Newtownabbey, which would be presented to the Council for consideration and approval in due course. Topographical surveys had been commissioned at the proposed site to assess ground conditions and confirm its suitability.

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

Councillor Cooper returned to the Chamber.

7.2 IN CONFIDENCE PBS/PS/001 PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO STREET NAMING AND NUMBERING PROCEDURE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek approval for an amendment to the existing Street Naming and Numbering Procedure, along with the associated guidance note (circulated) issued to property developers.

2. Background

At present, the procedure for street naming was as follows: proposed new street names were submitted to Building Control for approval by the Council. Once approved, the installation of street nameplate signage was carried out by the Council's Estate Services section.

Prior to 2015, the two legacy councils operated different arrangements:

- Newtownabbey Borough Council installed all new development street nameplates, as well as the replacement of existing signage, at the Council's expense.
- Antrim Borough Council replaced existing signage at its expense but required developers to install nameplates for new developments.

Since the merger, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council had adopted a single approach, whereby all new and replacement street nameplates were installed at the Council's expense.

3. Financial Implications

At present, the total annual cost of street nameplate installations was £33,000. This comprised of £15,000 for the installation of nameplates in new developments and £18,000 for the replacement of existing nameplates.

4. Proposal

It was proposed that a guidance note would be issued to developers, advising that while the Council would continue to install new street nameplates, the associated costs would be recharged to the developer.

Replacement street nameplates would continue to be funded by the Council; however, replacements would only be carried out where a nameplate was missing, damaged, or has become illegible. The decision to replace would rest with the Senior Officer in Estate Services.

As all street nameplates would be installed by the Council, this approach would ensure consistent, high-quality installations, including standardised text size, font, height, materials, reflective backing, and other design elements.

The Director of Parks & Leisure Operations agreed to investigate the possibility of requiring developers to assume responsibility for the maintenance of street name plates in new developments, until such time as the roads are formally adopted by the Department for Infrastructure.

The Head of Estate Services undertook to meet with representatives from Building Control to discuss simplified street naming, numbering and signage issues.

Proposed by Councillor Cooper
Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed that

the report to be deferred until Officers investigate the possibility of requiring developers to assume responsibility for the maintenance of street name plates in new developments, until such time as the roads are formally adopted by the Department for Infrastructure

ACTION BY: Matt McDowell, Director of Parks & Leisure Operations / David Blair, Head of Estate Services

7.3 IN CONFIDENCE PK/GEN/120 DEVELOPMENT OF A GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE – SIXMILE CEMETERY, ANTRIM

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek approval for the development of a Garden of Remembrance at Sixmile Cemetery, Antrim, at an estimated cost of

2. Background

A Garden of Remembrance provided a dedicated space for the interment of ashes within cemeteries. While such facilities currently existed in Carnmoney, Mallusk, and Ballyclare cemeteries, and a memorial garden with columbarium provision was available at the Council's Crematorium, there were no equivalent facilities within the legacy Antrim Borough Council area. This absence had created a clear gap in provision for local families seeking appropriate and dignified interment options.

3. Demand

Since the opening of the Council's Crematorium in June 2023, cremations within the Borough had risen significantly, increasing year on year from 1,042 to 1,450. At present, bereaved families in the Antrim area who wished to inter ashes must have purchased a grave plot, which was often underutilised as the ashes were typically interred beneath an existing headstone. To meet this growing demand, it was proposed that a Garden of Remembrance be

developed at Sixmile Cemetery, Antrim. Designed to accommodate 160 plots within a landscaped, peaceful setting, the garden would provide families with a dignified environment for remembrance and reflection while ensuring long-term provision for local residents.

4. Business Case

A comprehensive business case had been prepared to assess a range of options, which was circulated for Members' reference, along with a site plan (circulated). Following detailed evaluation, Option 2 emerged as the preferred solution, delivering the best balance of enhanced service, cost-effectiveness, and long-term sustainability. This option addressed identified local needs, promotes equitable access, and provided a dedicated facility that would improve operational efficiency, user experience, and the dignity of bereavement services across the Borough. By contrast, Option 1 served only as a baseline and did not address existing challenges; Option 3, while offering improvements, posed medium-risk outcomes and potential accessibility issues; and Option 4, though expanding capacity, did not meet user expectations for private memorial spaces and was limited by design constraints.

Proposed by Councillor Kelly

Seconded by Councillor O'Hagan and agreed that

Option Two for the development of a Garden of Remembrance at Sixmile Cemetery, Antrim, at an estimated cost of [REDACTED] be approved.

ACTION BY: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

Having declared an interest in item 7.4 Councillor Foster left the Chamber.

7.4 IN CONFIDENCE L/LEI/629/VOL2 BALLYCLARE RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB – REQUEST FOR USE OF 3G PITCH AT THE CLOUGHAN

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the allocation of 100 hours per annum of free use of the 3G pitch at The Cloughan, Ballyclare, to Ballyclare Rugby Football Club (BRFC).

2. Background

Members would be aware that Council was a key partner in the [REDACTED] Cloughan Project, Ballyclare, which was part-funded by Ballyclare Rugby Club and Sport Northern Ireland's Multi-Facility Fund. Following a request from BRFC, it was approved that Council would increase the size of the 3G pitch to allow rugby to be played at the facility.

In January 2023, Ballyclare Rugby Club advanced to the final stage of Sport NI's programme, covering project planning and procurement. During the design process, the Irish Rugby Football Union (IRFU) determined that the original pitch size was below the minimum requirement for rugby fixtures. As a

result, the Rugby Club requested that the pitch be increased to meet IRFU requirements and agreed to contribute [REDACTED] towards the additional costs. The increased pitch size had enhanced the facility's attractiveness to a wider range of potential users, including:

- Ballyclare Rugby Club (senior, female, youth, mini, and disability sections)
- Ballyclare High School, Ballyclare Secondary School, and other local clubs
- Ulster Rugby, with potential to use the facility as a regional hub
- Other sports requiring larger field dimensions, such as American Football

As part of the agreement for Council to develop the 3G pitch, the Rugby Club had provided a lease for the facility and entered into an income-share arrangement for pitch bookings, with income split 75/25% in Council's favour.

3. Request from Ballyclare Rugby Football Club

In recognition of BRFC's [REDACTED] investment, the Club has formally requested an allocation of 100 hours per year of free use of the 3G pitch. Correspondence outlining this request was circulated for Members' reference.

BRFC had indicated that:

- The hours would be spread across their various sections (Senior, Female, Youth, Minis, and Hares).
- Their overall use of the pitch would exceed 100 hours per year; therefore, they would remain a paying user once the allocation was utilised.
- The requested allocation equated to approximately two hours of free use per week.

4. Financial Implications

The financial impact of granting 100 hours of free use per year equated to approximately [REDACTED] annually, based on the current hire rate of [REDACTED] per hour. Over the proposed 15-year lease, this represented a notional loss of income of [REDACTED] based on an assumed Consumer Price Index (CPI) increase of 2.5% per annum.

It was therefore recommended that any allocation of free hours was clearly defined, monitored, and reviewed annually to ensure transparency and fairness across all user groups.

Proposed by Councillor Archibald-Brown
Seconded by Councillor Kelly and agreed that

the allocation of 100 hours per annum of free use of the 3G pitch at The Cloughan, Ballyclare, to Ballyclare Rugby Club be approved and be reviewed annually.

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

Councillor Foster returned to the Chamber.

7.5 **IN CONFIDENCE** WM/arc21/4/VOL11 ARC21 JOINT COMMITTEE PAPERS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members on the June Joint Committee meeting.

2. Introduction

The arc21 Joint Committee meets on a monthly basis and each month the papers were reviewed by the Operations Committee.

3. Previous Decisions of Council

All previous papers had been noted.

4. Main Report

The papers for the arc21 Joint Committee Meeting were included (circulated) for Members' information:

- 26 June 2025

Members were reminded that these documents were confidential and may be legally privileged or otherwise protected from disclosure so therefore Members should not disclose this information to any third party and the information must be kept secure.

5. Summary

The main issues from the June meeting were:

[REDACTED]

Proposed by Councillor Foster

Seconded by Councillor Kelly agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

7.6 IN CONFIDENCE CE/GEN/089 ALL-PARTY GROUP ON CLIMATE ACTION – FACILITATING NATURAL, LOW-CARBON AND SUSTAINABLE BURIAL OPTIONS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to inform Members of correspondence received from the All-Party Group on Climate Action seeking support in exploring options for low-carbon burial options within the Borough.

2. Background

The All-Party Group on Climate Action from Northern Ireland Assembly had written to all Councils highlighting the environmental impacts of traditional burial and cremation, including carbon emissions, chemical pollution and long-term land use. The correspondence was circulated for Members' reference. The correspondence suggests that public interest in alternatives such as natural (green) burial and tree pod interment was increasing, with these options already adopted elsewhere in the UK.

3. Considerations

Provision of sustainable burial options could support Council's climate action commitments, reduce long-term maintenance costs, and enhance biodiversity within cemeteries.

However, any such development would be subject to statutory planning requirements, including assessment of land use, ground conditions, drainage, and environmental impact, alongside compliance with public health and burial legislation. Members would also be aware of the current challenges relating to burial capacity, particularly in urban Newtownabbey. While early feasibility work was progressing on a new cemetery, these factors would need to be fully considered within the Business Case for the proposed development.

4. Next Steps

The correspondence requests that Councils explore the feasibility of offering sustainable burial options within existing or new cemeteries and report any legislative or operational barriers by 30 September 2025.

The Director of Parks & Leisure Operations noted that further detail on sustainable burial options could be included in a report for a future Council meeting, along with a response to the All Party Group's correspondence.

Proposed by Councillor Foster

Seconded by Councillor Cooper and agreed that

the report be noted.

ACTION: Matt McDowell, Director of Parks & Leisure Operations

7.7 IN CONFIDENCE WM/WM/037 WASTE HARMONISATION UPDATE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members on the progress of the Harmonisation of Waste Collection Services in the Borough.

2. Background

Members would be aware that Officers were actively working on the Harmonisation of Waste Collection Services across the Borough along with key stakeholders including, third party waste companies, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and dedicated consultants. Officers had continued to provide Members with a monthly update on how the project was progressing.

3. Key Information

As reported to Members at August Council, Council had received delivery of all containers, the final bespoke kerbside sort vehicles would be delivered by end of w/c 1 September and the procurement of contract services had now been completed.

Officers had begun the delivery of the extensive communication plan. Residents had received their launch letters, press releases and media enquiries had been answered and Officers hosted 22 information public drop-in information sessions across the legacy Antrim areas with approximately 420 people attending. Officers had begun bespoke information session for sheltered accommodation, schools and community groups etc who had requested further assistance.

Billboards, adshels and ongoing social media would continue throughout September to further highlight the project and residents would begin to receive a 2nd letter this week (1 September) to indicate their roll-out would be within the next few weeks and providing them with further information. A timescale of all actions and information on next stage was included (circulated) for Members' information.

Contractors had commenced the build of the containers with the delivery of first containers commencing weekend of 11 September meaning the phased rollout of the new collection service was still on target for w/c 15 September and it was envisaged that the services would be fully implemented after nine weeks. Members would be notified of an indicative schedule of delivery at September Operations Committee.

As reported there would be some day changes for bin collections in the

Newtownabbey area but these had been kept to a minimum and would help achieve improved collection efficiencies. Members in DEAs affected had been notified of the areas and residents would receive direct communication before the change happened.

Council was continuing to work with AWS (Amazon) to establish a dedicated Customer Service assistant to support the Waste and Council customer service team during the project roll-out and provide residents with a 24-hour information service.

The Head of Waste Strategy & Sustainability Operations agreed to circulate any information on Waste Harmonisation to Members in all DEA areas and involve schools in neighbouring DEAs in local educational & awareness projects, as well as those in the affected DEAs.

Proposed by Councillor Cooper
Seconded by Councillor Kelly and agreed that

the report be noted.

ACTION: Lynsey Daly, Head of Waste Strategy & Sustainability

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED OUT OF 'IN CONFIDENCE'

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor O'Hagan 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 8.26pm.

MAYOR