



29 October 2025

Committee Chair: Alderman J Smyth

Committee Vice-Chair: Councillor L O'Hagan

Committee Members: Aldermen – L Boyle, P Bradley and L Clarke

Councillors: J Archibald-Brown, R Foster, J Gilmour, N Kelly, AM Logue, A McAuley, E McLaughlin, V McWilliam, 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 November 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

A G E N D A

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2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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REPORT ON BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING ON MONDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2025

3 ITEMS FOR DECISION

3.1 PK/GEN/035/VOL5 PARKS AND OPEN SPACES SUB GROUP MINUTES

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the most recent Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Group meeting minutes held on 1 October 2025.

2. Summary

At the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Group meeting on 1 October 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 1 October 2025 be approved.

Prepared and agreed by: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks

Approved by: Matt McDowell, Director of Estates and Recreation

3.2 EH/EHS/LR/002 EL131 - APPLICATION FOR THE GRANT OF A PROVISIONAL ANNUAL INDOOR ENTERTAINMENT LICENCE – THE COTTONMOUNT ARMS, 130 MALLUSK ROAD, NEWTOWNABBEY, BT36 4QN

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend that Members approve the grant of a provisional Annual Indoor Entertainment Licence for The Cottonmount Arms, 130 Mallusk Road, Newtownabbey, BT36 4QN

2. Introduction

An application has been received for the grant of a provisional Annual Indoor Entertainment Licence for the following location

Licensee	Location of Premises	Type(s)and hours of entertainment	File Number	New Application or Renewal
Mr John Stewart	The Cottonmount Arms, 130 Mallusk Road, Newtownabbey, BT36 4QN.	Singing, Music, Dancing or Entertainment of a like kind Annual Indoor Licence Monday – Sunday 12.30am – 01.00hrs Number of persons; Ground Floor – TBC First Floor -130 Note - Occupancy total within the proposed licensable areas to be determined further to consultation with NIFRS.	EL131	New Application (New applicant for this premises)

In line with the Council Protocol for the hearing of Entertainment Licence applications, approved in December 2016, all such applications must be considered by the Operations Committee.

Council can decide the following:

- i. Grant the licence,
- ii. Grant the licence with specific additional terms, conditions or restrictions;
- iii. Refuse the licence; or
- iv. Defer consideration to obtain further information.

If Council makes a decision against an Officer's recommendation, then Members must state their reasons for doing so. In such circumstances, a recorded vote will be taken.

3. Main Report

An application has been received for the grant of an Annual Indoor Entertainment Licence for the above-named premises. In accordance with the Entertainment Licence Policy, Members' approval is required prior to the issue of the licence.

The premises, The Cottonmount Arms is currently undergoing extensive renovation works and is under new ownership. The application has been submitted to enable entertainment to be provided once those works are completed.

Under Article 3 of The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 1985, Council may grant a provisional Entertainments Licence subject to the condition that all works are completed to the satisfaction of Council and in compliance with all relevant licensing requirements.

4. Summary

An application for a Provisional Annual Indoor Entertainment Licence has been received from Mr John Stewart for The Cottonmount Arms, 130 Mallusk Road, Newtownabbey, BT36 4QN.

In accordance with Council Protocol for the Hearing of Entertainment Licence Applications, a decision by Members is required on whether to grant the licence.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that a Provisional Annual Indoor Entertainment Licence be granted to Mr John Stewart, The Cottonmount Arms, 130 Mallusk Road, Newtownabbey, BT36 4QN, subject to the following conditions:

- a) **That all relevant licensing requirements are met;**
- b) **That satisfactory inspection certificates are submitted and approved;**
and
- c) **That all statutory and public consultees have no objections to the issue of the licence.**

Prepared by: Jennifer McGrugan, Environmental Health Officer

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

Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Sustainability

3.3 EH/EHS/LR/001 EL067 - APPLICATION FOR THE GRANT OF AN ANNUAL INDOOR ENTERTAINMENTS LICENCE – THE SIPSTER, 607 SHORE ROAD, WHITEABBEY, BT37 OST

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend that Members approve the grant of a provisional Annual Indoor Entertainment Licence for The Sipster, 607 Shore Road, Whiteabbey, BT37 OST

2. Introduction

An application has been received for the grant of an Annual Indoor Entertainment Licence for the following location

Licensee	Location of Premises	Type(s)and hours of entertainment	File Number	New Application or Renewal
Ms Anthea Wilson	The Sipster, 607 Shore Road, Whiteabbey, BT37 OST.	Singing, Music, Dancing or Entertainment of a like kind Annual Indoor Entertainment Licence Monday – Sunday 11.00 – 23.00hrs Number of persons – no greater than 200	EL067	New Application

In line with the Council Protocol for the hearing of Entertainment Licence applications (approved December 2016), all such applications must be considered by the Operations Committee.

Council may decide the following:

- i. Grant the licence,
- ii. Grant the licence with specific additional terms, conditions or restrictions;
- iii. Refuse the licence; or
- iv. Defer consideration to obtain further information.

If Council makes a decision against an officer's recommendation, then Members must state their reasons for doing so. In such circumstances, a recorded vote will be taken.

3. Main Report

An application has been received for the Grant of an Annual Indoor Entertainment Licence for the above-named premises. In accordance with the Council's Entertainment Licensing Policy, Members approval is required prior to the issue of the licence.

Members should note that the applicant previously held an Entertainment Licence for the venue, however, chose not to renew following the Covid-19 pandemic.

4. Summary

An application for an Annual Indoor Entertainment Licence has been submitted by Ms Anthea Wilson, for The Sipster, 607 Shore Road, Whiteabbey, BT37 0ST.

In line with the approved Council Protocol, a decision by Members is required on whether to grant the licence.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that an Annual Indoor Entertainment Licence is granted to Ms Athea Wilson, for The Sipster, 607 Shore Road, Whiteabbey, BT37 0ST, Subject to the following conditions:

- a) **That all relevant licensing requirements are met; and**
- b) **That all statutory and public consultees have no objections to the approval.**

Prepared by: Jennifer McGrugan, Environmental Health Officer

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

Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Sustainability

3.4 EH/GEN/007 REVIEW OF THE PROHIBITION OR RESTRICTION OF USE OF PUBLIC ROADS FOR SPECIAL EVENTS POLICY

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to propose minor amendments to the existing “Prohibition or Restriction of Use of Public Roads for Special Events” policy and seek approval for an increase in application fees.

2. Background

Members are reminded that The Roads (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 2010 came into force in September 2017 and provides powers to local Councils to prohibit or restrict the use of public roads for the purpose of holding special events on them with the consent of the Department for Infrastructure Roads (DFI). Special events are defined as:

- Any sporting event, social event or entertainment which is held on a public road; or
- The making of a film on a public road, including the making of TV programmes, films or advertisements.

Examples of such “special events” include marathons, fun runs, street parties, concerts and community celebrations and there are approximately 10 “special events” per annum.

In November 2017 Council approved a working policy on the Prohibition or Restriction of Use of Public Roads for Special Events with a formal review to take place every 2 years. The most recent review, completed in January 2022, identified no amendments at that time. The review has been delayed as the Department for Infrastructure Roads (DFI) has been working on updating guidance for Councils, which has been considered as part of this review.

3. Key Issues

The Department for Infrastructure has now completed a formal review of the “*Operation of the Roads (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (NI) 2010*” and following engagement with any body involved in the planning and running of special events, has published a revised guidance document for district councils and event promoters for holding special events on publicly maintained roads, (July 2025).

In response, Council has undertaken a review of its own policy to ensure alignment with this updated guidance.

The revised policy aims to streamline the application process for event organisers and reduce administrative burden for both applicants and Council. It clarifies the legislative framework, consultation and advertising requirements, processing timescales and associated costs.

When first approved in 2017, Council agreed that:

- Small events would not incur administration or advertising charges.
- All other events would be charged £165 for administration plus £100 for statutory advertising totalling £265 per application.

Since 2017 Council has received 76 applications for road closures:

- 26 for road races
- 47 for events (21 of which were community-based)
- 3 for filming

Fees

There is no central government funding for this function, and councils may recover only those costs reasonably incurred in processing applications.

Existing fees, unchanged since 2018, no longer reflect current costs, particularly the cost of statutory public notices, which now frequently exceed £300. These costs are presently absorbed by the Council.

A comparative review shows that Antrim and Newtownabbey's fees are below those of other councils. To achieve cost recovery and reflect increased expenses, it is proposed that fees be amended as follows:

Table 1

Event Type	Existing Fee	Proposed Fee
Small event	No administration fee No advertising fee	No administration fee £350 fee to cover advertising costs
Large event	£265 (£165 administration fee, plus £100 advertising fee)	£600 (£250 administration fee plus £350 advertising fee)
Small event applications from community or charitable organisations	£265 (£165 administration fee, plus £100 advertising fee)	No fee
Large event applications from community or charitable organisations	£265 (£165 administration fee, plus £100 advertising fee)	No administration fee. Cost recovery for advertisement fee

Members are asked to note the increasing costs in comparison to fee income. In particular, the increasing costs of advertising where large advertisements are required to be placed in local newspaper by Council.

Other Minor Policy Amendments

In addition to the proposed change to the existing fee structure, a number of minor amendments have been made to the Policy to ensure alignment in approach to consultation, advertising requirements, managing representations, monitoring of events and post event evaluation.

A copy of the updated policy is (**enclosed**), with all minor amendments highlighted in yellow.

4. Previous Decision of Council

In November 2017 Council approved the initial working policy and delegated authority to the Director of Operations and Head of Environmental Health to grant closure orders where no objections are received.

At the January 2022 Operations Committee meeting, Members were advised of a review, which concluded that no amendments were required at that time. An updated Section 75 Policy Screening was provided, and the revised policy was approved.

5. Financial Position

There are direct financial costs attached to the administration of the Act by Council and, whilst fees have been previously agreed, the cost to administer the scheme is only partially recovered from applicants based on our information to date.

Existing fees were agreed by Council in November 2017 as outlined in "fees" above. While the administration costs have not significantly changed, the costs to Council associated with newspaper advertisement has increased significantly. At present, the cost to administer the scheme is in excess of the income received from application fees.

6. Equality and/or Rural Screening Requirements

A Section 75 Screening form and Rural Needs impact assessment in relation to the recommendation is (**enclosed**) and the advice is that the recommended amendment to Standing Orders is not subject to a full Equality Impact Assessment.

7. Summary

Following the publication of DfI's *Guidance for District Councils and Event Promoters* (July 2025), Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council has reviewed its *Prohibition or Restriction of Use of Public Roads for Special Events Policy*.

The review identifies a need to update and align the Policy particularly regarding fees to reflect current costs and maintain consistency with other Councils.

The proposed amendments will ensure the Council continues to operate the scheme effectively, transparently, and on a sustainable cost-recovery basis.

In addition, a number of minor updates to the policy have been made to reflect the updated guidance and reflect current approach to processing applications.

8. Recommendation

It was recommended that

- a) The revised working Road Closure Policy and associated Section 75 Equality Screening be approved.**
- b) The proposed increase in fees, as outlined in table 1 above be approved.**

Prepared by: Mark Sloan, Deputy Head of Environmental Health

Agreed by: Colin Kelly, Head of Environmental Health

Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Sustainability

3.5 EH/EHS/FC/008 PUBLIC ANALYST APPOINTMENT

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to inform Members that the list of appointed Public Analysts has been updated following the regional tender process carried out on behalf of all 11 Councils, in accordance with Article 27 of the Food Safety (NI) Order 1991.

2. Background

The Public Analyst service is a scientific body who help protect public health by analysing food, water, and related products. It supports the Council in enforcing food safety laws through sample testing and expert advice. The contract for Public Analyst Services for the 11 Councils has been awarded to Eurofins Food Testing Ireland Ltd (EFTI). The new two-year contract runs until 31 March 2027, with an option to extend for an additional two years. EFTI was also the Council's previous contractor for this service.

3. Previous Decision of Council

In May 2025, a report was brought before committee appointing a number of Public Analysts. This report seeks to add a further person to the list of appointed persons.

4. Key Issues

Article 27 of the Food Safety (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 requires that the Council appoint one or more persons to act as Public Analyst(s) within the district of the Council. This report seeks the formal appointment of the following person as Public Analyst for Council in accordance with Article 27 of the above Order.

Public Analyst

Emily Shannon Roberts MSc MChemA CChem MRSC

Having met the qualifications required by Public Analyst(s) as set out in the Food Safety (Sampling and Qualifications) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013, the above named person can be appointed to act as Public Analyst for the Council.

5. Summary

Eurofins Food Testing Ireland Ltd (EFTI) has been appointed to deliver the Public Analyst Contract for the 11 Councils, supporting Environmental Health with food sampling, analysis, reporting, and expert advice. The listed individual must be formally appointed by Council to perform these duties.

6. Recommendation

It is recommended that the above listed person be appointed as Public Analyst for the Council under Article 27 of the Food Safety (Northern Ireland) Order 1991.

Prepared by: Christina McErlean, Deputy Head of Environmental Health (Commercial)

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

Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Sustainability

3.6 EH/EHS/CP/002 OFFICE FOR PRODUCT SAFETY & STANDARDS GRANT FUNDING FOR THE CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY BUILDING PROGRAMME IN NORTHERN IRELAND: NON-FOOD PRODUCTS 2024/25

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to inform Members that grant funding has been offered from The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) in respect of the Council responsibilities to product safety and standards.

2. Background

Members are reminded that, since 2018, The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS), the national regulator for product safety, has worked with Councils in Northern Ireland to assist with the provision of advice and support to local businesses regarding their product safety responsibilities. This arrangement has included a grant funding offer either made directly to Council or through a Service Level Agreement with a lead Council.

3. Previous Decision of Council

In September 2024, Council agreed to receive a previous offer of £55,000 in grant funding from OPSS.

4. Key Issues

The funded activities are listed in Grant Funding Agreement (**Enclosed**) and are for targeted and prioritised regulatory activity on non-food consumer goods to ensure a robust market surveillance across the UK.

The funding is used by Council to undertake a range of activities on non-food consumer products including to:

- Build on previous product safety capacity and capability building work.
- In collaboration with Northern Ireland Consumer Safety Liaison produce a report, on the work of Northern Ireland Councils have undertaken in the last 5 years on market surveillance.
- Support and implement the actions in the Consumer Safety Liaison work plan (**Enclosed**) on market surveillance and consumer safety awareness.
- Produce a report covering 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026 detailing the work achieved from the Consumer Safety Liaison work plan.
- Share product safety materials and resources created with the Office of Product Safety and Standards to support compliance.

The funding will be utilised to deliver the activities outlined above, primarily through implementation of the 2025/2026 Environmental Health Northern Ireland (EHNI) Consumer Safety Liaison Group work plan, using an existing full-time Environmental Health Officer within the Environmental Health structure to lead this work.

5. Financial Position

A grant funding offer of £49,500 has been proposed for eligible expenditure related to funded activities. This amount will be paid directly to the Council in the financial year ending on 31 March 2026.

6. Summary

The Office of Product Safety and Standards has offered Antrim and Newtownabbey Council a grant of £49,500, for a capacity and capability building programme focused on non-food products. This grant is intended for eligible expenditure.

7. Recommendation

It is recommended that the grant funding offered by the Office of Product Safety and Standards be approved.

Prepared by: Christina McErlean, Deputy Head of Environmental Health

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

Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Sustainability

3.7 WM/WM/037/VOL2 TEMPORARY FESTIVE RECYCLING CENTRE ARRANGEMENTS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to advise Members on the arrangements for Temporary Recycling Centres over the Christmas period.

2. Background

Members will be aware that residents in the location of the O'Neill Road Recycling Centre have been provided with additional waste disposal capacity over the festive period with a bin lorry parked at the Valley Leisure Centre.

3. Previous Decision of Council

The last two years usage of the additional waste disposal location has been analysed and information provided in the table below.

Waste Tonnes 2023

Date	Satellite Site	Tonnage	HRC Site	Tonnage
27/12/2023	Valley LC	14.62	O'Neill Road HRC	87.22
28/12/2023				
29/12/2023				

Waste Tonnes 2024

Date	Satellite Site	Tonnage	HRC Site	Tonnage
27/12/2024	Valley LC	11.06	O'Neill Road HRC	76.68
28/12/2024				
30/12/2024				

Based on this information the following arrangements are proposed to provide extra waste disposal capacity during the week after Christmas when site usage is at its highest:

- That similar to Christmas 2024, an additional temporary waste recycling facility is put in place at the Valley Leisure Centre carpark in order to reduce traffic congestion at O'Neill Road and wider area on Saturday 27 and Monday 29 and Tuesday 30 December from 9am - 4pm;

4. Key Issues

There are extremely high levels of usage at the O'Neill Road Recycling Centre during the festive period and as a result, the additional facility will be maintained for three days.

All other Recycling Centres are expected to be able to manage the additional usage although this will be monitored by officers.

5. Financial Implications

The proposed additional service can be delivered using existing Council staff although one extra collection vehicle will be required for the operation at a cost of £1,000, subject to availability.

All waste collected at the additional site will be transferred to a materials recycling facility, where as much waste as possible will be removed for recycling or recovery. Council does achieve better recycling rates when the waste is collected at the Recycling Centres and therefore use of the additional site will be kept to a minimum.

A Section 75 Screening Form and Rural Needs Impact Assessment in relation to the recommendation are attached (enclosed) and the advice is that a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required.

6. Recommendation

It is recommended that Members approve:

- a) the arrangements for a Temporary Recycling Centre as set out above.**
- b) the Section 75 Screening Form and Rural Needs impact Assessment**

Prepared by: Darren Purdy, Head of Waste Operations

Agreed by and Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Sustainability

3.8 WM/WG/002 WINTER OPERATIONS AND MOU WITH THE DEPARTMENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the Winter Operations Plan 2025/26.

2. Background

Winter Operations Plan

From November to April, Council maintains a Winter Operations Plan to assist staff in delivering Council services as safely and efficiently as possible during the winter months. The Plan also includes provision for gritting services at all Council facilities and designated areas like town centres and car parks, the delivery of the waste collection services during adverse weather, and snow clearance operations.

3. Key Issues

The Winter Operations Plan is reviewed on an annual basis in order to improve the delivery of the service. A copy of the updated Plan is included for Members information with Appendix 2 (**enclosed**) that outlines the areas which will be gritted and when this will occur.

Last year, the gritting of the designated areas in the towns and villages will be carried out by specialist contractor following a procurement exercise due to a lack of internal resources. It is envisaged that this will be the case again this year, although staff will be given the opportunity too volunteer if they wish.

The Plan outlines the notification procedure for gritting operations, which will commence if the designated officer or specialist contractor believes there is a strong possibility of ice occurring based on Met Office warnings and media weather reports.

The procedure takes into account micro climatic differences across the Borough, for example, areas may be gritted in Glengormley due to sub-zero temperatures but there will be no requirement to do so in Crumlin as the temperature is above freezing.

The Plan aims to have Council facilities gritted before staff arrive at work, and the main town centres to be serviced before shops and businesses open at 9am, although Members should be aware that gritting operations cannot take place during periods of heavy rain or snow and are dependent on available resources.

The Plan also addresses the possible impact of adverse weather on the waste collection services. In the event of severe weather, road conditions will be assessed and operations revised to reflect the increased risks to staff

and public safety.

Community Winter Resilience Kits

The Council also has three Community Winter Resilience Kits, including salt spreader, salt, grit box, snow shovels, ice grippers, gloves, and hi-vis vests for each DEA. The contact details of the community groups or individuals will be kept on a database in case resources need to be shared across the Borough if ice coverage is patchy. Community groups or individuals receiving the Kits will also be supplied with health and safety guidance notes.

Community Grit Piles

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

Memorandum of Understanding Clearing Busy Town Centre Footways and Pedestrian Areas of Snow and Ice

Since the formation of the Council, an Agreement has been in place with Department for Infrastructure (DfI) Roads for clearing busy town centre footways and pedestrian areas of snow and ice during periods of heavy snowfall or prolonged adverse weather.

This Agreement, in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding, is renewed every three years and is currently in place until 2027. The MoU is attached **(enclosed)** for Members information.

The MoU provides an agreed framework to formalise the level of service to be provided and defines each organisation's duties and obligations in delivering the service. Points in the MoU to note are:

- DfI Roads provides Council with the salt/grit mix free of charge;
- Council will receive an annual Service Fee of £2,358;
- DfI Roads extends the indemnity offered to Council and its agents.

4. Financial Implications

The implementation of the Council Winter Operation Plan does have a financial impact with the provision of spreading equipment and grit/salt, and the staffing resources. In addition, there will be costs due to the use of the specialist contractor to deliver the requirements of the Plan in the towns and villages. The final cost is dependent on the severity of the winter but it's envisaged to be in the region of £30,000. As stated above, there will be a small financial receipt, £2,358, from DfI if Council approves the terms of the MoU.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Winter Operations Plan including the MoU with DFI be approved.

Prepared by: Darren Purdy, Head of Waste Operations

Agreed by and approved by: Michael Lavery, Director of Sustainability and
Matt McDowell, Director of Estates and Recreation

3.9 EH/EHS/LR/007 REVIEW OF LEGACY COUNCILS DOG CONTROL ORDERS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the outcome of the review of the existing Legacy Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Dog Control Orders, undertaken in conjunction with Legal Services, and in line with Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) guidance.

2. Background

At the June 2025 Operations Committee, Members were informed of the proposal to align the eight existing legacy Dog Control Orders into four new Orders with minor amendments, providing consistency across the Borough.

A public consultation commenced on 4 July 2025 to gather public and stakeholder views on the proposed Orders.

The review aimed to streamline enforcement arrangements, establish a consistent approach across all current and newly added Council-managed land, and ensure that Orders remain proportionate, enforceable, and clearly communicated to the public.

3. Previous Decision of Council

At its meeting in June 2025, the Operations Committee agreed that officers proceed with the public consultation on four proposed consolidated Dog Control Orders covering:

- Dog Exclusion Areas
- Dogs on Leads Areas
- Dogs on Leads by Direction
- Dog Fouling – on lands in the Borough

It was agreed that a further report would be brought back to Members detailing the consultation outcomes and any recommended amendments prior to implementation.

Key Issues

The consultation was promoted through local press advertisements, Council civic buildings, and the Council website, with draft Orders and maps made available to the public both in hard copy and online.

The consultation ran for the statutory minimum of one month and closed on 8 August 2025.

A total of 48 responses were received;

- 91.8% confirmed they had reviewed the proposed Orders;
- 76.6% provided comments on the proposed amendments;

- 14 respondents (29%) expressed clear support for the proposals;
- 6 objections (12%) were received, primarily concerning the inclusion of allotments and sensory gardens within Dog Exclusion or Dogs on Leads Areas;
- 2 neutral or general enquiries were received.

The responses highlighted the following main themes:

- Support for greater enforcement and consistency across the Borough;
- Requests for designated off-lead areas to be retained or expanded (particularly at Hazelbank, Loughshore, and Antrim Castle Gardens);
- Concerns about irresponsible dog owners
- Recognition that dogs on leads improve safety, particularly for children, older residents, and those afraid of dogs;
- A small number of respondents objected to restrictions on well-trained dogs or raised concerns about exercise opportunities for pets.

Officer Response to Objections

- **Allotments and Sensory Gardens:** Objections focused on concerns about accessibility for assistance dogs. Officers confirm that the Dog Control Orders make provision for exemptions for registered assistance dogs, and appropriate signage will reflect this.
- **Public Access and Exercise Areas:** While several respondents requested retention of off-lead areas, officers consider that sufficient designated spaces remain across the Borough for off-lead exercise.

Following consideration of all consultation feedback, no material amendments to the proposed Orders (**enclosed**) are deemed necessary.

The change to the existing orders include:

- **Lead length:** The legacy Antrim Dog Control Order stipulates a lead length, whereas the legacy Newtownabbey Dog Control Order does not. The new aligned Order will not stipulate a lead length.
- **A & B Roads:** These roads are listed in the legacy Newtownabbey Dog Control Orders but not in the legacy Antrim Orders. The new aligned Order will remove all A & B roads from the listing.
- **Updated areas:** Additional areas and changes (**enclosed**) have been introduced since the legacy Dog Control Orders were implemented. These areas will be included in the new aligned Orders. These include the crematorium, allotments, sensory gardens and the Platinum Jubilee and Coronation Gardens.

New signage is currently being prepared for installation in all designated areas, including cemeteries, crematoriums, parks, allotments, and gardens.

Staff training and social media communications will also take place to ensure consistent enforcement across the Borough.

To ensure effective implementation and public understanding, officers will undertake a comprehensive public information and awareness programme, including:

Interactive Mapping Tool

- A new online interactive colour coded map will be published on the Council's website, allowing residents to easily identify areas where Dogs on Leads or Dog Exclusion Orders apply.
- The map will be searchable by postcode, park name, or location.
- User can identify dog control areas based on their current locations

A link to the maps can be found at;

[Dog Control Area Maps](#)

Signage and On-Site Information

- Updated temporary signage will be installed at all affected sites, including cemeteries, crematoriums, parks, gardens, allotments, and greenways, clearly displaying the relevant Dog Control Order and enforcement contact details.
- Signs will incorporate QR codes linking directly to the online map and explanatory information.
- New permanent signage will be developed in collaboration with the Council's Parks section to reflect the legal requirements of legislation and guidance. Signs will be colour-coded to reflect the information contained in the mapping tool

Targeted Communications Campaign

- A coordinated communications plan will include:
- Social media posts, press releases, and community updates;
- Information leaflets available in Council facilities
- Engagement with community and dog-walking groups and veterinary surgeries
- Campaign messaging will focus on responsible dog ownership, waste disposal and lead use, using the Council's established "Dog Watch" and responsible dog ownership campaigns' branding for consistency.

Education and Enforcement Partnership

- Council Enforcement Officers will receive refresher training to ensure consistent interpretation and application of the new Orders.
- The approach will be education-first, with initial enforcement focused on awareness and voluntary compliance before fixed penalty measures are applied.
- Officers will also work with local schools, community centres, and community groups to promote awareness of assistance dog exemptions and responsible behaviour in shared public spaces.

Subject to Council approval, the new aligned Dog Control Orders will come into force on 1 January 2026.

4. Financial Position

The cost of implementing the new Dog Control Orders, including production and installation of updated signage, staff training, and public notices, will be met from within existing Environmental Health budgets for 2025/26. No additional funding is required.

5. Equality and/or Rural Screening Requirements

An Equality and Rural Needs Screening exercise has been completed in accordance with Council policy. No adverse equality or rural impacts have been identified. Exemptions for assistance dogs ensure compliance with relevant disability legislation and promote accessibility and inclusion.

6. Governance

The Orders have been prepared in accordance with the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and DAERA guidance.

Following Committee approval, the Orders will be sealed, advertised in local press, and published on the Council website, taking legal effect from 1 January 2025.

7. Summary

The public consultation on the proposed aligned Dog Control Orders has concluded. The majority of respondents supported the new Orders, and objections were appropriately considered and addressed.

The introduction of clear mapping, both online and in local areas, signage and a robust public information campaign will help residents understand where and how the Orders apply, ensuring consistency, compliance, and transparency.

8. Recommendation

It is recommended that the new aligned Dog Control Orders be approved and implemented with effect from 1 January 2026 and officers proceed with the publication of statutory notices, installation of signage, and launch of a comprehensive public awareness campaign.

Prepared by: Mark Sloan, Deputy Head of Environmental Health

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

Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Sustainability

3.10 PK/GEN/127 ALLOTMENTS GREEN WASTE – NEW CHARGES

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the increase charges across all allotment sites including the removal of green waste.

2. Introduction

Members are reminded that Council operates several allotment sites across the Borough, including Ballyearl, Rathfern, Crumlin, Greystone in Antrim, the Grange in Ballyclare, and New Mossley. Collectively, these sites provide over 200 allotment plots for use by residents and community groups, supporting local food growing, wellbeing, and community engagement. Since the establishment of the allotment scheme, there has been no increase in rental charges across any of the sites, reflecting Council's ongoing commitment to keeping allotments accessible and affordable for all users while encouraging active participation in community gardening.

In addition, waste removal arrangements have differed across sites, with brown bins provided at The Grange and large skips supplied at other locations for monthly collections. Under the current terms and conditions, there is no specific provision for waste removal from allotment areas; however, it is recommended that a consistent approach be established to ensure regular and efficient waste management across all sites.

3. Key Issues on Sites

Council will transition from the use of skips for the disposal of green waste to the provision of brown bins across allotment sites. This change will not reduce the overall waste collection capacity. Brown bins will be collected weekly, ensuring continuity of service and convenience for allotment holders.

The decision to move away from skips follows a series of incidents involving the theft of skips from the New Mossley Allotment Site. These thefts resulted in significant and unplanned financial costs to Council and created operational challenges, including delays to waste removal, disruption to site users, and additional staff time required to arrange replacements and address security concerns.

As a result, Council has reviewed its waste management arrangements to establish a more secure, cost-effective, and sustainable long-term solution. The implementation of the revised collection method will be monitored over a 12-month period to assess its effectiveness and to ensure that service standards and community needs continue to be met.

4. Financial implications

Council has not previously applied additional charges for waste disposal; however, it is now proposed to introduce a one-off increase in fees for the 2026–2027 financial year. Under this proposal, fees would rise by £10.00 for full

plots and £5.00 for half plots. These rates will continue to be subsidised, as the average waste cost per plot is £27.00. Going forward, any future annual increases will be aligned with the prevailing rate of inflation.

This approach aims to support the long-term sustainability of the waste disposal service while ensuring that costs are shared fairly and proportionately, without placing an undue financial burden on residents.

It is also worth noting that the Council's current allotment charges remain competitively priced compared to those of other local authorities.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that Members approve the proposed one-off charge and then the rolling annual charge of inflation each year.

Prepared: Nadine Campbell, Parks Development Manager

Agreed by: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks

Approved by: Matt McDowell, Director of Estates and Recreation

3.11 L/LEI/004/VOL 2 SUMMER SCHEME 2025 PROGRAMME UPDATE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide a review of the Council's 2025 Summer Scheme Programme and to seek approval to undertake an options appraisal on the future delivery model for Council-managed Summer Scheme Programmes.

2. Introduction/Background

The Council delivers a range of Summer Schemes and Sports Camps across the Borough during the school summer holidays. In 2025, six main schemes were delivered within leisure centres and at various rural locations. To promote inclusion, the Council partnered with the Mae Murray Foundation to deliver three inclusive schemes at Antrim Forum, Crumlin Leisure Centre, and Mossley Pavilion.

In addition to Council-run activities, financial support was provided to external organisations through Community Development Grants, totalling £34,000, enabling them to deliver tailored summer programmes. A further £25,000 was allocated to Special Educational Needs (SEN) schools in the Borough, with contributions of up to £5,000 available for each school delivering a Summer Scheme for children and young people with special needs.

3. Summer Scheme 2025 Performance Statistics

The 2025 scheme achieved 98% occupancy, representing a 4% increase from 2024. Over the five-week programme, 2,715 spaces were available across eight Borough locations, compared to 2,885 in 2024. In addition we had 75 inclusive places available which brought this total to 2,790. The slight reduction was due to a hall closure at Lillian Bland and low interest in Hydepark, which reduced capacity. A total of 2,655 participants attended, with 189 also enrolled in early or late club sessions and another 54 at the Inclusive Schemes. The breakdown of key statistics for the schemes are as follows:

<u>Scheme</u>	Capacity 2025	Duration (Days)	Booked 2025	Occupancy
<u>Summer Scheme</u>				
Ballynure	90	10	94	104%
Doagh (Kilbride)	45	5	28	62%
Hydepark	0	0	0	0%
Merville	180	20	114	63%
Lillian Bland	200	25	198	99%
Community Total	515	60	434	84%
Ballyearl	420	25	391	93%
Crumlin	45	5	43	96%
Sixmile	450	25	461	102%
Valley	1000	25	1015	102%

	Leisure Total	1915	80	1910	100%
<u>Sports Camps</u>					
Antrim Forum		160	6	164	103%
Crumlin		45	3	73	162%
Castle Gardens		80	3	74	93%
Sports Camp Total		285	12	311	109%
<u>Inclusive</u>					
Antrim Forum		25	2	20	80%
Crumlin		25	1	14	56%
Mossley		25	2	20	80%
Inclusive Total		75	5	54	72%
Overall Scheme Total		2790	157	2709	97%
Scheme Total (excl. Inclusive)		2715	152	2655	98%

4. Staffing Considerations

The 2025 Summer Scheme was delivered by a dedicated team of approximately 57 staff across eight venues, led by the Summer Scheme Coordinator and supported by Leisure Centre Duty Managers and the Leisure Administration Team. Staffing structures varied by venue, comprising one Senior Leader and between four and nineteen Camp Leaders, depending on participant numbers and capacity.

A total of 85 applications were received through Council's contracted recruitment agency, resulting in 61 appointments. Senior Leaders were initially recruited through the Council's process; however, following two withdrawals after induction, five experienced agency staff were promoted to senior positions to ensure continuity. Additional specialist sports coaches were engaged for the multi-sport camps at Antrim Forum, Castle Gardens, and Crumlin.

This staffing model ensured appropriate supervision ratios and allowed flexibility to redeploy staff across sites when required.

The scheme's costs were predominantly made of staffing, most of which was through agency contracts. However, additional resources were contributed that are not reflected in the cost analysis, including support from HR, Finance, Organisational Development, the Leisure Administration Team, and Centre Management Teams in developing and delivering the programme.

5. Financial Review

The total cost of delivering the 2025 Summer Schemes was £187,633, with income generated of £120,241, resulting in a net subsidy of £67,392.

This equates to an overall cost to the Council of £24.88 per participant.

Despite achieving efficiencies, including an £8,000 cost reduction from the removal of transport for off-site trips, overall expenditure increased compared to 2024. Rising costs for facility hire, wages, materials, and

equipment resulted in a financial outcome broadly consistent with the previous year's deficit.

A detailed financial breakdown by site is provided below.

	Scheme	Income	Expenditure	Variance	Subsidy
<u>Summer Scheme</u>					
	Ballynure	£4,088	£9,241	(£5,153)	(£54.82)
	Doagh (Kilbride)	£872	£2,588	(£1,716)	(£61.28)
	Hydepark	£0	£0	£0	£0
	Merville	£2,912	£6,993.65	(£4,081.65)	(£35.80)
	Lillian Bland	£8,367	£17,607	(£9,460)	(£47.78)
	Community Total	£16,239	£36,429.65	(£20,190.65)	(£46.52)
	Ballyearl	£18,099	£28,935.42	£10,333.45	(£26.43)
	Crumlin	£810	£1,998	£1,188	(£26.63)
	Sixmile	£21,490	£30,832.15	£9,342.15	(£20.26)
	Valley	£54,423	£76,268.46	£21,845.46	(£21.52)
	Leisure Total	£94,822	£138,034.03	(£42,709.06)	(£22.36)
<u>Sports Camps</u>					
	Antrim Forum	£4,914	£2,536	£2,378	£14.86
	Crumlin	£1,381	£1,268	£113	£2.51
	Castle Gardens	£2,456	£1,268	£1,188	£14.85
	Sports Camp Total	£8,751	£5,072	£3,791	£12.19
<u>Inclusive</u>					
	Antrim Forum	£180	£3,238.93	(£3,058.93)	(£152.95)
	Crumlin	£69	£1,619.46	(£1,550.56)	(£110.75)
	Mossley	£180	£3,238.93	(£3,058.93)	(£152.95)
	Inclusive Total	£429	£8,097.32	(£7,668.32)	(£142.00)
	Overall Scheme Total	£120,241	£187,633	£67,392	(£24.88)
	Scheme Total (excl. Inclusive)	£119,812	£179,535.68	£59,723.68	(£22.49)

6. Challenges and Learning

The 2025 Summer Scheme Programme delivered another successful year, achieving a 98% occupancy rate—a 4% increase on 2024—and maintaining consistently high satisfaction levels, with 97% of parents satisfied to extremely satisfied and 91% stating they would recommend the schemes to a friend. The programme offered 2,790 places across eight venues, supported by an additional 377 before and after club spaces at the Valley Leisure Centre. Inclusive provision continued to be a key strength, with 54 children supported through specialist schemes in partnership with the Mae Murray Foundation and local Special Educational Needs Schools.

Delivery of the programme required a substantial staffing commitment, with 57 staff deployed across sites, supported by the Summer Scheme Coordinator, Duty Managers, and the More Team. While this structure ensured safe ratios and operational flexibility, the reliance on agency staff through Blue Arrow presented ongoing challenges in recruitment, continuity, and quality assurance. Additional input from HR, Finance, Organisational

Development, and Centre Management teams though not reflected in the financial analysis represents a significant unaccounted resource cost.

Financially, the programme generated £120,241 in income against £187,633 in expenditure, resulting in a net deficit of £67,392 (a per-participant subsidy of £24.88). Despite cost-saving measures such as removing transport for off-site trips, rising expenses for staffing, facility hire, and materials continue to impact sustainability. The delivery model also remains administratively demanding, particularly given the booking system issues experienced at launch, which caused significant customer frustration and additional workload for the More Team.

7. Proposed Future Delivery

While the 2025 Summer Scheme programme delivered strong participation, high satisfaction levels, and positive social outcomes, it remains a resource-intensive service with significant operational and financial pressures. The reliance on agency staffing, ongoing booking system challenges, and rising costs for facilities and materials continue to impact both service quality and sustainability.

To ensure the long-term viability of the Summer Scheme, it is proposed to review the current delivery model and explore alternative options that maintain inclusion, quality, and community value while improving efficiency.

One potential approach is to commission an external provider to manage the operational delivery and booking administration of the Summer Scheme. This model would allow the Council to:

- Retain strategic oversight of programme design, quality assurance, safeguarding, and inclusion standards.
- Reduce internal staffing pressures and the reliance on agency recruitment.
- Improve cost efficiency through streamlined operational management.
- Deliver a more user-friendly booking system, enhancing the customer experience and reducing administrative workload.
- Maintain or enhance the level of provision across both leisure and community venues, ensuring continued accessibility for families throughout the Borough.

A detailed options appraisal should be undertaken to assess feasibility, financial implications, and potential delivery partners. The review should include a comparison of in-house and externally commissioned models to determine the most sustainable and effective approach, with Members subsequently asked to approve an approach to market if deemed appropriate.

8. Recommendation

It is recommended that the 2025 Summer Scheme Programme review be noted and approval granted to undertake an options appraisal on the future delivery model for Council-managed Summer Scheme Programmes.

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

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

Approved by: Matt McDowell, Director of Estates and Recreation

3.12 PK/BIO/046 NORTHERN IRELAND ELECTRICITY NETWORK (NIE) - TREE PLANTING PROPOSAL FOR 2025

6. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the proposed tree planting locations for 2025.

7. Introduction

Members are reminded of Council's commitment to planting one million trees and of its continued efforts to encourage participation from residents, community groups, schools, and other key stakeholders.

To support the delivery of the One Million Trees initiative, Officers will submit an application to Northern Ireland Electricity Networks for its tree funding scheme, which is administered by The Conservation Volunteers (TCV).

The scheme is designed to deliver a range of environmental and social, benefits. Its primary objectives include enhancing local biodiversity through the creation and restoration of diverse habitats, supporting essential ecosystem services such as pollination and carbon sequestration, and contributing to climate change mitigation by increasing carbon capture and storage capacity. In addition, the initiative aims to improve, soil, and air quality, thereby fostering healthier, more resilient natural environments that provide long-term benefits for both people and wildlife.

8. Key Issues on Sites

Through the NIE Network, 100% of the eligible costs are awarded for the supply and planting of native tree species across proposed locations. This funding ensures no financial burden to Council for the establishment phase.

Site plans are **enclosed** for reference, detailing a total of 800 native trees to be planted across 0.5 hectares. These efforts contribute significantly to Council's tree planting targets and environmental commitments. Detailed maps of each location are **enclosed**.

- Caulside Park, Antrim
- Hazelbank Park, Newtownabbey
- Sixmilewater Park, Ballyclare

9. Recommendation

It is recommended that Members approve the proposed tree planting locations for NIE Networks for 2025.

Prepared by: Nadine Campbell, Parks Development Manager

Agreed by: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

Approved by: Matt McDowell, Director of Estates and Recreation

3.13 PK/GEN/223 HORTICULTURAL GRANT AID PROGRAMME

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the recommendations set within the 2ND Call of the Horticultural Grant Aid Programme

2. Background

Members are reminded that Council has previously approved the Horticultural Grant Aid Programme.

This programme provides fully funded grants of up to £1,500 to support local community groups in delivering horticultural projects on land that is accessible to the general public within the Borough. Eligible applicants include constituted community groups, and schools, based within the Borough.

Successful applications are expected to demonstrate clear outcomes in relation to increasing community participation in planting and related horticultural activities and/or supporting the purchase of horticultural materials and features that contribute to the enhancement of public spaces.

3. Grant Programme – Second Call

A total of seven applications were submitted during the second call for the Horticultural Grant Aid Programme. Each application has been comprehensively assessed and scored in accordance with the approved evaluation criteria.

Following detailed review and consideration, six applications have been recommended for funding under the programme. These applications were determined to have met the eligibility requirements and demonstrated strong alignment with the objectives of the scheme. A summary table outlining each application including key details and corresponding recommendations has been **enclosed** for Members' information and consideration as part of the decision-making process.

4. Financial Position

The approved budget for the 2025/26 Horticultural Grant Aid Programme is £30,000. In May 2025, Council awarded a total of £16,440 in grant funding, resulting in a remaining balance of £13,560.

Based on the assessment outcomes, and subject to Members' approval of the six recommended applications, a further £7,210 will be allocated during this round of funding. This allocation will leave a remaining budget of £6,350 for the 2025/26 financial year. A third call for applications will be issued in due course, with submissions to be assessed and presented for consideration at a future meeting of the Operations Committee.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that approval for the allocation of funding to the six successful applicants under the Horticultural Grant Aid Programme – Call 2, totalling £7,210 for the period 8 September to 20 October 2025 be granted.

Prepared by: Nadine Campbell, Parks Development Manager

Agreed by: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

Approved by: Matt McDowell, Director of Estates and Recreation

4 ITEMS FOR NOTING

4.1 L/LEI/SD/018 HEALTH INTERVENTION ACTION PLAN – UPDATE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with a Quarter 2 update on Council's Health Intervention Action Plan for 2025–26.

2. Introduction/Background

Members are advised that Council approved the Health Intervention Action Plan (2022-27) in November 2022, a copy is enclosed for Member's reference. The Action 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. Key Issues

Officers continue 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 2 of 2025–26, a total of 6,568 participants engaged in Council-supported programmes, 1% below the quarterly target of 6,610, however remain in line to hit cumulative target for the year with a detailed breakdown below. There will be an expected uplift in figures for Q3 and Q4 with the addition of new programmes and existing programmes restarting.

Programmes	25/26 Annual Target	Q2 Target	Q2 Actual	YTD Total
Physical Activity Referral Scheme (PARS)	170	45	39	78
Move More Cancer Rehabilitation and Rehabilitation Programme	100	25	34	50
Age Friendly (Live Long, Fall's Prevention, Walking Netball, Aqua Fit and Nordic Walking)	22,000	5500	5368	11,291

Exercise for Mental Health Programme	2000	500	492	856
Respiratory Rehabilitation and Maintenance Programme	600	115	116	284
Cardiac Rehabilitation and Maintenance Programmes	1200	300	296	648
Programmes for People with a Disability	500	125	223	411
Pre-Post Natal (new)	100	0	0	0
Substance mis-use (new)	20	0	0	0
Veterans	30	0	0	0

4. New Programmes

Looking ahead to the remainder of 2025–26, officers will continue to expand the reach and impact of the Health Intervention Programme.

In Quarter 3, new initiatives will be introduced to support pre- and post-natal health, with the programme launch scheduled for the week beginning 3 November. Information and taster sessions will take place at Antrim Forum (3 November) and Valley Leisure Centre (7 November). Officers are also engaging with the Trust to develop a Substance Misuse Programme, which is planned for delivery in Quarter 4.

Building on last year's success, another Veterans' Programme will take place in Quarter 3 at both Antrim Forum and Valley Leisure Centre.

In addition, funding secured from the Public Health Agency will support the delivery of a bespoke Cancer and Golf Rehabilitation Programme, scheduled for Quarter 4.

5. Financial Position/Implication

The Council directly employs three Health Intervention Officers to support delivery of the Action Plan. This work is 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
Falls Prevention Steady and Strong Programme TBC	NHSCT	£1,870
Move More (Cancer Rehabilitation Programme)	Macmillan	£5,000
	Total	£51,376

6. Recommendation

It is recommended that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Kevin Madden Sport and Physical Activity Manager

Agreed by: Deaglan O'Hagan Head of Leisure Operations

Approved by: Matt McDowell, Director of Estates and Recreation

4.2 PK/GEN/022, PK/GEN/030 NORTHERN IRELAND AMENITY COUNCIL – BEST KEPT AWARDS 2025 AND ULSTER IN BLOOM AWARDS 2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on Northern Ireland Amenity Council Best Kept Awards and Ulster in Bloom Awards for 2025.

2. Introduction

The Northern Ireland Amenity Council (NIAC) established the Best Kept Awards in the early 1950s under the leadership of Professor Arthur Muskett. The initiative was designed to encourage community pride and environmental responsibility by recognising towns, villages, and housing areas that demonstrated exceptional standards in environmental care and presentation.

Northern Ireland was the pioneer of this type of community-based competition, which has since inspired similar initiatives such as Britain in Bloom and Tidy Towns across the UK, Ireland, and Europe. Over the decades, the Best Kept Awards have evolved to celebrate achievements in cleanliness, greenery, and civic involvement, continuing to play a vital role in promoting environmental excellence and community spirit.

The Ulster in Bloom Awards celebrate horticultural excellence and environmental enhancement across Northern Ireland. Organised by the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) in partnership with Translink, the competition recognises the efforts of councils, community groups, and volunteers in creating attractive, sustainable, and welcoming public spaces.

Entries are assessed on three key criteria: Horticultural (40%), Environmental (30%), and Community (30%), which together promote local pride, biodiversity, and cross-community participation. Judging takes place annually from July to early August, with successful entrants also considered for nomination to represent Northern Ireland in the national RHS Britain in Bloom competition.

3. Past History and Results

In recent years, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council has consistently excelled at both the Northern Ireland Amenity Awards and Ulster in Bloom, reinforcing its strong commitment to environmental stewardship and civic pride.

These accomplishments are a testament to the collaborative efforts of residents, Council staff, and dedicated volunteers who work together to maintain clean, green, and welcoming spaces across the borough.

At this year Best Kept Awards 2025, Antrim was named Best Kept Large Town, with judges praising its high standard of presentation, well-maintained floral

displays, and cleanliness. Special commendation was given to Antrim Castle Gardens, recognised as an exemplary public space and a focal point for community activity.

Merville Garden Village received the title of Best Kept Large Housing Area.

Ballynure achieved Runner-Up in the Best Kept Small Village category.

Neilsbrook Fold was awarded Best Kept Sheltered Housing Area 2025.

Council also achieved good success in the Ulster in Bloom Awards 2025, further underscoring its borough-wide commitment to horticultural excellence, environmental sustainability, and community wellbeing. The borough's results were as follows:

Small Village Category – Winner: Ballynure; Second Place: Ballyeaston

Large Village Category – Third Place: Templepatrick

Small Town Category – Winner: Randalstown

Large Town Category – Winner: Antrim

Special Award for Wellbeing – Randalstown, for promoting community health and wellbeing through environmental initiatives

These achievements highlight the collective efforts of residents, volunteers, and Council staff in enhancing the borough's appearance and creating spaces that foster community pride and wellbeing.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that the report be noted.

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

Approved by: Matt McDowell, Director of Estates and Recreation

4.3 FI/FIN/004 BUDGET REPORT – PERIOD 6 APRIL 2025 TO SEPTEMBER 2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the financial performance for the Directorates reporting to the Operations Committee for Period 6 April 2025 to September 2025.

2. Introduction/Background

As agreed, quarterly budget reports will be presented to the relevant Committee. All financial reports will be available to all Members.

3. Summary

As at period 6:

The Parks and Leisure Directorate has a favourable variance of £316k, or 5.2%, against the budgeted financial performance for the period. This favourable position is the result of:

- Income from golf (memberships, driving range, and green fees) and Crematorium fees has exceeded targets.
- A significant reduction in energy consumption has led to lower energy costs.

The Sustainability Directorate has a favourable variance of £331k, or 2.5%, against the budgeted financial performance for the period. This slight favourable position is the result of:

- Lower than estimated waste arisings for the 1st quarter of the year;
- Lower than predicted staffing costs due to vacancies;
- Delays in receipt of invoice for Animal Welfare Services.

A report on the financial performance, employee costs, highest areas of expenditure and income, and the financial performance by Head of Service is **enclosed** for Members' information.

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

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Richard Murray, Head of Finance

Agreed by and Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

4.4 WM/WM/037/VOL2 HARMONISATION OF WASTE COLLECTION SERVICES UPDATE

1. Purpose

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

2. Background

Members will be aware that Officers are 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 have continued to provide Members with a monthly update on how the project is progressing.

3. Key Information

Deliveries of wheelie boxes and black bins are continuing and at the time of writing four out of seven routes completed and delivery of route five is currently underway. Roll-out is due to be completed w/c 17 November as planned. No significant issues with the delivery or uplift of the wheelie boxes and black bins had been reported, however Council experienced some delays in the daily collections of containers across the Borough during w/c 22 October. These delays were not in consequence of the roll-out but due to staffing issues affecting overall collections. Contingency plans were put in place and 90% of households were collected within the contractual 24 hours time period.

As reported to Members in October, to enable ongoing service efficiencies the change of collection weeks for the black residual bins commenced from 27 October. This is to mitigate the inefficiency of having no collections or requirement for vehicles on the legacy blue bin week. Residents have been advised with letters directly to their household notifying them of this change and contingencies have been put in place to assist with missed collections during this period.

Delivery of the communication plan is ongoing throughout the rollout/collection with ongoing social media to further highlight the project. Residents due to receive their notifications of swap over in November will have started to receive their direct 2nd letter from Royal Mail w/c 27 October. This letter will indicate their roll-out will be within the next few weeks and will provide them with further information on the system, collection days and what can be recycled in each container. In addition, educational talks have been delivered in 2 schools, with 7 more booked across the legacy Antrim area. Feedback shows the talks are well received, with children highly engaged and enthusiastic about recycling.

External monitoring is being provided by WRAP with Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) funding. WRAP Officers

have been assessing and monitoring the roll-out and collection service, with Council Officers actively involved in the process. This approach ensures a high level of contract management is maintained, supporting robust and effective service standards throughout the programme.

An updated timescale of all actions is included (**enclosed**) for Members information.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that the report be noted.

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

Agreed and Approved by: Michael Lavery, Director of Sustainability

4.5 L/LEI/00/004 OLYMPIC LEGACY FUND

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide information on the Olympic Legacy Fund, administered by Sport Northern Ireland (SNI) in partnership with Crowdfunder UK, as a potential funding opportunity for sports clubs and community groups within the Borough.

2. Background

Sport Northern Ireland (SNI) is a statutory partner of the Council. The Olympic Legacy Fund is a £1 million investment programme designed to improve the quality of club and community sports facilities, encouraging greater participation in sport and physical activity. Supported projects aim to leave a lasting community legacy inspired by the success of Northern Ireland athletes at the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Crowdfunding provides an alternative route for raising funds by engaging local communities. Individuals can financially support projects via an online platform, which also demonstrates community backing. This approach is increasingly used to secure partnership funding for sports and physical activity projects.

Eligible organisations include:

- Constituted sports clubs affiliated with governing bodies recognised by SNI.
- Community or voluntary groups and charities whose primary activity is sport or physical activity in Northern Ireland.

3. Funding Details

Organisations may apply for projects costing between £1,000 and £50,000. Sport NI will fund up to 65% of project costs, rising to 75% for clubs in high-need areas. The remaining amount must be raised through a Crowdfunder UK campaign, with a submission deadline of 20 February 2026. A copy of the guidance is **enclosed** for Members' reference.

4. Implications for Sports Clubs in the Borough

The Olympic Legacy Fund provides a significant opportunity for clubs and community organisations to upgrade facilities and equipment. Council Officers will:

- Disseminate information about the Fund to eligible sports clubs and relevant community groups.
- Provide guidance on the application process and support in preparing Crowdfunder campaigns.
- Assist clubs in understanding compliance requirements for facility projects.

Clubs and community organisations are encouraged to engage with the Council early to ensure applications are well-prepared and demonstrate community support.

5. Summary

The Olympic Legacy Fund provides a significant opportunity for sports clubs in the borough to upgrade facilities and equipment, supported by Sport NI and community crowdfunding. Council Officers will communicate the information to clubs and relevant community organisations.

6. **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the report be noted.

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

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

Approved by: Matt McDowell, Director of Estates and Recreation

4.6 EH/PHWB/012 DEMENTIA SAFEGUARDING SCHEME

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the Dementia Safeguarding Scheme which is aimed at improving safeguarding of people with dementia by reducing the risk of them becoming missing persons.

2. Background

It is estimated that over 20,000 people are currently living with dementia in Northern Ireland and this is projected to rise to approximately 60,000 by 2050. Individuals living with dementia, particularly those with Alzheimer's disease, often experience difficulties with memory and spatial awareness. Research indicates that around 70% of people with dementia will experience at least one "missing" incident during the course of their condition. Such incidents can be extremely distressing for the person involved, as well as for their families and carers.

Dementia Safeguarding Scheme

Recognising the importance of supporting people living with dementia and those who care for them, the Environmental Health has partnered with the Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) to deliver the Dementia Safeguarding Scheme. Originally developed by Avon and Somerset Police, the Dementia Safeguarding Scheme has since been introduced across local authorities in Northern Ireland.

The scheme provides free wearable assistive devices that use Near Field Communication (NFC) technology. These wristbands and hang tags securely store essential information about the wearer and their next of kin. When scanned with a smartphone, the device allows first responders or members of the public to quickly access key details such as the person's name, emergency contact information, and any relevant medical notes.

Each device also features a QR code linking to Council's website, where users can find demonstration videos explaining how to operate the devices and upload contact details. Details of the scheme and how to apply for a device can be found at;

<https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/Dementia-Safeguarding>

The scheme will be promoted through local media, Council's website, and social media channels. Family members and carers can request devices directly at no cost via the Council's website. In addition, partner organisations such as the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), the Northern Trust Health and Social Care Dementia Team, and Alzheimer's Society Northern Ireland can refer individuals who would particularly benefit from the devices.

3. Financial

The Dementia Safeguarding Scheme has been jointly funded by the PCSP and the Environmental Health and Wellbeing Team through the existing Age Friendly budget.

A total budget of £3,000 was allocated, with each partner contributing £1,500. This funding has enabled the purchase of 2000 hang tags and 225 wristbands. Promotional items have been purchased under existing age friendly budgets.

4. Equality and/or Rural Screening Requirements

A Section 75 Screening form and Rural Needs impact assessment in relation to this initiative is included (enclosed) with a full Equality Impact Assessment not required.

5. Summary

The Dementia Safeguarding Scheme aims to enhance the safety and wellbeing of people living with dementia by reducing the risk of them going missing.

Through this collaborative initiative, the Council demonstrates its ongoing commitment to building an Age Friendly Community, ensuring that Antrim and Newtownabbey remain inclusive, supportive for all residents.

6. Recommendation

It is recommended that the report be noted.

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Agreed by: Colin Kelly Head of Environmental Health and Wellbeing

Approved by: Michael Laverty Director of Sustainability

5 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

Any Other Relevant Business (AORB) may be taken at this point.