



**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
HELD IN ROUND TOWER CHAMBER, ANTRIM CIVIC CENTRE
ON 02 FEBRUARY 2026 AT 6.30 PM**

In the Chair	:	Alderman J Smyth
Committee Members (In person)	:	Alderman L Clarke Councillors – J Archibald-Brown, R Foster, J Gilmour, N Kelly, V McWilliam, M Stewart and S Ward
Committee Members (Remote)	:	Alderman P Bradley Councillors – A McAuley, E McLaughlin and L O’Hagan
Non Committee Members (In person)	:	Councillor B Webb
Non Committee Members: (Remote)	:	Alderman S Ross Councillors – P Dunlop, M Cooper and M Goodman
Officers Present	:	Director of Environmental Services and Sustainability – M Laverty Head of Parks Operations - P Mawhinney Head of Leisure Operations – D O’Hagan Head of Environmental Health & Wellbeing – C Kelly Head of Estate Services – D Blair Leisure Development Manager – C McCallion ICT Project Officer – C Bell Member Services Officer – L Irwin

CHAIRPERSON’S REMARKS

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

1 APOLOGIES

Councillor AM Logue

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

3 PRESENTATION

3.1 L/GEN/080 LEISURE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY 2025-26

1. Purpose

The purpose of this presentation was to provide Members with an update on the Leisure Customer Satisfaction Survey 2025-26.

2. Introduction

Members received a presentation from Conor McCallion, Leisure Development Manager, on the results of the recent Leisure Customer Satisfaction Survey 2025-26.

Members sought and received clarification from the Officer in relation to individual centres, breakdown of demographic and cleanliness.

Proposed by Councillor Kelly
Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed that

The Head of Leisure Operations will report back to Members on the variances of trends across individual centres and consider adding specific activities to the survey, such as soft play, in the future.

ACTION: Deaglan O'Hagan, Head of Leisure Operations

4 ITEMS FOR DECISION

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

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the recommendations arising from the 4th call of the Leisure Grant Aid Programme for the period November – December 2025; and the proposed amendments to the operation of the Leisure Grant Aid Programme, as detailed within the main body of the report, to improve efficiency and ensure effective management of available budget.

2. Introduction

Members were advised that for the period 1 November – 31 December 2025, 22 applications were received, 6 applications were deemed ineligible and 16 met the criteria for funding. Details of the grant programme criteria were circulated.

A table setting out details and recommendations for the remaining £12,593 was 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 to date 25/26	Approved spend to date 25/26	No. of apps. Call: 4	Grants proposed (£)	Funding Balance remaining (subject to approval of application)
Capital Grants	£39,750	5	£39,750	1	0	£0
Grants to Clubs	£46,689	10	£39,900	3	£6,789	£0
Grants to Athletes Bursaries	£52,987	61	£49,973	10	£3,014	£0
Grants to Coaches and Officials Bursaries	£1,720	8	£1,470	1	£250	£0
Sports Event Grant	£22,932	13	£21,832	2	£1,100	£0
Defibrillator Grant	£5,922	4	£4,482	1	£1,440	£0
Allocation total	£170,000	101	£157,407	18	£12,593	£0
Fitness suite Gold Card	20 Applications	14	11 applications	4	3 applications	6 applications

3. Financial Position

The overall budget for the 2025/26 programme was £170,000. Of the applications received, 16 met the eligibility criteria, requesting a total of £37,554, which included a £20,000 Capital Grant. The remaining funding available for the 2025/26 financial year was £12,593; therefore, the Capital Grant could not be progressed during this call period. Funding from categories with remaining balances was reallocated to relevant categories to address current demand and maximise the use of available funds for eligible grants. Officers would advise the Capital Grant applicant that they may reapply from 1 April 2026, when a new budget became available.

4. Leisure Grant Aid Review

The Leisure Grant Aid Programme operated as a rolling grant scheme and was open to applications throughout the year across a total of five call periods, subject to the availability of budget. Officers had recently reviewed the call periods for the Leisure Grant Aid Programme and proposed the following modifications for Members' consideration:

Grant Programme	Purpose	Proposed Change	Benefit of Change
Capital Grant	Technical Assistance Grant & Capital Grant for projects over £40,000	Grant only open during Call 1 (1 April – 31 May) and Call 3 (1 August – 31 October)	To allow for a more efficient grant process. Available budget.
Grants to Athletes	Athletes are supported through a Bursary scheme towards training and competition costs	Amount awarded is representative of the level of achievement/representation as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £500 Regional Level • £750 National Level • £1,000 International Level 	Introduction of a more robust criteria for amount awarded.
All programmes	Rolling Grant process	Deliver 4 call periods per annum. If there is enough budget remaining, a 5th Call for applications will be made.	To allow for a more efficient grant process.

5. Summary

The overall budget for the 2025/26 programme was £170,000. A total of £157,407 had previously been approved across Call 1, Call 2 and Call 3. Call 4 amounts to £12,593. Subject to approval of the grants listed, total expenditure to date would reach £170,000, leaving a remaining balance of £0. Consequently, no further grant calls would be issued during the 2025/26 financial year.

Proposed by Councillor Archibald-Brown

Seconded by Alderman Clarke and agreed that

- a) Approval be granted for the Leisure Grant Aid Programme awards arising from the 4th call, covering the period November – December 2025.
- b) Approval be granted for the proposed changes to the Leisure Grant Aid Programme, as outlined within the report, including amendments to call periods, eligibility criteria and award structures, to support a more efficient grant administration process and effective use of available budget.

ACTION BY: Anna Boyle, Funding Unit Manager

4.2 PK/REG/008 APPLICATION FOR THE RENEWAL OF PREMISES FOR CIVIL MARRIAGES / CIVIL PARTNERSHIP CEREMONIES

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Council approval for the renewal of place approvals for Corrs Corner Hotel as a venue where Civil Marriage and Civil Partnership ceremonies may be conducted.

2. Background

In accordance with the Marriage (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 and the Civil Partnership Act 2004, Council was responsible for approving applications for temporary place approvals for Civil Marriages and Civil Partnerships.

As part of this process, a Notice of Interest must be displayed in a prominent location at the proposed venue for a period of three weeks to allow for any public objections to be submitted.

No objections were received during the public notice period. In addition, each of the premises had been formally inspected and deemed suitable to proceed with the approval process

3. Previous Decision of Council

The venue was previously granted approval by Council in March 2023.

Proposed by Councillor Foster

Seconded by Alderman Clarke and agreed that

Corrs Corner Hotel be re-approved as a venue to hold Civil Marriages under the terms of the Marriage (Northern Ireland) Order 2003, and for the registration of Civil Partnerships under the Civil Partnership Act 2004.

ACTION BY: Paula Redpath, Registrar

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

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek approval for the most recent Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Group meeting held on 21 January 2026.

2. Summary

At the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Group meeting on 21 January 2026, Members considered a detailed report which provided a range of updates from the Parks section. The minutes of the meeting were circulated for Members' consideration.

Proposed by Alderman Clarke

Seconded by Councillor Stewart and agreed that

the minutes of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Group meeting held on 21 January 2026 be approved.

ACTION BY: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

4.4 PK/GEN/057 GREEN FLAG AWARDS 2026 NOMINATIONS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek approval for the Green Flag Award nominations for 2026.

2. Green Flags

The Green Flag Award was an internationally recognised benchmark of excellence for the management, maintenance, and community engagement of parks and open spaces.

In Northern Ireland, the programme was administered by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful. To achieve Green Flag status, sites must operate in accordance with a comprehensive management plan that meets rigorous criteria, including high horticultural standards, cleanliness, environmental sustainability, biodiversity, community involvement, and public safety.

In the previous year, a total of 20 Council-managed sites and 12 community-managed spaces across the Borough were awarded the prestigious Green Flag accreditation. The increase in community-managed sites reflected the significant collaborative efforts of the Council and local communities in taking ownership of these spaces and fostering an increase in civic pride.

3. Submissions for 2026

This year's nominees had all demonstrated active involvement in the Green Flag Awards programme and had made a significant positive impact by enhancing the environmental quality of spaces within their communities. A new nomination for 2026 was proposed for the grounds of the Council's Crematorium.

Park / Open Space	Green Flag Awarded by Type
Antrim Castle Gardens	Heritage
Sentry Hill Historic House	Heritage
Antrim / Belmont and Six Mile Cemetery	Council - Parks
Antrim Lough Shore Park and Gateway	Council - Parks
Ballyclare Cemetery	Council - Parks
Ballynure Old Graveyard	Council - Parks
Jordanstown Loughshore Park, Hazelbank Park & Gideon's Green	Council - Parks
Kilbride Cemetery	Council - Parks
Lilian Bland Park	Council - Parks
Mallusk Cemetery	Council - Parks
Mill Race Trail	Council - Parks
Newtownabbey Way	Council - Parks
Randalstown Riverside Walk	Council - Parks
Rashee Cemetery	Council - Parks
Sixmilewater Park	Council - Parks

Valley Park (V36 and Glas-na-Braden Glen)	Council – Parks
Wallace Park	Council – Parks
Crumlin Glen	Council – Parks
Threemilewater Park	Council – Parks
Whiteabbey Glen	Council – Parks
Antrim & Newtownabbey Crematorium	Council – Parks
Clotworthy Courtyard at Antrim Castle Gardens	Community
Duneane Community Garden	Community
Cranfield Church and Holy Well	Community
Ballyeaston Church Ruin	Community
Elevation Randalstown	Community
Toome Linear Park	Community
The Sovereign Complex, Rathfern	Community
Monkstown Village Community Garden	Community
Neilsbrook Fold	Community
Monkstown Village Community Garden	Community
Maine Fold - Randalstown	Community
Sentry Hill Community Garden	Community

Proposed by Councillor Archibald-Brown
 Seconded by Alderman Clarke and agreed that

the above nominations be approved for submission to the 2026 Green Flag Awards.

ACTION BY: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

4.5 WM/WM/037/VOL2 REFUSE AND RECYCLING PUBLIC HOLIDAY COLLECTIONS 2026

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval on the proposed alternative refuse and kerbside recycling collection days for Public Holidays in 2026.

2. Background

As in previous years, Council worked with Avenue Recycling and Bryson Recycling 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 up to and including December 2026 were set out below for consideration. The proposed alternative collection days for 2026 were:

Public Holiday	Antrim and Newtownabbey Households
St. Patrick's Day Tuesday, 17 March 2026	No change. Collections as normal on Tuesday, 17 March 2026.
Good Friday Friday, 3 April 2026	No change. Collections as normal on Friday, 3 April 2026.
Easter Monday Monday, 6 April 2026	No service. Alternative collection date Saturday, 04 April 2026.
Easter Tuesday Tuesday, 7 April 2026	No change. Collections as normal on Tuesday 07 April 2026.
Early May Day Monday, 4 May 2026	No change. Collections as normal on Monday 4 May 2026.
Spring Bank Holiday Monday, 25 May 2026	No change. Collections as normal on Monday 25 May 2026.
Sunday, 12 July 2026	No collection required.
Monday, 13 July 2026	No service. Alternative collection date Saturday, 11 July.
Summer Bank Holiday Monday, 31 August 2026	No change. Collections as normal on Monday 31 August 2026.
Christmas Day Friday, 25 December 2026	No service. Alternative collection date Sunday, 27 December 2026.
Boxing Day Saturday, 26 December 2026	No collections required. Collections as normal Monday, 28 December 2026.
New Years Day Friday, 01 January 2027	No service. Alternative collection date Saturday, 02 January 2027.

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

Proposed by Councillor Kelly

Seconded by Alderman Clarke and agreed that

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

ACTION BY: Leanne Smits, Waste Strategy and Sustainability Manager.

4.6 EH/EHS/LR/001 APPLICATION FOR THE GRANT OF AN ANNUAL ENTERTAINMENT LICENCE – THE BRIDGE END BAR & BISTRO, 19 BRIDGE STREET, ANTRIM, BT41 4DA

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members approval for an Annual Entertainment Licence for The Bridge End Bar & Bistro, 19 Bridge Street, Antrim, BT41 4DA.

2. Introduction

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

Licensee	Location of Premises	Type(s)and hours of entertainment	File Number	New Application or Renewal
Mr Sam McFaul	The Bridge End Bar & Bistro, 19 Bridge Street, Antrim, BT41 4DA	Singing, Music, Dancing or Entertainment of a like kind Annual Entertainment Licence Monday – Wednesday 12:00pm – 23.00pm Thursday - Saturday 12:00pm – 01.00am Sunday 12:30pm – 12:00am Number of persons – no greater than 160	EL225	New Application

In line with the Council Protocol for the hearing of Entertainment Licence applications, approved in December 2016, the application must be considered at the Operations Committee meeting.

Council could decide the following:

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

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

3. Main Report

An application had been received for the grant of an Annual Indoor Entertainment Licence for the above-named premises. In accordance with the Entertainment Licence Policy, Members approval was required before the licence could be granted.

Members were advised that the applicant previously held an entertainment licence for this venue (formerly known as 'Rubys'). The licence was not renewed due to the anticipated change in ownership of the premises and

subsequently expired on 30 April 2025. Although the ownership change did not occur, the premises had since been rebranded and was now operating as The Bridge End Bar & Bistro.

The current application sought to cover events in the Lounge and Public Bar areas only, representing a reduction from the previous application. Accordingly, the total maximum occupancy of the premises had been reduced to 160 persons.

4. Summary

Application for an Annual Entertainment Licence had been received from Mr Sam McFaul for The Bridge End Bar & Bistro, 19 Bridge Street, Antrim, BT41 4DA. In accordance with Council protocol for the hearing of Entertainment Licence applications, as decision by Members was needed on the granting of the licence.

Proposed by Councillor Kelly
Seconded by Councillor O'Hagan and agreed that

an Annual Entertainment Licence be granted to the applicant Sam McFaul – The Bridge End Bar & Bistro, 19 Bridge Street, Antrim, BT41 4DA with the following Conditions.

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

ACTION BY: Katie Kinnear, Environmental Health Officer

4.7 EH/EHS/LR/007 IMPLEMENTATION OF FIXED PENALTIES UNDER ARTICLE 5 OF THE WASTE AND CONTAMINATED LAND (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 1997 (AS AMENDED) AND SETTING OF ASSOCIATED FIXED PENALTY FINE

1. Purpose

To seek Members' approval to apply Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) for offences under Article 5 of the Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997.

2. Background

In January 2023, Council was granted powers by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), under the Waste and Contaminated Land (Amendment) (2011 Act) Commencement No.3 Order (Northern Ireland) 2022, to enforce Articles 4 and 5 of the Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997.

These discretionary powers allowed for dual enforcement by NIEA and District Councils and provided an enhanced framework for addressing illegal waste disposal (fly-tipping) within the Borough. The powers permitted councils to issue Fixed Penalty Notices as an alternative to prosecution for certain offences.

In March 2023, Council approved the use of Fixed Penalty Notices under Article 4 of the Order, initially focusing enforcement on offences related to the illegal deposit of waste. With procedures and officer training for addressing Article 5 offences in place, Environmental Health propose implementation of Fixed Penalty notices to cover Article 5 “duty of care” offences.

3. Key Issues

Article 5 establishes a statutory “duty of care” for any person or business that produces, imports, carries, treats, keeps, or disposes of controlled waste. This duty also applied to householders, who must ensure that anyone removing waste from their property was a registered and authorised waste carrier. Failure to comply constituted an offence under Article 5, with a summary conviction carrying a fine of up to £5,000.

As an alternative to prosecution, Council may issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) for offences under Article 5. For Article 5 offences, the legislation prescribed a fixed penalty amount of £300 and allowed Council to offer a discretionary reduction for early payment.

It was proposed that Council introduced a reduced rate of £200 for Article 5 offences if paid within 14 days. This approach was proportionate, encouraged early resolution, aligned with Environmental Health wider enforcement practices. Any non-payment of a fixed penalty may result in prosecution.

4. Previous Decision of Council

In March 2023, Council agreed a FPNs rate for Article 4 offences only, setting the penalty at £400, reduced to £300 for early payment.

5. Summary

Council had previously approved fixed penalty notices under Articles 4 of the Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997. This report sought approval in enforcing Article 5 ‘duty of care’ offences using Fixed Penalty Notices.

Following a query from a Member, the Head of Environmental Health and Wellbeing undertook to raise awareness with residents of the changes through social media and Council publications.

Proposed by Councillor Foster

Seconded by Alderman Clarke and agreed that

approval be granted for the implementation of Fixed Penalty Notices for Article 5 offences, including a discretionary reduced payment of £200 if settled within 14 days.

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

4.8 EH/EHS/LR/006/VOL2 CONSULTATION ON DRAFT REGULATIONS, ASSOCIATED GUIDANCE AND AN EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT ON NOTICE TO QUIT PERIODS FOR PRIVATE LANDLORDS AND TENANTS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval to issue a Council response to a Department for Communities (DfC) consultation on draft regulations, associated guidance.

2. Background

Members would be aware that Environmental Health was responsible for enforcing private tenancy legislation in Northern Ireland, including the Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 and the Private Tenancies Act (Northern Ireland) 2022, which regulated matters such as rents, tenancy deposits, property standards, tenant information, notice to quit and eviction procedures.

3. Key Issues

The Department for Communities had launched a 12-week public consultation commencing on 5 January 2026. It was proposed that Council would submit a response, a copy of which was (circulated) and had been agreed in conjunction with all other councils. The consultation was available at the following link:

[Consultation on Notice to Quit Periods - NI Direct - Citizen Space](#)

The proposed Regulations- The Private Tenancies (Notice to Quit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2025 provide for;

- Shorter notice periods for special cases;
- The definition of special cases;
- The requirement for evidence; and
- The new prescribed form that the notice to quit must be contained on.

The special circumstances to the minimum notice to quit periods that DfC wish to legislate for were set out below:

- i. The tenant was in substantial arrears of rent
- ii. The tenant, or a member of the tenant's household, had engaged in serious Anit-Social Behaviour (ASB) in, or in the locality of, the dwelling-house
- iii. The tenant, or a member of the tenant's household, was convicted of a relevant criminal offence.
- iv. Possession of the property was sought for occupation by either the landlord, or landlord's immediate family.

The current notice to quit requirements for landlords were set out in the table below;

Length of Tenancy	Minimum Notice to Quit Period
1 year or less	4 weeks
1-10 years	8 weeks
10 years or more	12 weeks

The draft Private Tenancies (Notice to Quit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2025 Regulations proposed that the Notice to Quit requirements were increased for standard cases as set out below;

Length of Tenancy	Minimum Notice to Quit Period
1 year or less	8 weeks
1-3 years	4 months
3-8 years	6 months
8 years or more	7 months

The draft Private Tenancies (Notice to Quit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2025 Regulations introduced four special cases in which a landlord could give a shorter notice period than those outlined above. These special case associated notice periods were set out in the table below:

Notice to Quit Circumstance	Special Case Notice Period
Substantial arrears of rent	1 month
Engaged in Serious Anti-Social Behaviour	2 weeks
Convicted of a Relevant Criminal Offence	2 weeks
Possession for occupation by the landlord or landlords' immediate family	3 months

Tenants who received a special case Notice to Quit, but did not agree that the special case circumstance was correct, could challenge the Notice to Quit in Court, should the landlord commence possession proceedings. It would then be up to the landlord to prove the validity of the particular circumstance which was being relied upon.

A draft consultation response, had been prepared in collaboration with Environmental Health teams across all councils in Northern Ireland, highlights the following main points:

- Council considered that the special case notice period for possession due to occupation by the landlord or their family should be reviewed in order to give further consideration to those medium and long term tenants (over 3 years)

- In cases of rent arrears, Council believed landlords should be required to provide evidence that they had attempted to engage the tenant in a repayment plan.
- Council would welcome clarification from DfC that there was no obligation to prove a “statutory nuisance” to demonstrate antisocial behaviour and that evidence of repeated annoyance or disturbance would suffice.
- Greater clarity on data sharing and information protocols was needed for instances where evidence was requested from Environmental Health regarding antisocial behaviour.
- Council would also welcome guidance on how a landlord could provide evidence of a relevant tenant conviction in the High Court.

4. Equality and Rural Screening Requirements

In order to establish whether there may be adverse differential impacts, DfC had carried out a detailed Equality Impact Assessment for the Draft Regulations, a copy of which is available at:

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-12/dfc-notice-to-quit-consultation-eqia.pdf>

Council’s comments could be seen in the circulated response.

5. Summary

The Department for Communities had consulted on draft regulations to give effect to extended notice to quit periods within the private rented sector, alongside supporting guidance. The proposed regulations were required to implement provisions contained within the Private Tenancies Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 and to clarify the circumstances in which shorter notice periods may apply.

The consultation sought to balance increased security of tenure for tenants with appropriate safeguards for landlords in defined “special case” circumstances. Environmental Health had reviewed the proposals and in collaboration with other councils, prepared a draft response that broadly supported the intent of the regulations while highlighting practical and enforcement considerations.

Proposed by Councillor Foster
 Seconded by Councillor McWilliam and agreed that

the draft consultation response be approved

ACTION BY: Liam Nicholas, Environmental Health Manager

5 ITEMS FOR NOTING

5.1 L/GEN/080 LEISURE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY 2025-26

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to present the results of the 2025–26 Customer Satisfaction Survey (CSAT) for Council's Leisure Service, including analysis of performance against the baseline established in 2024–25 and progress towards the agreed performance target for 2025–26.

2. Introduction

Members would be aware that Council's Leisure Service was committed to gathering regular customer feedback to support continuous improvement across all leisure facilities.

The CSAT was an in-depth annual survey designed to capture customers' views on key aspects of service delivery, including facilities, staff, value for money and activity programmes. The CSAT provided detailed insight into customer experience and helped identify both strengths and priority areas for improvement across the Leisure Service.

In 2024–25, the CSAT was used to establish a baseline measure of overall customer satisfaction. That baseline satisfaction score was set at 89.3%. For the 2025–26 reporting year, a performance target of 90% overall customer satisfaction was agreed.

3. Results

The survey received 1,910 responses over a six-week period, representing one of the largest customer engagement exercises undertaken in 2025 by council. Responses were collected via member emails, social media, the Council's website, posters, and face-to-face interactions. A detailed breakdown of results for all six leisure centres was circulated for Members' reference.

Key Findings

- Survey responses: 1,910 in 2025, down from 2,245 in 2024.
- Overall satisfaction: 91.3%, exceeding the 90% target and improving on 89.3% in 2024.

Top-scoring categories:

- Staff: 97.3%, unchanged from 2024.
- Fitness classes: 95.1%, up from 90.8% in 2024.
- Value for money: 91.8%, slightly down from 92.5% in 2024.

Among the six leisure centres, Ballyearl received the highest satisfaction score maintaining a score of 94.1%, followed by Allen Park in second place with 92.5%.

The rankings for all six centres were as follows:

Rank	Centre	2025	2024
1	Ballyearl	94.10%	94.10%
2	Allen Park	92.50%	79.80%
3	Valley	91.00%	88.90%
4	Crumlin	89.40%	81.20%
5	Sixmile	89.20%	87.50%
6	Antrim Forum	89.00%	90.50%

In response to a Members' query, the Head of Leisure Operations advised that a report would be brought back for Members' information with further details and actions as a result of the survey findings.

Proposed by Councillor Kelly
 Seconded by Councillor McWilliam and agreed that

the report be noted.

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

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

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to provide Members with a Quarter 3 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 3 of 2025–26, a total of 6,790 participants engaged in Council-supported programmes, 2% above the quarterly target of 6,665. The Health Intervention Action Plan was predicted to achieve the cumulative target for the year, with a detailed breakdown below.

Programmes	25/26 Annual Target	Q3 Target	Q3 Actual	YTD Total

Physical Activity Referral Scheme (PARS)	170	45	34	112
Move More Cancer Rehabilitation and Rehabilitation Programme	100	25	16	66
Age Friendly (Live Long, Fall's Prevention, Walking Netball, Aqua Fit and Nordic Walking)	22,000	5500	5773	17,064
Exercise for Mental Health Programme	2000	500	446	1597
Respiratory Rehabilitation and Maintenance Programme	600	115	75	359
Cardiac Rehabilitation and Maintenance Programmes	1200	300	317	965
Programmes for People with a Disability	500	125	89	500
Pre-Post Natal (new)	100	40	36	36
Substance mis-use (new)	20	0	0	0
Veterans	30	15	4	11

4. New Programmes

Looking ahead to the remainder of 2026, Officers would continue to expand the reach and impact of the Health Intervention Action Plan.

In Quarter 3, the Post-Natal Programme was launched, with information and taster sessions delivered at Antrim Forum on 3 November and Valley Leisure Centre on 7 November. Following these sessions, regular classes commenced at both locations. Demand for the programme was high, prompting the introduction of a third Post-Natal class at Valley Leisure Centre. This block of classes was scheduled to conclude at the end of January, with the next set due to commence the week beginning 9 February.

Officers were actively engaging with partners to develop a Substance Use Programme. In December 2025, a Substance Use Awareness workshop was delivered to Health Officers by Ascertain Training. A delivery programme for Quarter 4 was currently being developed in consultation with the Health Trust and the Public Health Agency to ensure that the complex needs in this area were appropriately addressed.

In collaboration with the Mae Murray Foundation, officers were developing a pilot programme for a closed group of participants with neurological conditions, scheduled for Quarter 1 2026. This pilot would be delivered at Antrim Forum on Thursdays, commencing April. In addition, £1,000 funding had been secured through Parkinson's NI to deliver a programme for this population at Valley Leisure Centre, starting in June.

In addition, funding secured from the Public Health Agency would support the delivery of a bespoke Cancer and Golf Rehabilitation Programme, scheduled

for Quarter 4. The swimming component would be delivered at Antrim Forum, Sixmile, and Valley Leisure Centres, with the first programme commencing at the end of February at Antrim Forum, targeting women who had undergone breast cancer treatment. The golf component would take place at Allen Park and Ballyearl, with both programmes due to start in March.

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
Healthy Kids Resources	NHLP	£4000
Walking Football Programme	NHSCT	£3,000
Parkinsons Physical Activity Programme	Parkinsons NI	£1000
Falls Prevention Steady and Strong Programme	NHSCT	£1,870
Move More (Cancer Rehabilitation Programme)	Macmillan	£5,000
	Total	£56,376

Proposed by Councillor Kelly

Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.3 WM/WM/037/VOL 2 HABITAT FOR HUMANITY CHRISTMAS TOY COLLECTION

1. Purpose

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

2. Background

Members were advised that the 2025 Christmas Toy Collection Scheme was delivered across the Borough during the Christmas period, in partnership with Habitat for Humanity, providing residents with the opportunity to donate good-quality pre-loved toys for reuse by families in need.

The scheme operated from late October through to early December 2025, with collection points available at the Borough's Household Recycling Centres. Due to planned improvement works, Craigmore Household Recycling Centre was not operational during the scheme, and residents were directed to alternative sites.

Building on the original pilot and subsequent yearly growth, the 2025 scheme continued to develop and strengthen community engagement. Donated toys

were assessed, cleaned and refurbished where appropriate by Habitat for Humanity before being redistributed through Habitat for Humanity ReStore shops at affordable prices. In addition, pop-up toy events were delivered in conjunction with the Council's Community Planning team, helping to maximise access for families across the Borough.

Habitat for Humanity reported receiving a wide range of good-quality toys, reflecting strong public participation and continued support for reuse initiatives. The scheme delivered positive social and environmental outcomes by supporting families during the festive period and diverting reusable items from the waste stream.

Following the Christmas period, any suitable toys remaining were donated by Habitat for Humanity to local community organisations identified through the Community Planning team, including playgroups, nurseries and Women's Aid, ensuring that all donated items continued to benefit children and families within the Borough.

During the 2025 scheme 3840 were toys collected, resulting in 4.2 tonnes diverted from landfill, with positive social impact through improved access to affordable toys and environmental benefits from increased reuse and waste reduction.

Given the continued success of the initiative and the clear community need, it was proposed that the Christmas Toy Collection Scheme would be delivered again in October/November 2026, subject to operational arrangements and ongoing partnership support.

3. Summary

Given the continued success of the initiative and the clear community need, it was proposed that the Christmas Toy Collection Scheme would be delivered again in October/November 2026, subject to operational arrangements and ongoing partnership support.

Proposed by Councillor Kelly
Seconded by Councillor McWilliam and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.4 FI/FIN/4 BUDGET REPORT – PERIOD 9 APRIL 2025 TO DECEMBER 2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to provide an update on the financial performance for the Directorates reporting to the Operations Committee for Period 9 April 2025 to December 2025.

2. Introduction/Background

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

3. Summary

As at period 9:

The Estates and Recreation Directorate had a favourable variance of £727k, or 8.0%, against the budgeted financial performance for the period.

The Environmental Services & Sustainability Directorate had a favourable variance of £366k, or 2.0%, against the budgeted financial performance for the period.

A report on the financial performance, employee costs, highest areas of expenditure and income, and the financial performance by Head of Service was included for Members' information (circulated).

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

In response to a Member, the Head of Leisure Operations undertook to consider the extension of the opening hours at the driving range at Ballyearl on Sundays due to its popularity.

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor O'Hagan and agreed that

the report be noted.

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

5.5 **WM/WM/037/VOL2 RETHINKING OUR RESOURCES: NORTHERN IRELAND RESOURCES AND WASTE STRATEGY CONSULTATION**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members on the recently launched **Rethinking our Resources: Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Strategy** consultation by Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).

2. Background

Members were advised that DAERA opened a consultation on the draft **Rethinking Our Resources: Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy**, which aimed to integrate policy reforms, modern technology, and partnerships to ensure long-term sustainability and adaptability.

It focused on controlled wastes from households, commercial and industrial

premises, and category 3 animal by-products, contributing to recycling targets and Net Zero commitments. The Strategy provided both long-term plans and short-term actions to drive significant environmental change.

The aims of the new Strategy were cited as being:

- to maximise the potential for better use of the resources consumed in Northern Ireland;
- to prevent resources becoming waste, or where generated, to ensure they were captured and
- processed into products that minimised environmental pollution;
- building on previous plans by broadening the range of sectors obligated, presenting
- new actions to achieve higher targets;
- setting out the greater ambition necessary to meet net zero;
- aims to integrate policy reforms, modern technology, and partnerships to ensure long term sustainability and adaptability.

The Strategy outlined 10 targets and 63 actions laid out in the consultation proposed to help Northern Ireland achieve its vision. These actions included new support programmes, statutory and best practice guidance, campaigns, data refinements, and cross-departmental collaboration. The Strategy provided a long-term plan for significant environmental change, alongside clear, effective, and realistic short-term tactics and actions necessary to drive the required outcomes.

Targets included:

- Achieve a waste recycling rate of at least 70% by 2030.
- Achieve a municipal waste recycling rate of 55% by 2025.
- Achieve a municipal waste recycling rate of 60% by 2030.
- Achieve a municipal waste recycling rate of 65% by 2035.
- Achieve a 10% cap on the amount of waste going to landfill by 2035.
- DAERA would continue to tackle the problem of littering and would continue to work with stakeholders to advance our anti-litter agenda including the introduction of bans or levies on certain materials.
- DAERA would continue to lead the development of multi-year, integrated Communications and Engagement for waste and recycling.
- DAERA would continue to support updating skills and training needs to facilitate a shift to a more Circular Economy in Northern Ireland.
- DAERA would work with Devolved Administrations to develop and implement the first phase of mandatory Digital Waste Tracking across the UK by October 2026.
- DAERA would continue to develop a greater understanding of Serious and Organised Crime's involvement in environmental crime, to enhance capabilities in tackling this issue.

Actions included:

- Actions on increasing waste prevention and reuse;
- Increased action on household and business recycling to improve the quantity and quality of material;
- The introduction of extended producer responsibility for packing materials and a deposit return scheme;
- Further action to increase capture of food waste and ensure this type of waste is not sent to landfill;
- Actions to improve how waste was dealt with in commercial and industrial settings;
- Case studies showing how action was already happening and helping to create change.

There were a total of 23 questions covering the targets and actions and how these would be delivered. The full consultation documents could be found <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/rethinking-our-resources-northern-ireland-resources-and-waste-management-strategy>.

3. Summary

The consultation period closes on 8 April 2026 and Officers would aim to prepare a response on behalf of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council and present to March Committee for approval.

Proposed by Councillor Kelly
 Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.6 PBS/PS/016 ESTATE PROJECTS UPDATE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to provide 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 three quarters 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 include:

- Heating and Building Management System upgrades 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, four cascading 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

Comparing Q1-Q3 2024/25 with Q1-Q3 2025/2026, energy consumption had fallen by 9% (1.2 million kWhrs), costs by 11% (£220K), and CO₂ emissions by 22% (400K kg).

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:

- New buffer tank at Antrim Forum.
- Replacement SPA dehumidifier at Antrim Forum
- Solar panels at Mossley Mill – Awaiting Planning approval at present
- Heating control and BMS upgrades at Valley Leisure Centre, Forum Leisure Centre, and Ballyearl Leisure Centre.
- LED floodlighting upgrades at Antrim Forum, Valley, Crumlin, Allen Park, and Sixmile Leisure Centres, with automated and remote controls. Capital team progressing this scheme at present.
- Expansion of energy monitoring to top 15 sites, representing 90% of energy usage ongoing.
- Consultant reviewing 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:

- Wind turbine and solar panels at the Environmental Services Depot.
- Solar canopy, hydro electrical projects to be evaluated across the estate.
- HVAC replacements at Antrim Forum and Crumlin Leisure Centre by June 2026.
- Expansion of EV charging network, with approximately 21 Council-controlled charge points by December 2026.
- 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 levels.
- Implementing a pool cover replacement programme to reduce heating costs across leisure centres.
- Site visit and consultation with Queens university with respect to their Geo Thermal Heat Pump system. Information sharing available relating to efficiencies and savings.

Following a number of queries from Members, the Head of Estate Services undertook to advertise Council's energy initiatives and their achievements made to date.

In response to a Member's query, the Director of Environmental Services and Sustainability advised that a meeting of the Sustainability Working Group will be held as soon as possible.

Proposed by Councillor Archibald-Brown
Seconded by Alderman Clarke and agreed that

the report be noted.

ACTION BY: Michael Laverty, Director of Environmental Services and Sustainability and David Blair, Head of Estate Services

5.7 PK/GEN/144 CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE DEPARTMENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE – PROPOSED FOOTWAY/ CYCLE PATH B0012 GLENAVY ROAD

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to note correspondence from the Department for Infrastructure Active Travel Team, and request Members' feedback regarding a proposed footway/cycle path on the B0012 Glenavy Road.

2. Background

Council had received correspondence from the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) Active Travel Team outlining a proposal to develop a new shared footway and cycle path extending from Aghnadarragh Road to Main Street, Crumlin. This proposed scheme formed part of DfI's wider Active Travel programme, which sought to improve connectivity and encourage greater use of sustainable transport modes across towns and villages.

In rural locations, as well as within smaller towns and villages, schemes of this nature could deliver significant benefits. The provision of safe, high-quality infrastructure for walking and cycling will improve local connectivity, enhance accessibility for users of all ages and abilities, and create safer travel environments for pedestrians and cyclists.

DfI had indicated that the majority of the proposed footway and cycleway would be accommodated within the existing green verge and footway located on the eastern side of Glenavy Road, thereby minimising land take and potential disruption.

3. Request of Council

The Department had requested comments and feedback from Elected Members and from Council Officers to inform on further development of the proposal. The correspondence including maps and supporting documents was enclosed for Member's reference. Any feedback from Members would be included in Council's corporate response.

Proposed by Councillor O'Hagan
Seconded by Councillor Kelly and agreed that

the report be noted and any relevant feedback to the proposed footway/cycle path on the B0012 Glenavy Road be provided.

NO ACTION

The Supplementary report was taken at this point.

5.8 WM/WM/037/VOL2 UPDATE ON WASTE AND RECYCLING COLLECTION SERVICES

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members on waste and recycling collection services provided by Bryson Recycling in the Borough.

2. Background

Members would be aware there had been issues with the waste and recycling collection services provided by Bryson Recycling and this resulted in the Chief Executive attending the January full Council meeting to address the issues of concern.

3. Key Information

Officers were continuing to work closely with Bryson Recycling staff to address outstanding collection issues. The following was an update on actions which had been taken to improve the waste collection standards:

- Further staff had been recruited by Bryson Recycling and these drivers had been allocated to the waste collection services in the Borough;
- Targeted supervision in areas where there had been multiple collection issues;
- Officers were working to improve the integrity of the reporting information and ensure actual house numbers rather than % are reported to Members;
- No Council resources were required last week to assist with waste collections;
- Quick Response Team (QRT) vehicle now operating in the Borough to address emergency requests;
- Ongoing discussions with the procurement team to ensure all elements of the contract had been delivered;
- Project Monitoring Officer targeting areas where access issues had affected collections;
- Officers were investigating ways to maximise the effectiveness of our Project Monitoring Officer including how best to integrate with Bryson Recycling daily operations.

The previous week there was also service disruption on Tuesday because of Storm Chandra. Black bin collections were delayed until Saturday and while some wheelie boxes were lifted, the majority of households were missed due to the suspension of services. Bryson Recycling would be committing additional resources to collections on Tuesday 3 February as residents would have extra recycling to be collected.

Following queries from Members, the Director of Environmental Services and Sustainability agreed to bring back a report to a future Committee in relation to the work of the Quick Response Team. He also agreed to report back to Members on an indicative timetable for the installation of new software being used by Bryson Recycling to aid waste and recycling collections.

Proposed by Councillor Foster

Seconded by Alderman Clarke and agreed that

the report be noted.

ACTION BY: Michael Laverty, Director of Environmental Services and Sustainability

6 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

- 6.1 A Member acknowledged the work of Council staff and other emergency services for their co-ordinated multi agency approach during the recent Storm Chandra. The Director of Environmental Services and Sustainability undertook to liaise with the Head of Health, Safety and Resilience in relation to the storm response and potential inclusion of emergency services information in the

Borough Life.

ACTION BY: Michael Laverty, Director of Environmental Services and Sustainability

- 6.2 In response to a Member, the Head of Parks Operations confirmed that any Council equipment that was damaged and not safe to be used was taken out of operation and reported through the relevant process.

NO ACTION

- 6.3 A Member raised concerns in relation to residents being blocked in their homes by cars in the event of large events at the Forum. The Head of Leisure Operations agreed to review that appropriate precautions be put in place e.g. signs and parking attendants.

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

- 6.4 A Member requested that they are provided with the staffing numbers for Parks North and Parks South teams, including vacancies and attendance rates.

ACTION BY: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED 'IN CONFIDENCE'

Proposed by Councillor Foster

Seconded by Councillor O'Hagan and agreed

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

7 ITEMS IN CONFIDENCE

7.1 **IN CONFIDENCE** PK/GEN/197 BEREAVEMENT SERVICES QUARTERLY UPDATE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to provide an update on the burial capacity within Council's cemeteries and to present an analysis of cremation usage performance.

2. Introduction/Background

Members would be aware that quarterly updates were routinely provided to the Operations Committee regarding the current burial capacity across Council owned cemeteries. In response to previous request from members, further information had been included relating to the performance of Council's Crematorium.

3. Burial Capacity

The capacity as of 31st December 2025 for Council's Cemeteries and Gardens of Remembrance was detailed as follows:

Cemetery	Previous Report	No. of plots remaining	Current Average no. of plots sold PER YEAR (based on 3yr average)	Estimated remaining burial capacity (years)
	up to 30th Sept 2025	Up to 31st Dec 2025		
Ballyclare	475	469	100	5
Rashee	337*	335	10	33.5
Sixmile	2032	2026	80	25
Crumlin	666	664	25	25
TOTAL	3510	3486	215	16

Garden of Remembrance Plots (for burial of ashes only)	Previous Report	No. of plots remaining	Average no. of plots sold (based on 3 year average)	Estimated remaining burial capacity (years)
	up to 30th Sept 2025	Up to 31st Dec 2025		
Carnmoney	46	42	55	0.6
Ballyclare	113	113	5	5
Mallusk	15	15	0	0
TOTAL	174	170	60	2.5

Preparatory work for the Garden of Remembrance at Sixmile Cemetery was progressing as planned, with design concepts now developed. The project remained on schedule, with construction commencing in Spring 2026.

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

4. Crematorium Performance

The current cremation numbers for Council's Crematorium, recorded up to and including 31 December 2025, are set out below. The data provided an overview of cremation activity for the 2025 calendar year, including a breakdown of usage by residents and non-residents.

Month	Overall	Residents	Non-Residents
January	143	42	101
February	112	37	75
March	119	48	71
April	111	37	74
May	111	36	75
June	109	39	70
July	105	36	69
August	104	38	66
September	102	32	70

October	142	44	98
November	113	43	70
December	136	59	77
Total	1407	491	916

Based on current usage levels, residents accounted for approximately 34.9% of all cremations undertaken at the Crematorium, while non-residents represented the remaining 65.1% of overall cremations.

The Head of Parks Operations agreed to bring back an update report on the discovery of a souterrain in Rashee Cemetery to next month's meeting along with updated figures on burial capacity. He also advised he would report back to Members with regard to a timeline for the business case in relation to the proposed Carnmoney South cemetery.

In response to a Member, the Head of Parks Operations undertook to investigate the possibility of covering the walkway at the exit of the Crematorium. He further undertook to review the parking situation and advise Members of options to increase the car park capacity.

Proposed by Councillor Foster
 Seconded by Councillor Kelly and agreed that

the report be noted.

ACTION BY: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED OUT OF 'IN CONFIDENCE'

Proposed by Councillor Foster
 Seconded by Councillor McAuley 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 8.28pm.

MAYOR

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