



**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE HELD IN THE CHAMBER, MOSSLEY MILL  
ON MONDAY 15 JUNE 2026 AT 6.30 PM**

|                                              |   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|----------------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>In the Chair</b>                          | : | Councillor A O'Lone                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Committee Members<br/>(In person)</b>     | : | Alderman – J McGrath<br><br>Councillors – M Brady, M Cooper, P Dunlop,<br>J Gilmour, R Lynch, T McGrann, M Ní Chonghaile,<br>and S Wilson                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Committee Members<br/>(Remote)</b>        | : | Councillors – J Burbank, L Kirkpatrick, H Magill,<br>M Stewart                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Non-Committee<br/>Members (In person)</b> | : | Alderman – S Ross                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Non- Committee<br/>Members (Remote)</b>   | : | Alderman – L Clarke<br>Councillors – R Foster, M Goodman                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Officers Present</b>                      | : | Director of Community and Culture – U Fay<br>Head of Community Development – R McKenna<br>Head of Arts, Culture, Tourism & Events – S Goldrick–<br>Head of Marketing, Communications and PR - J<br>McIntyre<br>Community Services Co-Ordinator – J Henderson<br>ICT Change Officer – A Cole<br>Member Services Officer – S Fisher |

**CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

The Vice-Chairperson welcomed Members to the June meeting of the Community Development Committee and reminded all present of the audio recording procedures.

## 1 APOLOGIES

Councillor – V McWilliam

## 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Items 4.6 and 4.17 – Councillor M Cooper

## 3 PRESENTATIONS

*Alderman McGrath left and returned to the Chamber during Item 3.1.*

### 3.1 COMD/CD/002 PEACEPLUS – OUR SHARED BOROUGH ‘WEAVE INITIATIVE’ UPDATE

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to update Members on the PEACEPLUS Programme 4: Our Shared Borough ‘WEAVE Initiative’ delivered by the Community Development Section.**

#### 2. Introduction/Background

Members were reminded that the PEACEPLUS Programme was a €1.1bn cross-border funding programme created to strengthen peace and prosperity within and between the border counties of Ireland and Northern Ireland. PEACEPLUS is the successor programme to both Peace IV and INTERREG VA. The Council was one of 17 Peace Partnerships across Northern Ireland and the Border Counties.

Members were reminded that the aim of Theme 1 ‘Building Peaceful and Thriving Communities’, was to unite communities and help them rebuild and learn from a difficult past. Under Theme 1 and Investment Area 1.1 ‘Co-designed Local Community Action Plans’, Local Councils across Northern Ireland and the Border Counties were invited to submit applications to the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) to secure funding to deliver against the actions identified in each Local Community Action Plan.

The Council had secured £4.4m to deliver programmes and projects in the Borough until December 2028. Delivery of the Antrim and Newtownabbey PEACEPLUS Local Community Action Plan was being managed by the Community Development Directorate within Council.

#### 3. Previous Decision of the Council

Members were reminded that it was reported to the February 2025 Community Development Committee that Council had received a Letter of Offer from the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) offering €5,103,757 (approx. £4.4m) towards delivery of the Antrim and Newtownabbey Co-designed PEACEPLUS Local Community Action Plan.

Members were also reminded that an update on PEACEPLUS Programme 4: 'Our Shared Borough' was approved at the June 2025 Community Development Committee.

#### 4. 'Our Shared Borough' WEAVE Initiative

The WEAVE Initiative (We Educate, We Empower, We Engage) formed part of the PEACEPLUS Local Community Action Plan, under Strand 2: Thriving and Peaceful Communities, Programme 4: Our Shared Borough.

Supported by an investment of £445,658.09 through the PEACEPLUS Programme, the Initiative was designed to build community capacity, strengthen collaborative working and provide strategic support for sustainable development across the sector. It was structured around nine key threads as follows:

- **Thread 1: We Connect: A Digital Governance Resource & Support Hub** - a one-stop shop that provided community groups with the support they need to manage efficiently in a rapidly evolving world.
- **Thread 2: A Grant Finder Platform** - provided transparency, support and efficiency in identifying and accessing funding opportunities.
- **Thread 3: A Community and Voluntary Quality Assurance Programme** - raised standards and building trust across our sector.
- **Thread 4: The Development of 7 DEA Local Community Development Plans** - ensured progress was rooted in local priorities and tailored to meet local needs.
- **Thread 5: The Business of Running a Successful Community Facility** - supported sustainable infrastructure for long-term sustainability.
- **Thread 6: Ignite and Inspire** - supported participants on the Bonfire Management Programme with skills, capacity building and leadership development.
- **Thread 7: A Suite of Community Capacity Building Programmes** – identified through local need which would focus on training, engagement and developing local leadership.
- **Thread 8: The Establishment of A Borough Wide Community Forum** – to connect, strengthen and support local groups while enabling a collective voice for the community.
- **Thread 9: The Development of A Community Support Plan** – to provide a strategic, long-term framework for inclusive growth.

#### 5. Key Issues

The Community Services Coordinator delivered a presentation to update the Committee on the progress of the 'WEAVE Initiative' to date, and future delivery.

#### 6. Finance

The budget for the Programme 4: 'Our Shared Borough' element of the Action Plan was €512,506.80 (£445,658.09) and was based on real-life costs for staff, office and administration, external expertise and services, travel, accommodation and equipment.

There were no cost implications associated with this report.

## 7. Governance

The 'Our Shared Borough' programme elements were managed and delivered by the Community Development Section via a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the PEACEPLUS Partnership and regular performance reports would be brought to the PEACEPLUS Partnership and Community Development Committee.

Members thanked the Community Services Co-Ordinator for his presentation. He responded to Members' queries on a range of matters, including DEA Member involvement, budgets and timelines, vouching arrangements, capacity building, the new grant finder, the sustainability of the programme and its legacy outcomes. He also confirmed that future reports would include a breakdown of participation by DEA.

Proposed by Councillor Cooper

Seconded by Councillor Wilson and agreed that

- a) the presentation and progress update on the PEACEPLUS Programme 4: Our Shared Borough 'WEAVE Initiative' be noted and**
- b) regular updates on this Initiative be brought to future meetings of the Committee.**

*ACTION BY: Jonathan Henderson, Community Services Co-ordinator*

*Councillor Cooper left and returned to the Chamber during Item 3.2 and Councillor Magill joined the meeting during Item 3.2.*

## **3.2 CP/CD/201 SERVICE REVIEW OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

### **1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report was to update Members on the ongoing work being carried out in relation to a service review of the Council's Community Facilities.**

### **2. Introduction/Background**

The Council owned 11 Community Facilities, 8 of which were managed by the Community Development Section as follows.

- Greystone Community Centre
- Muckamore Community Centre
- Parkhall Community Centre
- Rathenraw Community Centre
- Stiles Community Centre
- Neillsbrook Community Centre
- The Dunannee Centre
- Lillian Bland Pavilion

Three community facilities were operated under Service Management Agreements with community organisations running the facilities in partnership with the Council.

### 3. Previous Decision of the Council

Members were reminded that at the Community Development Committee in April 2026 in response to a query from a Member about levels of use of the Council's community facilities, Officers advised that a report with analysis of current community centre use would be brought back to a future Committee.

Members were also reminded that an update on the Community Facilities Expression of Interest process was noted at this Committee in April.

### 4. Key Issues

A report on the operational performance of community centres use for April 2025 to March 2026 was circulated for Members' information.

The Head of Community Development delivered a presentation to the Committee outlining ongoing work being carried out in order to improve and modernise service delivery and operational performance across all Council owned community facilities.

### 5. Finance

There were no cost implications associated with this report.

### 6. Governance

It was proposed to provide regular updates to the Committee on this ongoing work.

Members thanked the Head of Community Development for his presentation. He responded to Members questions regarding the condition surveys and agreed that the full footprint of the site would be audited in each case. He also agreed that other funding streams, including developer's social clauses, would be explored.

Furthermore he confirmed that any future reports would present breakdowns expressed as percentages, and that he would liaise with Council colleagues regarding the pilot energy savings review being undertaken at Stiles Community Centre.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson

Seconded by Councillor Dunlop and agreed that

**a) the presentation and operational performance update on community facilities be noted and**

- b) regular updates on this ongoing work be brought to future meetings of the Committee.**

*ACTION BY: Ursula Fay, Director of Community and Culture*

## **4 ITEMS FOR DECISION**

### **4.1 PT/CI/066 BUSINESS PLAN 2025/26, PERFORMANCE REPORTING TEMPLATE QUARTER 4**

#### **1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report was to recommend to Members to approve the Business Plan 2025/26, Quarter 4 Performance Reporting Template for the Community and Culture Directorate.**

#### **2. Background**

Members were reminded that Part 12 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 put in place a framework to support the continuous improvement of Council services.

Specifically, the duties in the Act related to Section 84(1), 85(2) and 85(9) whereby the Council had a statutory duty to make arrangements to:

- Secure continuous improvement
- Secure achievement of its improvement objectives
- Exercise its functions so that any Departmental specified standards were met.

#### **3. Previous Decision of Council**

In June 2025 the Council approved a strategic performance framework as part of the Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2025/26.

#### **4. Business Planning**

Business planning played a vital role in the Council's performance management and delivery processes. It offered a more efficient and cohesive approach to monitoring and evaluating performance while improving overall visibility.

The purpose of Directorate Business Plans was to:

- Demonstrate how each of the Directorates were supporting and achieving Council's priorities.
- Provide a clear sense of purpose of the Directorate and the challenges it faced.
- Illustrate how Directorates were aligning resources to meet the challenges ahead.
- Measure performance and hold Directorates accountable to ensure they were delivering for the Council and its residents.

Business Plans Quarter 4 Performance Reporting Templates for the Community and Culture Directorate 2025/26 were circulated for approval.

#### 5. Financial Position/Implications

As agreed, as part of the Council's rate setting process.

Proposed by Alderman McGrath

Seconded by Councillor Dunlop and agreed that

**the Business Plan 2025/26 Quarter 4 Performance Reporting Template for the Community and Culture Directorate be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Allen Templeton, Performance Improvement Officer*

### 4.2 **AC/GEN/062 SENTRY HILL COMMUNITY GARDEN**

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval to renew the lease agreement with the Sentry Hill Community Garden Group for 10 years from 1 July 2026.**

#### 2. Introduction/Background

Sentry Hill Historic House was acquired by the legacy Newtownabbey Borough Council in 1997. In 2006, a section of land on the site was developed as a community garden allowing local community groups to lease raised beds for a small fee and to grow a range of crops and flowers. 'Sewing Seeds', a social economy enterprise established in Newtownabbey in 2006, took on responsibility for the management of the garden and was superseded in 2008 by a Community Garden User's Forum.

In 2017, the plot holders established the Sentry Hill Community Garden Group as a formally constituted group which aimed to 'provide an educational and recreational resource in the form of a community garden where members could cultivate their own produce in an effort to promote social wellbeing and improve their quality of life'. The Sentry Hill Community Garden had proved to be an important social resource, which had helped build social cohesion and inclusion and had provided much added value to the site.

Funding was obtained through the Department for Communities' Access and Inclusion Programme 2021/22 to expand the garden area to include another 40 beds and provide an accessible area and facilities.

#### 3. Previous Decision of Council

A Service Management Agreement between the Council and the Sentry Hill Community Garden Group was approved by the Operations Committee in June 2018.

Approval was given to convert this Service Management Agreement to a Lease Agreement for 6 years from June 2020 at the October 2019 Community Planning and Regeneration Committee.

#### 4. Key Issues

The current lease of the Community Garden expired in July 2026, and the Group were keen to renew this for a further period. To assist them in applications for external funding and provide security for future planning and development it was proposed that the lease be renewed for a period of 10 years on the same terms as the current lease with the group paying a peppercorn rent for the land. The Group had also requested that maintenance responsibility for the tool sheds and polytunnels move from Council to the Group.

The draft proposed lease was circulated for Members' information.

#### 5. Financial Position

The renewal of the lease for the Community Garden would have no significant financial implications for the Council.

#### 6. Summary

An agreement to lease a portion of land at Sentry Hill Historic House to the Sentry Hill Community Garden Group had been in place since 2018, and the most recent lease agreement expired in July 2026. The group had indicated its desire to sign a new lease agreement for a further 10 years.

Proposed by Alderman McGrath  
Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

**the lease agreement with the Sentry Hill Community Garden Group be renewed for a further 10 years on the present terms with responsibility for maintenance of the tool sheds and polytunnels transferring from the Council to the Community Garden Group.**

*ACTION BY: Philip Magennis, Culture and Events Co-ordinator*

### **4.3 AC/EV/025 BALLYCLARE MAY FAIR**

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the minutes of the Ballyclare May Fair Working Group meeting of 13 May 2026 as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.**

#### 2. Background

Members were reminded that the role of the Ballyclare May Fair Working Group was to promote, develop and organise the annual Ballyclare May Fair. The specific role of the May Fair Working Group was set out as follows:



- To advise the Council on the programme for the May Fair
- To organise delivery of the May Fair
- To promote participation in the May Fair by the Ballyclare community and wider Borough community
- To explore opportunities for sponsorship and additional funding for the May Fair
- To provide advocacy for the May Fair and achieve collaboration of a range of stakeholders into the design and delivery of the May Fair
- To contribute expertise, skills and knowledge from a range of sectors to the benefit and continuous improvement of this annual event so that Ballyclare DEA achieves maximum benefit from its delivery.

The Working Group met monthly from September to June each year and reported to the Community Development Committee. Membership consisted of all Ballyclare DEA Elected Members, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, and up to five non-elected voluntary members who were actively involved in the local community.

### 3. Previous Decision of the Council

The revised Working Group Terms of Reference were approved at the December 2023 Community Planning Committee. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved at the May 2026 Community Development Committee meeting.

### 4. Working Group Meeting

Members were advised that the Ballyclare May Fair Working Group met on 13 May 2026 in Ballyclare Town Hall. The minutes of the meeting were circulated.

Proposed by Councillor Stewart  
Seconded by Councillor Magill and agreed that

**that the minutes of the Ballyclare May Fair Working Group meeting of 13 May 2026 be approved as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.**

*ACTION BY: Joanne Hamilton-Whyte, PA to Director of Community and Culture*

## **4.4 ACTE/ED/TOU/064 RENEWAL OF LEASE AGREEMENT WITH THE SHAFTESBURY ESTATE OF LOUGH NEAGH LTD**

### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval to negotiate a renewal of the lease agreement currently in place with the Shaftesbury Estate of Lough Neagh Ltd for the land used as a slipway into the lough at Cranfield.**

### 2. Introduction/Background

The bed and shore of Lough Neagh had been owned by the Earl of Shaftesbury's estate since the 1800s. Since 1998 an agreement had been in place with the Estate which permitted the Council to lease the ground used by

the Cranfield slipway and jetty for an initial fee of £225 per annum rising to £275 per annum today. The original agreement expired in 2019, and since then it had rolled over every year with payments continuing to be made to the Estate every six months.

Following the Council's decision to demolish the remains of the jetty and refurbish and extend the slipway, a new lease agreement was now required before discussions could begin with the Estate to secure the necessary permissions for the project to begin.

A separate lease agreement with the Estate relating to the waste dredged from the bed and soil of Lough Neagh in connection with the Cranfield jetty support posts had been in place since 1985. As the decision had now been taken to remove the remains of the jetty, it was not anticipated that this second agreement would be renewed.

### 3. Previous Decision of Council

At the February 2026 Committee it was agreed that the Cranfield Jetty preferred option of removal of the existing jetty and refurbishment and extension of the existing slipway to 8m x 20m be approved and that progress of the Cranfield Jetty project to Stage 2 of the Council's Capital Programme be approved including completion of a final business case (including detailed design, planning and procurement) also be approved.

### 4. Key Issues

Any new lease agreement would remain substantially the same as the existing lease, except that references to the jetty would be removed. It was also possible that the Estate would ask for a modest increase to the £275 per annum fee currently paid by the Council.

Once a new agreement was in place, discussions would begin to secure permission for the capital development work to the slipway.

### 5. Financial Position/Implication

The cost of leasing the land at Cranfield was included in the 2026/27 revenue budgets.

### 6. Summary

In order to begin discussions with the Shaftesbury Estate of Lough Neagh Ltd to secure permission for the capital work to the Cranfield slipway and jetty to begin, a renewed lease agreement was needed for the ground covered by the slipway. It was not anticipated that this agreement would be substantially different to the existing lease.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson

Seconded by Councillor Lynch and agreed that

**the commencement of negotiations for the renewal of the lease agreement currently in place with the Shaftesbury Estate of Lough Neagh Ltd for the land used as a slipway into the lough at Cranfield be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Simon Goldrick, Head of Arts, Culture, Tourism and Events*

#### **4.5 AC/GEN/085 COMMUNITY FESTIVAL FUND GRANT AID**

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

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for 6 Community Festival Fund grants for 2026 to 2028.**

##### **2. Background**

As part of the Council's Community Development Grant Aid Programme, community and voluntary organisations could apply for Community Festival grant funding to support the delivery of community events.

A community festival was defined as a series of events with a common theme, delivered within a defined time period. It was developed from within a community and should celebrate and positively promote what the community represents.

Community festivals were about participation, involvement, inclusion and the creation of a sense of identity, and were important in contributing to the social well-being of a community. The fund was available to properly constituted community, voluntary and charitable groups based in the Borough.

##### **3. Previous Decision of Council**

Members were reminded that a presentation on the Community Development Grant Aid Programme was made to the Community Development Committee in February 2025, and the proposed changes to the Grant Aid programme approved.

A key change to Community Festival Funding was that Groups could now seek funding for either one or two years, with 80% of the annual budget being given to multi-year applications. Calls were made annually for single year applications, while multi-year applications open at the end of every two-year cycle.

At the Community Development Committee in February 2026, 12 applications for funding totalling £39,880 for 2026-27 and 2027-28 were approved. A second call for applications was also approved.

At the Community Development Committee in March 2026, a proposal to move £12,547 from the Community Festival Fund budget to the oversubscribed Tourism Event Grant budget was approved.

##### **4. 2026-2028 Community Festival Fund Proposals**

A second call for Community Festival Fund grant applications for 2026-27 and 2027-28 opened on 2 March and closed on 30 April 2026. A total of 7 two-year funding applications for 2026-28 and 2 one-year funding applications for 2026-27 were received. 6 two-year applications, totalling £19,990 achieved the required pass threshold for funding, details of which were circulated.

## 5. Financial Position

A budget of £135,270 was included in the 2026-27 Culture budget for Community Festival grant funding, comprising an estimated contribution from the Department for Communities (DfC) of £27,700 and a Council contribution of £107,570.

Following the transfer of £12,547 to the Tourism Event Grant budget and funding commitments of £8,750 awarded as part of previous multiyear funding, the revised gross budget was £113,973.

The financial position is outlined in the table below:

| Call Number | No. of applications recommended of funding | Amount awarded | Budget remaining |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| 1           | 12                                         | £39,880        | £74,093          |
| 2           | 6                                          | £19,990        | £54,103          |

## 6. Summary

Following a second call for applications in March 2026, 7 applications were received for two-year Community Festival grant funding for 2026-28 and 2 applications for one-year funding were received for 2026-27.

The required threshold for funding was achieved by 6 applicants seeking a total of £19,990 in 2026-27 and £19,990 for 2027-28. When added to the commitments previously approved, a budget of £54,103 would remain for the 2026-27 Community Festival fund.

Proposed by Councillor Lynch

Seconded by Councillor Wilson and agreed that

**(a) the 6 successful Community Festival applications for funding totalling £19,990 for 2026-27 and 2027-28 be approved; and**

**(b) a third call for applications be opened on 6 July 2026 and close on 14 August 2026.**

*ACTION BY: Anna Boyle, Funding Unit Manager*

Having declared an interest in Item 4.6, Councillor Cooper left the Chamber.

## 4.6 AC/GEN/037 CULTURAL GRANT AID AND BURSARY PROGRAMME

## 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for a Cultural Grant award.**

## 2. Introduction/Background

The aim of the Cultural Grant Aid and Bursaries programme was to provide support to constituted groups and individuals based in the Borough to participate in, develop and promote Cultural activities and projects. Funding was available for projects which developed artistic talent and knowledge, showcased the arts and promoted participation and inclusion, celebrated shared heritage, and contributed to the understanding of minority languages and cultural diversity.

Cultural groups could apply for grants for:

- Eligible costs involved in running a cultural event (with a maximum award of £1,000)
- Costs relating to the production of a cultural product e.g. a publication or an exhibition (with a maximum award of £500)
- Course fees for group members to attend an event or course or undertake training (with a maximum award of £500)

Individuals could apply for bursaries for:

- Costs relating to the production of a cultural product e.g. a publication or an exhibition (with a maximum award of £500)
- Contribution to costs associated with the attendance at cultural events, specialist training courses or study programmes relating to Arts or Heritage (with a maximum award of £500)

## 3. Previous Decision of Council

The Cultural Grant Aid and Bursaries Programme was approved by the Community Development Committee in November 2025.

## 4. Application for 2026-2027 Cultural Grant Aid and Bursaries Programme

One application had been received and assessed by Officers under the appropriate funding category and maximum award available.

A summary of the application was set out below along with the proposed award:

| <b>Group / Individual Name</b>  | <b>Funding Category</b>                              | <b>Funding Purpose</b>                                                   | <b>Proposed Amount Awarded</b> |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Monkstown Community Association | Cultural Group - Costs relating to the production of | The purchase of two Tommy figures, one male and one female, as part of a | <b>£500</b>                    |

|  |                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |  |
|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
|  | a cultural product, an exhibition in relation to the 110 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Somme | remembrance display to commemorate the 110 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme. Funding has also been requested for hospitality costs associated with this commemoration event.<br><br>The criteria for this grant programme states that retrospective applications will not be considered; the approval of this grant is therefore subject to confirmation by the applicant that the exhibition will take place from July 2026. |  |
|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|

## 5. Financial Position

The budget available for the Cultural Grant Aid and Bursaries programme in 2026-2027 is £33,000. £7,300 had already been committed for applications within the 2026-2027 financial year, and if the above application was approved, a balance of £25,200 would be left for the remainder of the year.

## 6. Summary

One Cultural grant application had been received for £500 to support Monkstown Community Association with the production of an exhibition in relation to the 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Somme.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour  
Seconded by Councillor Brady and agreed that

**the grant award for £500 be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Anna Boyle, Funding Unit Manager*

*Councillor Cooper returned to the Chamber.*

## 4.7 **AC/GEN/083 THEATRE AT THE MILL DAYTIME OPENING**

### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the Theatre at the Mill to close when not in use during the day, and to relocate art exhibitions to the reception area of Mossley Mill where they would be available to a wider audience.**

### 2. Introduction/Background

The Theatre at the Mill was currently open to the public from 10am until 4pm Monday to Friday, as well as evenings and weekends when a performance or

event was taking place. Eight staff members, working on rota patterns, were currently based in the theatre's offices.

Historically, the reason for opening the theatre during these daytime hours was to facilitate in person access to the box office, but since the creation of the Culture Hub in 2021 the theatre box office had been largely virtual during office hours with almost all bookings taken online or over the phone. The facility to book in person existed at each of the Council's three theatres when they were open for performances and over 7 days per week at Antrim Castle Gardens.

In addition, daytime opening gave public access to the artwork exhibited in the lower ground floor of Theatre at The Mill. In practice, however, very few people (typically fewer than five per week) visit exhibitions outside performance times.

In recent years the theatre had experienced incidents of antisocial behaviour during the school holidays which had been difficult to control because the front of house areas were not permanently staffed. This antisocial behaviour had resulted in some damage to the public areas including a number of occasions of flooding in the washrooms.

### 3. Key Issues

Given the low number of visitors to the exhibitions outside performance times, the ongoing issue of antisocial behaviour in the theatre and the desire to reduce electricity and gas consumption across Council venues, it was proposed to close the theatre during the daytime whenever there was not a performance or event taking place. It was also proposed to relocate exhibitions from the theatre lower foyer to a dedicated space in the Mossley Mill reception area where they would benefit from significantly increased footfall and interest.

If approved, this approach would mitigate the risk of serious damage to the theatre caused by antisocial behaviour and could save up to 20% of the current cost of heating, lighting and cleaning the theatre (potentially up to £30,000 per annum) without impacting customer service.

### 4. Financial Position/Implication

Although it was difficult to accurately estimate the savings that this move would make to the heating, lighting and cleaning of the theatre, it was anticipated that a cost reduction of between £15,000 and £30,000 per annum would be achievable.

### 5. Summary

It was proposed to reduce daytime opening of Theatre at The Mill as outlined and move art exhibitions from the theatre lower foyer to Mossley Mill reception. This had the potential to reduce operating costs by significant amounts in heating, lighting and cleaning costs and would mitigate against the ongoing risk of damage to the theatre caused by antisocial behaviour whilst also exposing art exhibitions to a wider audience.

In response to questions from Members, the Director of Community and Culture advised that a further report would be brought back to a future Committee regarding where and how the historical photographs and art exhibitions would be displayed.

Proposed by Alderman McGrath  
Seconded by Councillor Cooper and agreed that

**the proposal for the Theatre at the Mill to close when not in use during the day, and to relocate art exhibitions to the reception area of Mossley Mill where they will be available to a wider audience be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Simon Goldrick, Head of Arts, Culture, Tourism and Events*

#### **4.8 AC/GEN/037 CULTURAL GRANT AID AND BURSARY PROGRAMME – UPDATED GUIDANCE NOTES**

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

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for a clarification amendment to the Cultural Grant Aid and Bursary Programme guidance notes.**

##### **2. Introduction/Background**

The aim of the Cultural Grant Aid and Bursary programme was to provide support to constituted groups and individuals based in the Borough to participate in, develop and promote Cultural activities and projects.

Funding was available for projects which developed artistic talent and knowledge, showcased the arts and promoted participation and inclusion, celebrated shared heritage, and contributed to the understanding of minority languages and cultural diversity.

Cultural groups could apply for grants for:

- Eligible costs involved in running a cultural event (with a maximum award of £1,000)
- Costs relating to the production of a cultural product e.g. a publication or an exhibition (with a maximum award of £500)
- Course fees for group members to attend an event or course or undertake training (with a maximum award of £500)

Individuals could apply for bursaries for:

- Costs relating to the production of a cultural product e.g. a publication or an exhibition (with a maximum award of £500)
- Contribution to costs associated with the attendance at cultural events, specialist training courses or study programmes relating to Arts or Heritage (with a maximum award of £500)
- The Cultural Grant Aid and Bursary Programme budget also contained provision for up to 30 Irish Language / Gaeltacht Summer Course and Ulster-



Scots Cultural Bursaries, and for the annual Mrs Joan Christie CVO, OBE Legacy Bursary Scheme awards.

### 3. Previous Decision of Council

The current Cultural Grant Aid and Bursary Programme was approved by the Community Development Committee in November 2025.

### 4. Key Issues

Following a number of recent questions from potential applicants, it was proposed to amend the Cultural Grant Aid and Bursary Programme guidance notes to provide greater clarity about who can apply for grants, and what the purpose of each grant category was. It was also proposed that the maximum award for groups wishing to apply for support to attend and participate in cultural events or courses was raised from £500 to £1,000, while maintaining the £500 maximum award for individuals.

The proposed amended guidance notes for this grant programme were circulated for Members' information, and the revised table showing the award categories was as follows (section 1.3 detailing who could apply for these grants was also included for reference):

| Category                     | Key notes/Purpose of Application                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Who can apply                                          | Maximum award |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Cultural Groups*</b>      | Eligible costs involved in running an event with clearly defined cultural objectives and expected outcomes (infrastructure costs, facilitation costs, room/venue hire, equipment hire, marketing and promotion)                        | Any group meeting the criteria outlined in section 1.3 | <b>£1,000</b> |
|                              | Eligible costs associated with the production of a cultural publication or the staging of a temporary cultural exhibition                                                                                                              | Any group meeting the criteria outlined in section 1.3 | <b>£500</b>   |
|                              | Contribution to costs associated with the attendance and participation by a group in a cultural event (either by invitation or qualification); or specialist training courses, events or study programmes relating to Arts or Heritage | Any group meeting the criteria outlined in section 1.3 | <b>£1,000</b> |
| <b>Individual Bursaries*</b> | Eligible costs associated with the production of a cultural                                                                                                                                                                            | Any artist or cultural practitioner meeting            | <b>£500</b>   |

|  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                         |             |
|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
|  | publication or the staging of a temporary cultural exhibition                                                                                                                                                                                               | the criteria in section 1.3                                             |             |
|  | Contribution to costs associated with the attendance by an individual at a cultural event (either by invitation or qualification on the basis of individual merit); or specialist training courses, events or study programmes relating to Arts or Heritage | Any artist or cultural practitioner meeting the criteria in section 1.3 | <b>£500</b> |
|  | Contribution to costs associated with the study, promotion and development of minority languages relevant to Northern Ireland other than Irish and Ulster-Scots                                                                                             | Any individual meeting the criteria outlined in section 1.3             | <b>£250</b> |

*\* Members were asked to note that individual bursaries would only be considered from applicants who were not attending and participating in a cultural event, course or programme as part of a group. If more than one individual from a group wished to apply for support for the same event or project, this must be done through a single application under the Cultural Groups category.*

### **Who can apply?**

Any individual residing in the Borough, or group based in or operating in the Borough.

### **Groups**

A group must;

- Be democratically accountable through regular public meetings.
- Hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM).
- Be properly constituted and include a decision-making process and aims and activities that are acceptable to the Council (a copy must be submitted with the application).
- Be managed by a publicly elected committee; the office bearing positions of Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer must be held as a minimum.
- Demonstrate a fair and equitable ethos through their established aims and objectives in accordance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998).
- Demonstrate that proposed activities are not a duplication of other activities.
- Produce an annual statement of independently verified or certified accounts, or a bank statement for new groups only.

- Agree to Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council's monitoring, evaluation, and training procedures if required.

#### 5. Financial Position/Implication

There were no financial implications resulting from this proposal.

#### 6. Summary

Following a number of recent questions from potential applicants, it was proposed to amend the Cultural Grant Aid and Bursary Programme guidance notes to provide greater clarity about who could apply for grants, and what the purpose of each grant category was. It was also proposed that the maximum award for groups wishing to apply for support to attend and participate in cultural events or courses was raised from £500 to £1,000, while maintaining the £500 maximum award for individuals.

Proposed by Councillor Lynch

Seconded by Councillor Wilson and agreed that

**the proposed clarification amendments to the Cultural Grant Aid and Bursary Programme guidance notes be approved.**

*ACTON BY: Simon Goldrick, Head of Arts, Culture, Tourism and Events*

### **4.9 CP/CD/476 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANT AID PROGRAMME - SMALL GRANTS FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS 2026-27**

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval in relation to the Community Development Small Grants Funding Programme awards being recommended.**

#### 2. Background

The Small Grants Programme provided financial assistance to groups within the Borough of up to £1,000 towards seeding costs, public and employer's liability insurance, small items of equipment or an activity.

#### 3. Previous Decision of Council

The Small Grants Programme, was approved by the Council in October 2014 as part of the Council's Community Development Grant Aid Programme.

Members were advised that groups who applied for a small grant were not permitted to apply for the wider Community Facilities, Programmes and Activities Grant Programme within the same financial year.

Small Grants were assessed on the basis of Pass/Fail against eligibility criteria and not subjected to a scored assessment process. All proposed awards were

subject to a signed disclosure from the group confirming that all appropriate supporting documentation was in place and could be provided on request, or the offer of funding would be withdrawn.

#### 4. Financial Implication

The total budget for the 2026-27 Community Development Small Grant Aid Programme was £20,000.

During the months of February, March, April and May, 14 applications were received and assessed by Officers, with 12 applications totalling £10,923.58 recommended for approval, details of which were circulated for Members' information.

#### 5. Summary

It was proposed to award 12 Small Grants to the successful applicants as outlined. The Community Development Small Grants would remain open as a rolling programme with applications reported to the Community Development Committee on a quarterly basis.

Proposed by Councillor Cooper  
Seconded by Councillor Lynch and agreed that

**the 12 Small Grant applications requesting a total of £10,923.58 be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Kerry Brady, Grants & Funding Officer*

### **4.10 CP/CF/006 NORTHERN IRELAND CENTENARY COMMUNITY CENTRE BALLYDUFF – POLLING STATION REQUEST**

#### **1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the Electoral Office Northern Ireland to use the Northern Ireland Centenary Community Centre Ballyduff on Thursday 6 May 2027 as a polling station.**

#### **2. Introduction/Background**

Members were reminded that the next NI Assembly and Local Council elections would take place on Thursday 6 May 2027.

The Electoral Office for Northern Ireland had previously requested the use of the Northern Ireland Centenary Community Centre Ballyduff as a polling station for Local Council, NI Assembly and UK General Elections.

Ballyduff Community Redevelopment Group (BCRG) operated the Northern Ireland Centenary Community Centre Ballyduff under a Service Management Agreement with the Council.

#### **3. Previous Decision of Council**

Members were reminded it was approved at the June 2024 Community Development Committee that the Northern Ireland Centenary Community Centre Ballyduff was used as a polling station for the 2024 UK General Election on 4 July 2024.

Members were reminded that the Community Centre was operated under a Service Management Agreement with BCRG. The group were responsible for managing bookings at the facility and Council Officers had been in touch with the group about the request.

#### 4. Key Issues

Members were advised that correspondence had been received and was circulated, from The Electoral Office for Northern Ireland regarding the next NI Assembly and Local Council elections, which would be held on Thursday 6 May 2027.

The Electoral Office for Northern Ireland had requested the use of the Northern Ireland Centenary Community Centre Ballyduff as a polling station on Thursday 6 May 2027.

#### 5. Financial Position/Implication

BCRG operated the Northern Ireland Centenary Community Centre Ballyduff under a Service Management Agreement with the Council and any remuneration received from The Electoral Office for this request would be paid directly to BCRG.

#### 6. Summary

Correspondence had been received from The Electoral Office for Northern Ireland requesting the use of the Northern Ireland Centenary Community Centre Ballyduff as a polling station for the NI Assembly and Local Council elections on Thursday 6 May 2027.

Proposed by Councillor Brady  
Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

**the request from Electoral Office Northern Ireland to use the Northern Ireland Centenary Community Centre Ballyduff on Thursday 6 May 2027 as a polling station be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Paul Townsend, Community Facilities Coordinator*

### **4.11 CP/CF/009 LILIAN BLAND PAVILION – FREE USE REQUEST**

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the free use of Lilian Bland Pavilion by the Community Relations Forum for a one-off community event in September 2026.**

## 2. Introduction/Background

The Community Relations Forum was a community-based charity in Newtownabbey that used community development and good relations to support residents in the area. The Community Relations Forum aimed to promote good community relations by encouraging honest and open dialogue enabling people to have a better understanding of and respect for each other's view

## 3. Previous Decision of Council

Members were reminded that approval was given at the June 2025 Committee for a revision to the Community Development Pricing Policy, which now required all free use requests to be brought to the Committee for decision.

## 4. Request for Free Use

The Community Relations Forum had requested the free use of the Lilian Bland Pavillion for a one-off event, The Great Glengormley Get Together, on Saturday 12 September 2026.

The Great Glengormley Get Together is a free, annual family fun day run by the Forum in Lilian Bland Park which included entertainment, stalls and music. The event helped bring residents and communities together, promoting good relations.

The community benefits of this event would include:

- Promotion of positive community engagement
- Positive uses of Council parks, open spaces and facilities
- Creation of community connection between all ages through a varied event
- Provision of accessible information and experiences for the community including, community safety, good relations and mental health
- Promotion of community and voluntary infrastructure and services from within the borough

This free event aligned with the Council's Community Plan by promoting inclusion, strengthening community connections, and encouraging greater participation in community and good relations activities across Antrim and Newtownabbey.

The Community Relations Forum had requested free use of the Lilian Bland Pavillion rather than paying the community rate on the basis that they operate on limited grant funding and donations which were prioritised toward delivery of the event. They had no available funding to hire a venue, nor were there alternative facilities within their local Glengormley community that were suitable to host an event of this nature.

## 5. Financial Position/Implication

If this request was approved, the potential lost income from a community booking would be £147.

## 6. Summary

A request had been received from Community Relations Forum for the free use of Lilian Bland Pavilion on Saturday 12 September 2026 to facilitate the annual Great Glengormley Get Together event.

The Community Relations Forum had requested the free use of the Lilian Bland Pavilion on Saturday 12 September 2026 to facilitate the annual Great Glengormley Get Together event.

Proposed by Alderman McGrath  
Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

**the request from the Community Relations Forum to have free use of the Lilian Bland Pavilion on Saturday 12 September 2026 for the Great Glengormley Together be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Paul Townsend, Community Facilities Coordinator*

*Councillor Burbank left the meeting at this point.*

## 4.12 CP/CC/012 RATHENRAW COMMUNITY CENTRE – SUMMER SCHEME FREE USE REQUEST

### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to recommend to Members that Rathenraw Youth Scheme in Antrim was given permission to use Rathenraw Community Centre free of charge for their two-week Summer Scheme from 20 – 31 July 2026.**

### 2. Introduction/Background

Rathenraw Youth Scheme made regular bookings at Rathenraw Community Centre on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday evenings. The group was a keyholder for the Community Centre.

Rathenraw Youth Scheme also delivered an annual Summer Scheme, established over 25 years ago. This year the scheme was scheduled to take place over two weeks from 20 July to 31 July, Monday to Friday 10am-3pm.

The Summer Scheme would accommodate 100 Juniors and 80 Seniors. The Youth Scheme had requested free use of Rathenraw Community Centre, as a keyholder, for the delivery of the two-week Summer Scheme.

### 3. Previous Decision of Council

Members were reminded that permission for free use of Rathenraw Community Centre for the delivery of the 2025 Summer Scheme was previously provided to Rathenraw Youth Scheme at the May 2025 Community Development Committee.

Members were reminded that approval was given at the June 2025 Committee for a revision to the Community Development Pricing Policy, which now required all free use requests to be brought to the Committee for decision.

#### 4. Request for Free Use

Rathenraw Youth Scheme had requested free use of Rathenraw Community Centre, as a keyholder, for the delivery of the two-week Summer Scheme.

The community benefits of this Summer Scheme would include:

- Promotion of positive community activities for young people
- Positive use of Council facilities
- Promotion of learning and wellbeing through a varied activities and programming
- Promotion of community and voluntary infrastructure and services from within the borough

This Summer Scheme aligned with the Council's Community Plan by promoting inclusion, strengthening community connections, and encouraging greater participation in community activities.

The Rathenraw Youth Scheme had requested free use of the Rathenraw Community Centre rather than paying the community rate on the basis that they operated on limited grant funding which was prioritised toward delivery of the Summer Scheme. They had no available funding to hire a venue, nor are there alternative facilities accessible within their local community that were suitable to host a Summer Scheme.

#### 5. Financial Position/Implication

The waiver of community hire charges for the two weeks scheme represented potential lost income of £1,267.50. However, the groups keyholder status alleviated the need for additional staff expenditure to facilitate this booking. The Centre was unlikely to be booked by any other group.

#### 6. Summary

Rathenraw Youth Scheme had requested free use to Rathenraw Community Centre for their two-week Summer Scheme, from 20 – 31 July 2026. Approval of this request alleviated the need for any expenditure on additional staff costs.

Proposed by Councillor Kirkpatrick  
Seconded by Councillor Dunlop and agreed that



**Rathenraw Youth Scheme be given permission to use Rathenraw Community Centre free of charge, as a keyholder, for their two-week Summer Scheme from 20 July – 31 July 2026 and that other Community Groups using Council facilities to deliver summer schemes on the same basis, would have their costs reimbursed, with a report on the outcome to be brought back to the September committee for noting.**

*ACTION BY: Paul Townsend, Community Facilities Coordinator*

#### **4.13 CP/CD/444 ANTRIM AND NEWTOWNABBEY SENIORS' FORUM**

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

**The purpose of this report was to provide Members with an update on the Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors Forum Quarter 4 2025-26 performance report.**

##### **2. Introduction/Background**

Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors Forum aimed to relieve poverty, advance education and promote the preservation and protection of health among seniors (50+) in the Borough and its environs. They provided facilities and programmes in the interests of social welfare for the education, recreation and leisure time for senior citizens. Officers had continued to work with the Forum and Community Planning partners (NIHE, PHA, NHSCT) to manage the service level agreement which had been approved at Committee in March 2025.

##### **3. Previous Decision of Council**

Members were reminded that at the March 2025 Community Development Committee it was agreed to provide funding of £15,000 through a service level agreement for the 2025/26 financial year to the Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors Forum. Officers had continued to work with the Forum and Community Planning partners (NIHE, PHA and NHSCT) to manage the service level agreement and performance of this Group.

Members were also reminded it was agreed at the July 2022 Council Meeting that a quarterly performance report be provided to the Community Planning Committee, from September 2022 onwards.

The 2024/25 Quarter 3 Performance Report and Service Level Agreement for 26/27 were approved at the March 2026 Community Development Committee and were based upon performance measures in the Service Level Agreement.

##### **4. Financial Position/Implication**

Members were advised provision of £15,000 in financial support for the Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors Forum had been provided for in the 2025/26 Community Planning budget. Other Community Planning partners had also confirmed their financial commitment to continue to support this group as outlined below.

| <b>Community Planning Partner</b>   | <b>Financial contribution to Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors Forum 2025/26</b> |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Northern Health & Social Care Trust | £15,000                                                                        |
| Public Health Agency                | £15,000                                                                        |
| Northern Ireland Housing Executive  | £15,000                                                                        |

## 5. Governance

Officers continued to work with the Forum and Community Planning partners to manage the Service Level Agreement and performance of this Group. A quarterly performance report was provided to Officers for the purposes of performance management.

## 6. Summary

The Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors' Forum 2025-26 Quarter 4 Report was circulated for Members' information and was based upon performance measures in the Service Level Agreement. Members were advised that the Quarter 4 targets had been met.

Proposed by Alderman McGrath

Seconded by Councillor Ní Chonghaile and agreed that

**that the Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors' Forum Quarter 4 2025-26 performance report be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Conor Cunning DEA Engagement Manager*

## 4.14 CD/TD/107 ELEVATE - COMMUNITY RENEWAL AND RESILIENCE FUND

### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval in relation to the Elevate Community Renewal and Resilience Programme awards being recommended for 2026-28.**

### 2. Background

The Elevate Community Renewal and Resilience Fund was available to financially support areas identified as the most deprived Super Output Areas (SOA's) of the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measures (NIMDM), excluding Neighbourhood Renewal Areas in the Borough.

The programme was partially funded by the Department for Communities (DfC) as part of existing Areas at Risk (AAR) arrangements for Carnmoney, Mossley and Monkstown areas only.

Neighbourhood Renewal areas which were already in receipt of monies through the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme were not eligible for this funding.

### 3. Previous Decision of Council

It was approved at the September 2025 Community Development Committee that the Elevate Community Renewal and Resilience Fund be launched as a competitive open grant call for multiyear funding for 2026-28 for organisations working within identified areas of deprivation, excluding Neighbourhood Renewal areas which were already in receipt of monies through the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme.

At the March 2026 Community Development Committee, 11 applications, totalling £186,994.50 for 2026-27 and £190,442.13 for 2027-28 were approved for funding. One applicant withdrew their application in April 2026.

Members were reminded that the offer of Areas at Risk funding for 2026-2027 totalling £76,395.38 from the Department for Communities was approved at the May 2026 Community Development Committee.

### 4. 2026-2028 Elevate – Community Renewal and Resilience Fund Proposals – Call 2

A second call for the Elevate Community Renewal and Resilience Fund for 2026-27 and 2027-28 opened on 3 April and closed on 15 May 2026.

A total of 5 two-year funding applications for 2026-28 were received, with 3 applications, totalling £134,400 achieving the required pass threshold, details of which were circulated for Members' information.

### 5. Financial Position

The contribution committed by the Council in 2025-26 to the Newtownabbey AAR Projects was £60,170, a similar allocation was included in the 2026-27 Community Development budget.

The contribution committed by the Council in 2025-26 to the Antrim AAR projects was £111,210, a similar allocation was included in the 2026-27 Community Development budget.

A Letter of Offer had been received from DfC confirming their 2026-27 contribution to the project with a funding award of £76,395.38.

The 3 grant applications recommended for approval totalled £67,200 for 2026-27 and £67,200 for the 2027-28 financial year. If the 3 applications were approved, there would be a remaining budget of £10,709.88 for 2026-27 and £10,403.25 for 2027-28.

### 6. Summary

Following a second call for applications in April 2026, 5 applications were received for the Elevate Community Renewal and Resilience Fund 2026-28 and assessed by a panel of Officers.

The required threshold for funding was achieved by 3 applicants seeking a total of £67,200 for 2026-27 and £67,200 for 2027-28 with a remaining budget of £10,709.88 for 2026-27 and £10,403.25 for 2027-28.

A Member raised concerns regarding a local school losing funding and requested that Officers liaise with the Head Teacher. The Head of Community Development agreed to provide a breakdown of the DfC funding received by Groups in the Monkstown, Carnmoney and Mossley areas and responded to questions on funding rationale.

Proposed by Councillor Ní Chonghaile  
Seconded by Councillor Lynch and agreed that

**the 3 successful Elevate – Community Renewal and Resilience Fund applications, totalling £67,200 for 2026-27 and £67,200 for 2027-28 be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Anna Boyle, Funding Unit Manager*

#### **4.15 COMD/CD/005 CAPITAL PREMISES AND EQUIPMENT GRANT FUND PROGRAMME 2026-2027**

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

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members approval in relation to proposed financial awards under the second call for Capital Premises and Equipment Grant Programme**

##### **2. Background**

The Capital Premises and Equipment Grant Programme provided financial assistance to support groups within the Borough that had been established for at least 10 years to update, enhance and improve their community facilities or equipment, provided they could clearly evidence need, particularly where financial need was limited from other funding sources.

A pass threshold of 60% applied to applications to the Programme and groups were not required to demonstrate match funding. Members were also asked to note that proposed awards were subject to the receipt of all relevant supporting documentation, or the offer of funding would be withdrawn.

##### **3. Previous Decision of Council**

Members were reminded that the Capital Premises and Equipment Grant Fund was approved by Council in October 2023 with a further update including the outcome of the Section 75 Equality Screening and Rural Proofing exercises approved at the March 2024 Community Planning Committee.

At the November 2025 Community Development Committee delivery of the 2026/27 Capital Premises and Equipment Grant Fund Programme was approved.

At the Community Development Committee in March 2026 it was agreed to fund 2 Capital Premises and 3 Equipment Grant awards to the successful applicants totalling £38,172.92 leaving a budget of £81,827.08.

It was also agreed that a second call for the Capital Premises and Equipment Grant Programme would open on 03 April and close on 15 May 2026.

#### 4. 026/27 Capital Premises and Equipment Grant Programme

The Second Call for applications to the Capital Premises and Equipment Grant Fund opened on Friday 3 April 2026 and closed on Friday 15 May 2026. To support applications to this programme, Officers delivered three grant workshops and offered one-to-one support to all groups upon request. The opportunity was promoted on the Council's social media channels.

A total of 21 applications were received and assessed by a panel of Officers with 13 applications (3 Capital Premises and 10 Equipment) totalling £79,376.70 achieving the 60% pass threshold, details of which were circulated for Members' information.

#### 5. Financial Implication

Members were reminded that the total budget available for Capital Premises and Equipment Grant Fund was £120,000 with an initial indicative allocation of £45,000 for premises and £75,000 for equipment.

Under the first call for applications £23,750 was awarded under the Capital Premises Grant Fund and £14,377.92 awarded under the Equipment Grant Fund leaving an indicative remaining budget of £21,250 for Capital Premises and £60,622.08 for Equipment.

Under the second call for applications 13 applications (3 Capital Premises and 10 Equipment) totalling £79,376.70 achieved the required threshold for funding. If these recommendations were approved, the remaining budget would be £2,459.38.

#### 6. Summary

The Capital Premises and Equipment Grant Programme approved by the Community Development Committee in November 2025 opened for a second call for applications on 3 April 2026 and closed on 15 May 2026.

It was proposed to award 13 Grant awards, at a total cost of £79,376.70.

Proposed by Councillor Ní Chonghaile  
Seconded by Councillor Wilson and agreed that

**the 13 successful applications for funding under the Capital Premises and Equipment Grant Fund totalling £79,376.70 be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Kerry Brady, Grants and Funding Officer*

#### **4.16 CP/CP/224 DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES: WARM HEALTHY HOMES FUND CONSULTATION**

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

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' instructions in relation to the Department for Communities public consultation on the Warm Healthy Homes Fund.**

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

The Department for Communities (DfC) was undertaking a consultation and seeking views on the proposed Warm Healthy Homes Fund, a new energy efficiency scheme aimed at supporting low-income households experiencing, or at risk of, fuel poverty across Northern Ireland

The Warm Healthy Homes Fund was intended to become the Department's primary long-term intervention for tackling fuel poverty and improving energy efficiency in private sector homes, including owner-occupied and private rented properties. The proposed scheme would replace the existing Affordable Warmth Scheme from April 2027.

##### **3. Key Issues**

Members were advised correspondence (circulated) had been received from DfC advising of a consultation on The Warm Healthy Homes Fund and sought views on proposals to improve energy efficiency, reduce energy costs and support better health outcomes through a "whole-house, fabric-first" approach.

This approach prioritised improvements to insulation, ventilation and the overall thermal efficiency of homes before considering heating upgrades or renewable technologies.

The DfC wished to hear from a wide range of interested persons and organisations. The consultation documents and associated survey were available online via the Department's website. The consultation followed stakeholder engagement undertaken during 2024 and sought views on the proposed delivery model and operational framework for the Fund.

The consultation period opened on 27 May 2026 and would close on 19 August 2026. Responses received outside of this timeframe would not be considered by the Department.

The Department had also advised that consultation events would be held in Belfast, online and Omagh during June 2026 to provide stakeholders with opportunities to discuss the proposals and help shape the final scheme design.

Members were advised that they may wish to respond on a corporate, individual or party-political basis.

##### **4. Summary**

The DfC had launched a public consultation on the proposed Warm Healthy Homes Fund. Input was welcomed from all interested parties. The consultation closed on 19 August 2026. Full details and documentation could be accessed via the Department's website.

Members were advised that they may wish to respond on a corporate, individual or party-political basis.

Proposed by Alderman McGrath  
Seconded by Councillor Ní Chonghaile and agreed that

**A corporate response be prepared with a draft brought to Full Council in July.**

*ACTION BY: Conor Cunning, DEA Engagement Manager*

#### **4.17 CP/CD/435 SOCIAL SUPERMARKET AND FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMME 2026/2027**

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

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval to continue to deliver a Social Supermarket in the Borough in partnership with Community Advice Antrim and Newtownabbey and a Family Support Programme in partnership with Save the Children.**

##### **2. Introduction/Background**

Social Supermarkets were community driven shops which supported those living in food poverty. They supplied low-cost food sourced from the charity FareShare NI and donations from local businesses. The aim of a Social Supermarket model was to offer a longer term and sustainable response to food insecurity by seeking to address the root causes of poverty rather than simply providing food.

The initial process to develop a Social Supermarket for the Borough commenced in June 2022 with a Consultant carrying out a feasibility study which included stakeholder engagement, focus groups, meetings with Elected Members and best practise visits with a view to designing a viable Social Supermarket model for the Borough.

##### **3. Previous Decision of Council**

Members were reminded it was reported at the May Community Development Committee that the Council was awarded an allocation from the Department of Communities (DfC) of £547,702.32 towards the delivery of the Community Support Programme in 2026/27. Financial assistance up to £171,864.89 was allocated for the delivery of the Social Supermarket Programme.

It was agreed at the Community Development Committee in October 2025 that the continuation of programmes in partnership with Community Advice Antrim and Newtownabbey through a Service Level Agreement to deliver a Social

Supermarket in 2025/2026 including funding of £136,678.40. It was also agreed to continue engagement with Save the Children to deliver the complementary Family Support Programme in 2025/2026, including funding of £20,000.

#### 4. Performance Review 2025/2026

The following statistics had been provided by CAAN and Save the Children in relation to the Social Supermarket and Family Support Programme in 2025/2026:

##### Social Supermarket (April 2025 to March 2026)

- 373 Adults, 223 Children, 307 Households supported through the SSM.
- £115,005 food vouchers allocated
- 307 Benefit checks completed
- 82 clients offered 1-1 tailored advice and support on Budgeting & Debt advice
- 233 clients linked into other services
- 78 Clients referred from 33 referral partners. In addition, clients are signposted to CAAN for SSM support.
- 88% of people accessing service felt they were better off in the longer term for the help they received
- £633,000 generated for clients.

##### Family Support Programme (April 2025 to March 2026)

- 124 families supported
- 238 children supported
- £32,280 of vouchers and early learning support packs provided

#### 5. Financial Position/Implication

The total budget for the 2026/27 Social Supermarket programme was £171,864.89. It was proposed to retain £17,186.49 (10%) for administering this grant fund, and it was proposed that the remaining £154,678.40 be allocated to CAAN and Save the Children for the delivery of the Social Supermarket and Family Support Programme in 2026/27.

#### 6. Equality and/or Rural Screening Requirements

As part of the Council's responsibility to identify and address potential Section 75 implications and promote equality of opportunity and good relations as required by the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Social Supermarket and Family Support Programmes had been subject to Section 75 Equality Screening and had been screened out for the need of an Equality Impact Assessment. The Council carried out an Equality Screening on these programmes which was reported to Committee in June 2025.

In addition, the Rural Needs Act places a duty on public authorities and local Councils to have due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans and when designing and delivering public services. A Rural Needs screening exercise was carried out for



the Social Supermarket and Family Support Programmes which was reported to Committee in June 2025.

## 7. Governance

Community Advice Antrim and Newtownabbey have been engaged through procurement of the Generalist Advice Contract, which included provision for contract variations. Save the Children had previously been engaged through a Letter of Offer, which included funding conditions.

Members were reminded that all funding awards were subject to satisfactory monitoring and evaluation.

## 8. Summary

Both the Social Supermarket and Family Support Programme have been very successful and provided significant support to families and individuals across the Borough during a time of need.

Given the performance review outcomes, it was proposed to continue both programmes in their current form as followed:

- Funding of £134,678.40 to be allocated to CAAN to deliver the Social Supermarket for the Borough in 2026/27.
- Funding of £20,000 to be allocated to Save the Children to continue to deliver the Family Support Programme in the Borough.

In response to questions from Members, the Head of Community Development agreed to provide a breakdown of clinics and explore the potential for additional retail outlets to be considered for the provision of food vouchers and to report back to a future Committee.

Proposed by Alderman McGrath

Seconded by Councillor Wilson and agreed that

**(a) the ongoing engagement of Community Advice Antrim and Newtownabbey to deliver a Social Supermarket in 2026/2027 including funding of £134,678.40 be approved.**

**(b) the ongoing engagement of Save the Children to deliver the complementary Family Support Programme in 2026/2027 including funding of £20,000 be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Will McDowell, DEA Engagement Coordinator*

The Vice-Chair advised that a five-minute recess would be taken at this point.

Alderman McGrath and Councillor Magill left the meeting during the recess.

## **4.18 CP/CP/231 SPORT NI – GET ACTIVE NI FUNDING PROGRAMME 2026-27**

### **1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members approval to submit a funding application to the Sport Northern Ireland Get Active NI Programme 2026/27.**

## 2. Background

Sport Northern Ireland (Sport NI), one of Council's statutory Community Planning partners, had launched the Get Active NI Programme 2026/27 in partnership with the London Marathon Foundation. The programme aimed to increase participation in sport and physical activity, reduce inequalities and strengthen collaboration between sport, health, community and voluntary sectors.

The programme focused on supporting those who faced the greatest barriers to participation, including:

- Women and girls
- Children and young people
- People with disabilities
- Communities experiencing high social need
- People living in rural areas.

## 3. Previous Decision of Council

Members were reminded that an offer of financial assistance from Sport NI totalling £48,370 for the Community Planning Investment programme was approved at the January 2025 Community Development Committee.

## 4. Key issues

Members were advised that correspondence, which was circulated, had been received from Sport NI, advising that Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council was eligible to apply for funding of up to £36,000 through the Get Active NI Programme 2026/27.

Sport NI had invited applications from all District Councils for funding through the Get Active NI Programme.

The programme had been designed to support the delivery of Community Planning priorities through increased participation in sport and physical activity, with a particular focus on underrepresented and less active groups.

A key outcome of 'Love Living Here' the Council's Community Plan was that 'Our Citizens enjoy Good Health and Well Being' and the Council promoted access to and participation in sport and physical activity in order to achieve this outcome. Officers from the Community Planning and Leisure Sections would submit their application to Sport NI by their deadline of Friday 21 August 2026.

The project would be based within local communities targeting areas of greatest need. It would be cognisant of the Community Planning ethos of co-production, working closely with community planning partners. The project would seek to take advantage of partnership working with local sports clubs with

a view to offering participants a pathway to continue their sporting journey well beyond the lifespan of the project.

Monitoring and evaluation would be built into the project framework to ensure lessons could be learned for any future investment, as well as celebrating any success. A report on the outcome of this application would be brought to a future meeting of the Community Development Committee.

#### 5. Financial Position / Implication

Sport NI had advised that the maximum funding available to the Council under the Get Active NI Programme 2026/27 was £36,000.

If the project was approved for funding, there would be no cost to the Council for this project.

#### 6. Summary

Sport NI had opened a call for applications under the Get Active NI Programme 2026/27. The programme sought to increase participation in sport and physical activity amongst underrepresented and inactive groups and was aligned to Community Planning objectives.

It was proposed that Officers would submit an application to SNI by their deadline of Friday 21 August 2026 for a programme which targeted participation in sport and physical activity which supported the delivery of the Community Plan.

A report on the outcome of this application would be brought to a future meeting of the Community Development Committee.

Proposed by Councillor Lynch

Seconded by Councillor Ní Chonghaile and agreed that

**Members approve the submission of an application to Sport Northern Ireland's Get Active NI Programme 2026/27 for funding of up to £36,000.**

*ACTION BY: Conor Cunning, DEA Engagement Manager*

### 4.19 **CCS/CPRM/020 FILMING POLICY**

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for an update to the Filming Policy which governed Council's response to any requests to film on Council-owned or Council-managed land and property.**

#### 2. Introduction and Background

The Council recognised the positive contribution film production can make to the local area, both economically and culturally.

Filming activities had the potential to promote the Borough as a destination, encourage local business, and enhance civic pride by showcasing the Borough's unique character, heritage, and landscape.

This policy established a clear, safe, and consistent framework for managing filming on Council-owned or Council-managed land and property. It ensured that all filming activity was conducted responsibly and in a way that protected residents, staff, and public assets.

### 3. Previous Decision of the Council

The policy was first approved by the Policy and Governance Committee in February 2019, it had been reviewed regularly, however not updated since this time.

### 4. Policy

A draft updated Filming Policy was circulated for Members' information. The policy aimed to:

- Provide a clear application process to film on Council property / land
- Outline documentation, notice periods and approvals required
- Ensure compliance with relevant legislation, health and safety standards, and Council procedures
- Protect the Council's reputation and minimise disruption to residents and businesses and other services

### 5. Financial Position/Implication

There was no direct financial implications arising from this Policy.

### 6. Governance

The Policy was reviewed biannually, and any changes required would be taken through the Community Development Committee for approval.

### 7. Equality and Screening

As part of the Council's responsibilities to identify and address potential Section 75 implications and promote equality of opportunity and good relations as required by the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Audit and Strategy had been subject to Section 75 Equality Screening and had been screened out for the need of an Equality Impact Assessment. A copy of the Section 75 Equality Screening Form was circulated for Members' information.

In addition, the Rural Needs Act placed a duty on public authorities and local Councils to have due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans and when designing and delivering public services. A Rural Needs screening exercise was completed and was circulated for Members' information.

## 8. Summary

The Filming Policy was last updated in February 2019 and had been amended to provide a clear, safe, and consistent framework for managing filming on Council-owned or Council-managed land and property. It ensured that all filming activity was conducted responsibly and in a way that protected residents, staff, and public assets.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour  
Seconded by Councillor Lynch and agreed that

**the updated Filming Policy and the accompanying Rural Needs Impact Assessment and Section 75 screening be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Jeanette McIntyre, Head of Marketing Communications & PR*

### **4.20 CP/CP/224 NORTHERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE TRUST DRAFT CARER STRATEGY 2026-2031**

#### **1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' instructions in relation to the Northern Health and Social Care Trust public consultation on the Draft Carer Strategy 2026-2031.**

#### **2. Introduction**

The Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT) was undertaking a consultation and sought the views on the proposed Draft Carer Strategy 2026–2031 which set out the Trust's vision, priorities and commitments for supporting unpaid carers over the next five years.

Census 2021 data indicated that there are over 56,000 unpaid carers living within the Northern Trust area.

The current regional policy framework, *Caring for Carers* (2006), had informed support for carers for almost two decades. While progress had been made, engagement with carers and stakeholder organisations had identified a need for a refreshed local strategy which reflected the changing needs of carers and the challenges currently experienced across health and social care services.

#### **3. Key Issues**

Members were advised correspondence, circulated, had been received from NHSCT advising of a consultation on the Draft Carer Strategy 2026–2031 which sought views on proposals for supporting unpaid carers.

The draft strategy had been developed in recognition of the vital contribution made by carers to the health and wellbeing of the population and acknowledged the increasing demands placed upon carers across all age

groups. The strategy aimed to improve how carers were identified, involved, informed and supported throughout their caring journey.

The development of the Strategy had been informed through an extensive programme of engagement undertaken between 2024 and 2026, including carer surveys, Carer Listening Forums, stakeholder workshops, engagement with the Carer Pathway Steering Group, Barnardo's Young Carer Service and wider consultation events. Feedback from carers and young carers identified six key themes:

- Identification
- Carer Health and Advocacy
- Information
- Communication
- Navigation
- Transitions

These themes had informed the strategic priorities contained within the Draft Strategy.

The NHSCT wished to hear from a wide range of interested persons and organisations. The consultation documents and associated survey were available online via the Trust's website.

The consultation period opened on 27 February 2026 and would close on 30 June 2026.

Members were advised that they may wish to respond on a corporate, individual or party-political basis.

#### 4. Equality Screening and Rural Needs Impact Assessment

The Trust had completed an Equality Screening and Rural Needs Impact Assessment in respect of the Draft Strategy. Both assessments identified the importance of consulting widely with carers and representative organisations to ensure that the final strategy reflected the needs of all carers, including young carers, older carers and those living in rural communities.

#### 5. Summary

The NHSCT had launched a public consultation on the proposed Draft Carer Strategy 2026–2031. The draft Strategy set out the Trust's commitment to improving outcomes and experiences for unpaid carers and young carers across the Northern Trust area.

Input was welcomed from all interested parties. The consultation closed on 30 June 2026. Full details and documentation could be accessed via the Trust's website.

Members were advised that they may wish to respond on a corporate, individual or party-political basis.

In response to a query from a Member, the Head of Community Development advised that although the Consultation had been open for some time, Community Development had only recently become aware of it. The Director of Community and Culture agreed that consideration would be given to promoting the consultation on Council social media channels.

Proposed by Councillor Kirkpatrick  
Seconded by Councillor Ní Chonghaile and agreed that

**Members respond on an individual or party-political basis.**

*ACTION BY: Conor Cunning, DEA Engagement Manager*

## ITEMS FOR NOTING

### 5.1 CP/GEN/019 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SECTION - PARTNERSHIP MINUTES

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to update Members on the various minutes of the Partnership Meetings led by the Community Development Section which had been held in recent months.**

#### 2. Introduction/Background

Members were advised that the quarterly update Partnership Minutes as listed below could be viewed in the electronic folder called “**Partnership Minutes for Members’ Information**” on Ipads.

| Community Development |                          |                                                                          |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| File Ref              | Date of Meeting          | Name of Partnership                                                      |
| D/Gen/91              | -                        | Community Advice Antrim and Newtownabbey                                 |
| D/DP/67               | 20.01.2026<br>31.03.2026 | Rathcoole Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership                              |
| D/CSP/48              | 24.09.2025<br>28.01.2026 | Antrim and Newtownabbey Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) |
| D/DP/67               | 14.01.2026<br>01.04.2026 | Grange Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership                                 |
| CP/GR/43              | 28.11.2025               | Traveller Issues Local Government Partnership                            |

Proposed by Councillor Dunlop  
Seconded by Councillor Cooper and agreed that

**that the update on Partnership Minutes be noted.**

*NO ACTION*

## 5.2 CP/CP/224 DEPARTMENT FOR WORK AND PENSIONS – TIMMS REVIEW OF PERSONAL INDEPENDENCE PAYMENT

### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to inform Members of the latest update from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) regarding progress on the Timms Review of Personal Independence Payment (PIP), including details of the ongoing Call for Evidence and the next phase of engagement and evidence-gathering activity.**

### 2. Introduction/Background

The Department for Work and Pensions had issued a further stakeholder update from the co-chairs of the Timms Review of Personal Independence Payment (PIP), which outlined progress to date and opportunities for individuals and organisations to contribute to the Review.

On 19 March 2026, DWP launched the Timms Review Call for Evidence, inviting disabled people, individuals with long-term health conditions, organisations across the UK, and those with relevant expertise or interest to submit views and evidence. The Call for Evidence remained open until 28 May 2026.

The Review aimed to ensure that PIP reflected the lived experience of disabled people and continued to support independence, participation and wellbeing. The Review Steering Group had emphasised the importance of engaging widely and using a range of participation methods to ensure diverse perspectives were heard.

The Department for Communities (DfC) would continue to engage with stakeholders locally throughout the Review process.

### 3. Key Issues

#### **Call for Evidence**

The Call for Evidence represented the first stage of a wider programme of engagement and evidence gathering. Responses received would inform the Steering Group's developing thinking and policy analysis.

Recognising that no single method would capture all perspectives, the Steering Group had agreed a six-part evidence and engagement programme designed to enable participation in ways that best suit individuals and organisations.

#### **Six-Part Evidence and Engagement Programme**

The programme would include:

##### **Call for Evidence**

Currently underway, gathering written submissions from stakeholders and the public.



- **Existing Data and Research**

Consideration of qualitative and quantitative research from government, the disability sector, and academic experts to ensure recommendations were grounded in established evidence.

- **New Quantitative Survey Research**

A representative UK-wide survey commissioned through the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) to address evidence gaps and provide additional insight.

- **Workshop in a Box**

Resources would be developed to enable organisations to host their own workshops, supporting collection of in-depth feedback on lived experiences of disability and PIP.

- **Evidence Sessions with Experts**

Targeted engagement sessions involving individuals with lived experience and relevant professional expertise.

- **Deliberative Events**

A series of events planned across the UK later in 2026 to test ideas, explore policy trade-offs, and refine recommendations.

The Steering Group considered this mixed-method approach essential to building a comprehensive evidence base and ensuring the Review reflected a wide range of perspectives.

### **Forward Programme**

The Steering Group had begun work on its priority themes and continued to review existing evidence relating to PIP.

- Summer 2026: Early findings from engagement activity expected to inform policy analysis and emerging recommendations.
- Autumn 2026: Anticipated period of recommendation testing and refinement.

Further updates and detailed information would continue to be shared as the Review progresses.

Full details of the co-chairs' update and accessible versions of materials (including BSL, Easy Read and audio formats) were available via GOV.UK. [The Timms Review: Co-chair Update, April 2026 - GOV.UK](#)

## **4. Summary**

The Department for Work and Pensions had provided a further update on the Timms Review of Personal Independence Payment.

Key developments included:

- The Call for Evidence remained open until 28 May 2026.

- A comprehensive six-part engagement and evidence-gathering programme had been established.
- Opportunities were being created for individuals, organisations, and experts to contribute through multiple participation routes.
- Early findings were expected during summer 2026, with recommendation development to continue into autumn 2026.
- The Department for Communities would maintain ongoing engagement with stakeholders as the Review progresses.

Proposed by Councillor Dunlop

Seconded by Councillor Cooper and agreed that

**Members note the latest update from the Department for Work and Pensions regarding progress on the Timms Review of Personal Independence Payment.**

*NO ACTION*

### **5.3 CP/PCSP/70 APPOINTMENT OF POLICING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP CHAIRPERSON**

#### **1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report was to update Members regarding the appointment of the PCSP Chairperson for 2026-2027.**

#### **2. Introduction/Background**

Members were reminded that the Justice Act 2011 stated that the position of Chairperson of the Policing and Community Safety Partnership was held by an Elected Member for a period of 12 months, or for a period ending with the reconstitution date. The Justice Act also stated that the position was held in turn by each of the 4 largest parties represented on the Council immediately after the last local general election. The position of Vice-Chairperson was held by an Independent Member, appointed by the Independent Members.

#### **3. Previous Decision of Council**

Members were reminded that it was agreed at the Annual Meeting of the Council in May 2023 that 10 Members be appointed to PCSP for the term of Council allocated using the d'Hondt method and that the Chairperson be appointed for a period of 12 months at a time and in turn by each of the 4 largest parties following the election.

#### **4. Appointment of PCSP Chairperson**

Members were reminded that Councillor Julie Gilmour, Alliance Party, was appointed to the position of PCSP Chairperson at the Community Development Committee in May 2025 for a period of 12 months. The Ulster Unionist Party as the fourth largest party were now allocated this position for 2026/27.

The Ulster Unionist Party nominating officer had advised that Councillor Leah Kirkpatrick is their nomination for the position of Chairperson of the Antrim and Newtownabbey PCSP for 2026-27 with the 12-month term which commenced on 01 June 2026.

#### 5. Summary

An Elected Member held the position of Chairperson of the PCSP for a period of 12 months, or for a period ending with the reconstitution date.

At the 2023 Annual Meeting, 10 Members were appointed to PCSP for the term of Council, allocated using the d'Hondt method with the Chairperson to be appointed annually and in turn by each of the 4 largest parties following the election.

Councillor Leah Kirkpatrick of the Ulster Unionist Party had been nominated for the position of PCSP Chairperson for 2026/27 as they were the fourth largest party represented on the Council. This appointment would commence on 01 June 2026.

Proposed by Councillor Dunlop  
Seconded by Councillor Cooper and agreed that

**the appointment of Councillor Leah Kirkpatrick to the position of Chairperson of the PCSP for 2026/2027 be noted.**

NO ACTION

### 5.4 **COMD/MCPR/002 MARKETING, COMMUNICATIONS AND PR PERFORMANCE REPORT**

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to provide Members with detailed performance data relating to the Marketing, Communications and PR service delivery.**

#### 2. Introduction

The Council's Marketing, Communications and PR Section of the Community and Culture Directorate managed external communications, marketing, public relations, graphic design services, and the Council's websites.

#### 3. Previous Decision of Council

Members were reminded that the Communications Strategy was approved at the January 2026 Community Development Committee.

Members were further reminded that it was agreed by the Committee in February to receive quarterly performance reports in line with the schedule below:

- June – Report on the previous January to March period
- September – Report on the previous April to June period
- December – Report on the previous July to September period

At the meeting a report on performance for the period April 2025 to December 2025 was provided and Members were advised that an annual performance report would also be brought to each June meeting.

#### 4. Performance Measurement

A Marketing, Communications and PR report for January 2026 to March 2026 was circulated for Members' information, with the annual report for the period April 2025 to March 2026 also circulated. These performance reports provided detailed analysis of marketing, communications and PR performance for both periods. The Communications Strategy committed to the continuous evaluation of the Council's communications to assess impact and inform the development of service delivery within an evolving communications landscape.

#### **Social Media**

Social media engagement was particularly high in Northern Ireland with over 80% of the population actively using social platforms and 99% of adults accessing services provided by Meta, including Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp.

The Council managed a range of social media channels and tailored its communications to specific audiences on each platform.

The social media section of the report provided detailed analysis of Social Media performance for the period January 2026 to March 2026 for the Council's main corporate channels. Highlights were summarised below:

| <b>Metric</b>       | <b>Number</b> | <b>Notes</b>                                                       |
|---------------------|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Number of Followers | 69,569        | Corporate sites – an increase <b>of 979 followers in Quarter 4</b> |
| Number of Posts     | 768           | Facebook, Instagram, X, TikTok, LinkedIn                           |
| Impressions         | 4,069,405     | Opportunities to View                                              |

Highlights from the report for the period April 2025 to March 2026 were shown below:

#### **Key Performance Statistics**

|                              |        |
|------------------------------|--------|
| Number of followers          | 69,569 |
| Number of social media posts | 3,599  |

Impressions 15,533,096

Audience Growth Rate 7.5%

Members were advised that the Marketing Communications and PR Team also managed 15 additional social media accounts which included Enchanted Winter Garden and Home and Garden Show Facebook and Instagram accounts. Across all channels (6 Corporate and 15 others) there were 163,571 followers in total.

Social media continued to be a highly effective means of communication and the digital nature of this form of communications provided real time data about the performance of each post as presented in the report enclosure.

### Media Relations

The Marketing Communications and PR team engaged in media relations both proactively and reactively. This was a key part of the Council's public relations (PR) function, focussed specifically on the media as a channel to reach broader audiences through trusted sources.

The media section provided detailed analysis of Media performance for the period January 2026 to March 2026 with highlights summarised below:

| Metric                      | Number/value | Breakdown / Notes                             |
|-----------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Total Press Releases Issued | 39           | Average 13+ per month                         |
| Total Mentions              | 1.2K         | Online: 626 · Print: 564 · Radio: 29 · TV: 10 |
| Total Reach                 | 437.5M       |                                               |

Highlights from the report for the period April 2025 to March 2026 were shown below:

### Key Performance Statistics

Total Press releases issued 173

Total mentions: 5.8K

Total reach 1.5billion

Advertising Value Equivalent £34,252,992

Media reach and value measures had been provided by NIMMS a professional media analysis company, which applied robust methodologies to assess coverage across all channels and time periods. This determined both potential reach and estimated value, based on the cost of equivalent paid advertising.

## 5. Finance and Governance

The delivery of the external communication function was resourced within the Marketing Communications and PR Section of the Directorate. Revenue budgets were utilised for specific campaigns to amplify both social media and media coverage through paid advertisement.

## 6. Summary

A Marketing Communications and PR performance report for January–March 2026 and for April 2025 to March 2026 highlighted key outcomes for the Section across social media and traditional media activity. Quarterly performance reports would continue to be submitted to the Committee as scheduled with an annual report also presented to the Committee in June 2027.

A Member requested that consideration be given to further promotion of good news stories from the Economic Development team through Council social media channels.

Proposed by Councillor Dunlop

Seconded by Councillor Cooper and agreed that

**the Marketing, Communications and PR performance reports for January to March 2026 and April 2025 to March 2026 be noted.**

*NO ACTION*

## **6 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS**

- 6.1 Members individually and on behalf of their Parties congratulated the Director of Community and Culture on her award of an MBE in The King's Birthday Honours.

*NO ACTION*

- 6.2 A Member congratulated the Director and all those involved in the delivery of the Home and Garden Show over the weekend.

*NO ACTION*

### **PROPOSAL TO PROCEED 'IN CONFIDENCE'**

Proposed by Councillor Brady

Seconded by Councillor Wilson 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** CE/OA/026 RENEWAL OF CARAVAN PARK OVERSIGHT AGREEMENT WITH BARISTA COFFEE HOUSE (NI) LTD

## 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval to renew the agreement with Barista Coffee House (NI) Ltd to provide oversight services for Loughshore Caravan Park for a further two years.**

## 2. Introduction/Background

Barista Coffee House (NI) Ltd held the lease for the Council-owned café at Jordanstown Loughshore Park, and had done so since 2011.

A separate agreement was also in place between Barista and the Council to provide oversight services for Loughshore Caravan Park. Under the terms of this agreement Barista agreed to assist with online bookings and on-site customer issues and questions, and to report maintenance and other issues to Officers. A monthly fee of £[REDACTED] was paid to Barista for this service.

## 3. Previous Decision of Council

The most recent extension of the lease agreement with Barista was approved at the August 2016 Council meeting.

## 4. Key Issues

Both the lease and the oversight agreement were due for renewal. A report to seek approval for the new lease would be brought to the Committee after a rent re-evaluation by Land and Property Services (LPS) had been completed, but the circulated draft oversight agreement was ready to sign subject to Committee approval.

The draft agreement was substantially the same as previous agreements, with the following exceptions:

- The draft agreement was for two years rather than one to reduce administration
- The draft agreement included a clause stating that if the rental figure in the main lease increases as a result of the LPS re-evaluation, the fee paid by the Council to Barista for the oversight of the caravan park would also rise by the same percentage amount

## 5. Financial Position/Implication

The draft oversight agreement stipulated that the Council would continue to pay Barista the same monthly fee as before (£[REDACTED]) subject to the rent re-evaluation outlined in point 4 above.

## 6. Summary

The agreement with Barista Coffee House (NI) Ltd to provide an oversight service for Jordanstown Caravan Park was due for renewal. It was proposed to renew

the existing agreement for a further two years with the fee subject to a rent re-evaluation by Land and Property Services.

Proposed by Councillor Cooper

Seconded by Councillor Ní Chonghaile and agreed that

**the proposal to renew the agreement with Barista Coffee House (NI) Ltd to provide oversight services for Loughshore Caravan Park for a further two years be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Simon Goldrick, Head of Arts, Culture, Tourism and Events*

## **7.2 IN CONFIDENCE AC/TH/001 THEATRE AT THE MILL LIGHTING CAPITAL PROJECT**

### **1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the Outline Business Case for the Theatre at the Mill Lighting Capital Project including the preferred option, and to seek Members' approval for the project to progress to Stage 2 of the Council's Capital Approval Process.**

### **2. Introduction/Background**

The Theatre at The Mill opened to the public on 30 January 2010 and was celebrating its sixteenth year of operation. It was the Borough's largest performing arts venue with an auditorium capacity of 400 and attracted an audience year-round from across the Borough as well as outside of the area.

The Theatre at The Mill like all performing arts venues was heavily impacted by the pandemic but had now fully recovered with performance targets exceeded in 2025/26.

The lighting system for the theatre was installed at the time of the theatre's construction and covers foyer lighting, dimmable auditorium lighting and programmable specialist stage lighting. The system used traditional incandescent bulbs.

The system was now reaching the end of its life partly due to its age but also because it was becoming increasingly difficult to replace incandescent bulbs which were being phased out in favour of energy efficient LED systems.

### **3. Previous Decision of Council**

A Project Initiation Document for the replacement of the stage, auditorium and foyer lighting systems at an estimated cost of £[REDACTED] was approved at the September 2025 Community Development Committee. A subsequent report (circulated) written by specialist consultants Rider Levett Bucknall (RLB) had recommended that the scope of the lighting project be expanded to cover the totality of the theatre's lighting system, all of which was at the end of its expected lifespan.



#### 4. Outline Business Case and Preferred Option

An Outline Business Case (OBC) for the Theatre at the Mill's lighting system was circulated for Members' information. The OBC considered the evidence of need, value for money and the options for the lighting system along with the associated capital and recurring revenue costs.

The OBC identified the preferred option for the Theatre at the Mill's lighting system as option 4. This option proposed the replacement of the entire lighting system including stage, auditorium, foyer and ancillary lighting at a capital cost of £[REDACTED] including optimism bias, with an annual revenue consequence of £[REDACTED] in loan charges and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) and a reduction of £[REDACTED] in annual running costs. This represented a reduction of more than 70% in running costs compared to current levels as a result of replacing inefficient high-energy bulbs with low-energy, long lasting and environmentally friendly lights.

This option was proposed on the basis that it:

- Ensured continuity of theatre operations
- Delivered a high-quality experience for customers and producers
- Significantly reduced the theatre's environmental footprint
- Significantly reduced the theatre's operating costs (energy use and maintenance)

#### 5. Financial Position/Implication

The estimated cost of the preferred option was £[REDACTED] and would incur annual loan costs of £[REDACTED] over the estimated 20-year lifespan of the project. Operating costs were expected to reduce by approximately £[REDACTED] per annum as a result of the move to low energy lighting and reduced maintenance costs.

#### 6. Governance

Approval of the Stage 1 Outline Business Case for the Theatre at the Mill Lighting Project would progress the project to Stage 2 of the Council's capital programme which would include the appointment of an Integrated Consultancy Team (ICT) and the preparation of a full business case including procurement. The final business case would be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee to seek the investment decision allowing the appointment of the winning tenderer and contract management.

#### 7. Summary

The Theatre at The Mill had been operational since January 2010. The theatre lighting system needed to be replaced given its age, outdated technology, future maintenance challenges and opportunity for improved energy efficiency and technological developments. An Outline Business Case (OBC) for the proposed project had been developed with an estimated capital cost of £[REDACTED] and annual revenue savings of £[REDACTED].

Approval was sought from Members to progress the project to Stage 2 of the Council's Capital Programme, to commence and complete the final business case (including detailed design, planning and procurement). The approval included authorisation for the appointment of an Integrated Consultancy Team and other associated costs at an estimated cost of £[REDACTED].

Proposed by Councillor Cooper

Seconded by Councillor Lynch and agreed that

- (a) the outline Business Case including the preferred option for the Theatre at the Mill Lighting Project at a total estimated capital cost of £[REDACTED] be approved, and**
- (b) progress of the development project to Stage 2 of the Council's Capital Programme be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Simon Goldrick, Head of Arts, Culture, Tourism and Events*

### **7.3 IN CONFIDENCE CP/CP/193 RATHCOOLE COMMUNITY HUB CAPITAL PROJECT**

#### **1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the Outline Business Case for the Rathcoole Community Hub including the preferred option, and to seek Members' approval for the project to progress to Stage 2 of the Council's Capital Programme.**

#### **2. Introduction/Background**

The Dunanney Centre was established in 1999 and initially led, delivered and managed by the Rathcoole Community Churches Group. In 2018 it was agreed that the Council would take on ownership and operation of the building.

Venture International Ltd (Venture) were commissioned to independently develop a business case for a proposed investment in a community facility in Rathcoole. The original focus for the business case was on redevelopment options for the Dunanney Centre.

Based on initial analysis of activity in the Centre and consultation with a range of community and voluntary groups in the Rathcoole and wider area it was recognised that the Dunanney Centre did not offer the potential to meet these needs. It was agreed that given this, the business case should focus on development options of the Council-owned pavilion site.

#### **3. Previous Decision of Council**

The development of this project had been under consideration for a number of years and had been included at initiation stage within the Council's capital projects programme.

At the Community Planning Committee in February 2022 the outline business case for the development of a Community Hub building on the Pavilion site in Rathcoole and retention of the existing Dunannee Centre at an estimated cost of £[REDACTED] was approved with establishment of a Project Board to progress the project.

At the May 2024 Policy and Governance Committee, Members were advised that, based upon the constraints of affordability and requirement for prioritisation, a review of the Capital Programme and Capital Project Management Process had commenced for Members' future consideration. Venture NI were subsequently engaged to develop a revised Outline Business Case (OBC) for the project.

Outline plans for the development were shared with Members at the Capital Projects Corporate Workshop in November 2025.

At the Council meeting in January 2026 an update on the Council's Capital programme was noted.

#### 4. Outline Business Case and Preferred Option

The OBC updated by Venture NI was circulated for Members' information and was completed in November 2025.

The OBC considered the evidence of need, value for money and the options for the development of the pavilion site, along with the associated capital and recurring revenue costs.

The OBC identifies four options as follows:

- **Option 1:** Do nothing / Business as Usual
- **Option 2:** Refurbish current changing Pavilion building only; no community hub, no 3G pitch
- **Option 3:** Refurbish current changing Pavilion building with two pitches (grass x1; 3G x1) and changing facilities; no community hub
- **Option 4:** Develop current Pavilion building as a community hub with grass pitch x 2 and changing facilities

The four options were considered but only option 4 met the project objectives. Option 4 was identified as the preferred option at OBC stage on the basis that it:

- Met community needs for a hub facility in the estate to provide family and community services
- Offered best opportunity to address the spatial constraints identified with the Dunannee centre located opposite the pavilion
- Offered income generating potential over the longer term through hire of space in the community hub
- Provided a multi-purpose community space in a densely population area of deprivation
- Enhanced existing sporting provision through improved ancillary facilities
- Provided opportunity for partnership across a range of service areas

- Aligned with a range of inclusion, health and wellbeing strategies at local and regional level

The estimated cost of the preferred option was £[REDACTED].

Officers had identified an additional Option 5 not considered within the enclosed OBC which would be to develop current pavilion as a community hub with grass pitch x 1, 3G pitch x 1 and changing facilities. This option would cost an estimated £[REDACTED].

The development of an additional 3G pitch was not recommended, having been considered in the context of both borough-wide and local provision.

An updated Playing Pitch Assessment was completed by Strategic Leisure Limited (SLL) in August 2023, and was circulated, building on the previous 2021 assessment. This assessment considered football, rugby, hockey and GAA provision across the Borough.

The OBC acknowledged existing and planned provision, including Abbey Community College (completed April 2026, with pavilion completion due November 2026), Valley Leisure Centre and the Cloughan 3G pitch in Ballyclare, which had secured planning permission.

Since completion of the OBC, the Education Authority had also confirmed investment in a 3G pitch at Ballyclare Secondary School. This presented potential for a community access arrangement similar to that agreed at Abbey Community College.

In addition, proposed training pitches at Mossley remained subject to external funding support, including potential investment through the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and/or the Northern Ireland Football Fund (TNIFF), and would provide comparable provision to the training pitch developed at Monkstown in May 2024.

These developments clearly illustrated how 3G provision had changed across the Borough, and in the Rathcoole locality, in recent years and they had informed the case for change for this OBC. The business case is of the view that while additional 3G provision at this location did not meet a robust and evidenced need, given the context of recent and planned 3G provision, there was a case for investment in ancillary facilities at the site to bring them up to a "good" standard and thus supporting greater participation by key target groups, including women, children and youth teams. Option 4 included refurbishment of the pavilion to the recommended standard to meet this required change.

## 5. Financial Position/Implication

The estimated cost of the preferred option was £[REDACTED] which would incur annual loan costs of £[REDACTED] over the estimated 25 years lifespan of the project. The average interest over 25 years was £[REDACTED] per annum. In addition, annual revenue costs of £[REDACTED] had been identified in terms of what it would cost to

operate the facility on an annual basis. This equated to an additional rate burden of approximately 0.42%.

Project capital cost assumptions included that:

- the capital cost schedule had been informed by independent architect and QS high level estimates updated at February 2026
- capital costs included an approx. 17% allowance for preliminaries and design development.
- NPSCs had been calculated for all options and assumed a 24-month construction period between 2026 (50% of the contract value) and 2027 (50% of the contract value)

## 6. Governance

Approval of the Stage 1 OBC for the Rathcoole Community Hub would progress the project to Stage 2 of the Council's capital programme which would include the appointment of an Integrated Consultancy Team (ICT) and the preparation of a full business case including planning and procurement. The final business case would be brought back to a future meeting of the committee to seek the investment decision allowing the appointment of the winning tenderer, contract management and construction.

## 7. Summary

Following completion of the OBC for the Rathcoole Community Hub the preferred option for the project had been identified as the development of a new community building adjacent to the existing pavilion along with the retention of the two grass football pitches and new changing facilities at an estimated cost of £[REDACTED]. The annual revenue consequence including capital financing was approximately £[REDACTED].

Approval was sought from Members to progress the project to Stage 2 of the Council's Capital Programme, to commence and complete the final business case including detailed design, planning and procurement. The approval included authorisation for the engagement of the already appointed ICT and other associated costs at an estimated £[REDACTED].

In response to a query from a Member, the Director of Community and Culture advised that she would request an update from Leisure colleagues on whether an application had been submitted for IFA Stadia funding.

Following Members' debate, it was

Proposed by Councillor Brady  
Seconded by Councillor Cooper that

- (a) the outline Business case to develop the current pavilion as a community hub with grass pitch x 1 3G pitch x 1 and changing facilities at a total estimated cost of £[REDACTED] be approved.

- (b) progress of the development project to Stage 2 of the Council's Capital Programme be approved.

An Amendment was then put to the meeting

Proposed by Councillor McGrann  
Seconded by Councillor Ní Chonghaile that

- (a) the outline Business Case including the preferred option for the development of a Community Hub on the Pavilion site in Rathcoole, with two grass pitches and changing facilities, and retention of the existing Dunanney Centre at a total estimated cost of £[REDACTED] be approved.
- (b) progress of the development project to Stage 2 of the Council's Capital Programme be approved.

On the Amendment being put to the meeting, 3 Members voted in favour, 7 against and 1 abstention.

The Amendment was declared not carried.

The Substantive proposal was then put to the meeting

Proposed by Councillor Brady  
Seconded by Councillor Cooper that

- (a) the outline Business case to develop the current pavilion as a community hub with grass pitch x 1 3G pitch x 1 and changing facilities at a total estimated cost of £[REDACTED] be approved.
- (b) progress of the development project to Stage 2 of the Council's Capital Programme be approved.

On the Substantive proposal being put to the meeting, 7 Members voted in favour, 3 against and 1 abstention.

The Substantive proposal was declared carried, and it was therefore agreed that

- (a) the outline Business case to develop the current pavilion as a community hub with grass pitch x 1 3G pitch x 1 and changing facilities at a total estimated cost of £[REDACTED] be approved.**
- (b) progress of the development project to Stage 2 of the Council's Capital Programme be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Ronan McKenna, Head of Community Development and Deaglan O'Hagan, Head of Leisure*

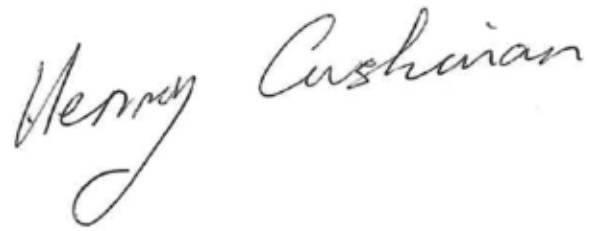
#### **PROPOSAL TO PROCEED OUT OF 'IN CONFIDENCE'**

Proposed by Councillor Cooper  
Seconded by Councillor Wilson 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 9.28 pm.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Henry Cushman".

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**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.***