



**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
COMMITTEE HELD IN THE CHAMBER, MOSSLEY MILL  
ON MONDAY 16 JUNE 2025 AT 6.30 PM**

<b>In the Chair</b>	:	Councillor S Wilson
<b>Committee Members (In person)</b>	:	Alderman – S Ross
	:	Councillors – M Brady, J Burbank, S Cosgrove, P Dunlop, J Gilmour, R Lynch, H Magill, A O'Lone and M Stewart
<b>Non-Committee Members (In person)</b>	:	Alderman – L Clarke
	:	Councillors - M Cooper, S Ward and B Webb
<b>Non-Committee Member (Remotely)</b>	:	Councillor – L O'Hagan
<b>Officers Present</b>	:	Chief Executive – R Baker Head of Community Development – R McKenna Head of Arts, Culture, Tourism & Events – S Goldrick Head of Corporate Affairs – J McIntyre Borough Lawyer and Head of Legal – P Casey ICT Change Officer – A Cole Member Services Manager – A Duffy

**CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

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

## 1 APOLOGIES

Alderman – J McGrath  
Councillors – T McGrann, V McWilliam and M Ní Chonghaile

## 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Item 3.5 – Councillors Brady and Gilmour  
Item 3.9 – Councillor Cooper  
Item 3.12 – Alderman Clarke and Councillors Dunlop and Wilson  
Item 3.13 – Councillors Dunlop and Wilson

## 3 ITEMS FOR DECISION

### 3.1 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 2025 as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.**

#### 2. Background

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 2025 Community Development Committee meeting.

#### 4. Working Group Meeting

Members were advised that the Ballyclare May Fair Working Group met on 13 May 2025 in Ballyclare Town Hall. The minutes of the meeting had been circulated.

Proposed by Councillor Stewart  
Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

**the minutes of the Ballyclare May Fair Working Group meeting of 13 May 2025 be approved as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.**

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

### 3.2 **CP/CP/224 CONSULTATION ON DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES 2025-26 BUDGET ALLOCATIONS**

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to obtain Members' instructions in relation to the Department for Communities (DfC) consultation on 2025-26 Budget allocations.**

#### 2. Introduction/Background

DfC recognised the important role that the voluntary and community Sector had in delivering support and services to people and local communities.

The Council managed a range of DfC funded contracts that financially supported a number of Voluntary and Community sector organisations. These included;

- Areas at Risk Programme
- Community Support Programme
- Neighbourhood Renewal Programme
- Social Supermarket

The Finance Minister announced the 2025-26 Budget for Northern Ireland on 03 April 2025.

#### 3. Previous Decision of Council

It was agreed at the April 2025 Community Development Committee that in the absence of the 2025-26 budget settlement, interim funding awards for DfC programmes to the end June 2025 would be retained at 2024/25 levels inclusive of the 5% uplift awarded in 2024/25.

#### 4. Key issues

Correspondence (circulated) had been received from DfC outlining 2025/26 initial budget allocations.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) consultation on The Department's initial budget 2025-26 allocations would launch on 15 May 2025 and run until 7 August 2025. The EQIA consultation and further information on this was available on the website;

<https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/dfc/eqia-on-dfc-budget-for-2025-26/>

#### 5. Financial implications

The NI Executive 2025-26 budget allocations resulted in the Department facing a resources funding gap of £98.6m (12.0%) and a £161.3m (38%) shortfall in Capital against bids submitted.

The DfC had indicated that Voluntary and Community sector groups receiving funding support from the Community Empowerment Division (CED) and the Voluntary and Community Division (VCD) would have an additional Resource funding of £2.8 million in 2025-26 to alleviate pressures facing the sector including the Real Living Wage, Employers National Insurance Contributions and other inflationary pressures.

The Council had in place an interim funding award until 30 June 2025 and were waiting on an update from DfC to advise on the funding position from 30 June 2025.

#### 6. Summary

DfC initial budget allocations for 2025/26 had been announced. An EQIA consultation on the initial budget was launched on 15 May 2025.

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

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour

Seconded by Councillor Brady and agreed that

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

*ACTION BY: Conor Cunning DEA Engagement Manager*

### **3.3 AC/GEN/001 AC/GEN/008 and CP/CD/201 FREE USE OF COMMUNITY AND ARTS AND CULTURE FACILITIES**

#### **1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for a change to Community Development Pricing Policy in relation to requests for free use of facilities.**

## 2. Introduction and Background

Both services were responsible for the management and operation of venues, facilities and spaces across the Borough and a Pricing Policy outlined the fees and charges which were applied to such spaces. The pricing schedule included both standard fees and charges as well as reduced community fees and charges, which applied to the Community and Voluntary Sector. These fees and charges were approved annually by the Committee.

The current policy included provision for the Head of Service to approve free use requests which were made from various groups as follows:

*Should requests for free use be made, each Head of Service could consider as follows:*

- *For an event or activity which did not have an admission fee / tickets sold, or a fund-raising purpose, requests could be considered only from community or charitable organisations based in or operating in the Borough which could be shown to contribute to the Corporate Plan.*
- *For an event or activity which had an admission charge and/or fundraising purpose but was not-for-profit, requests could be considered only from individuals (fundraising for a charity), community or charitable organisations based in or operating in the Borough, who could be shown to contribute to the Corporate Plan – with a maximum discount of 75% available for consideration.*

## 3. Previous Decision of the Council

The policy was first approved by this Committee in September 2017. It had been reviewed regularly since this time and was last updated on 1 July 2022.

Any requests for free use that had been outside the scope of the Policy clause above had been reported to the Committee for consideration on an ongoing basis.

A request for monthly free use of the Town Hall Ballyclare and the Eyre Studio in Antrim by the RNID was the most recent such example with this request approved by the Committee in October 2024. Prior to this a request from the North of Ireland History Society for free use of a room in Mossley Mill on a monthly basis was not approved by the Committee in June 2024.

## 4. Proposed Pricing Policy Amendment

Given that all facility use would incur costs of resourcing in both real terms and in kind, it was proposed to update the Community Development Pricing Policy so that Officers no longer approved any such requests, which would instead require the approval of Members through Committee.

The updated Policy (circulated) had been screened at the time of its creation in 2017 and it was determined that it did not require a fuller equality analysis in the form of an impact assessment.

It was considered that this update to the Policy was minor and therefore there was still no requirement to carry out an equality impact assessment.

## 5. Finance

The current Community and Arts and Culture schedule of charges provided two tiers of pricing with discounted community rates available for the Community and Voluntary Sector.

All use of Council facilities incurred real and in-kind resource costs such as staffing, cleaning, energy and others. Given the ongoing approach to financial management, which required delivery of services within the annual business plan and approved budgets, it was proposed to bring all future requests for free use to the Committee for Members' consideration.

## 6. Governance

The Community Development Pricing Policy outlined the fees and charges applied in relation to all facilities operated and managed by this Service. The Policy was reviewed annually, and any charges required the approval of Elected Members through the Community Development Committee. Fees and charges were also reviewed annually.

## 7. Summary

The Community Development Pricing Policy, last updated in July 2022, had provision for Officers to consider requests for free use of facilities. Requests outside of the Policy criteria were reported to the Community Development Committee for consideration. It was proposed to update the Policy, effective from 1 July 2025, so that all requests for free use from this time were reported to the Community Development Committee for consideration.

Proposed by Councillor Burbank

Seconded by Councillor Dunlop and agreed that

**the updated Community Development Pricing Policy be approved and implemented from 1 September 2025.**

*ACTION BY: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Development*

### **3.4 CP/CD/476 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANT AID PROGRAMME SMALL GRANTS FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS 2025/26**

#### **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.

Groups who applied for a small grant were not permitted to apply for any other funding available under the wider Community Development Grant Aid Programme during the course of the 2025/26 financial year.

In December 2019 Members agreed that from 1 April 2020 all Small Grants be 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 2025/26 Community Development Small Grant Aid Programme was £15,000 in the 2025/26 Community Development budgets.

Between March and May 2025, 9 applications were received and assessed by Officers, with 8 applications totalling £6,920.95 recommended for approval, details of which were circulated.

## 5. Summary

It was proposed to award 8 Small Grants to the successful applicants as outlined.

Community Development Small Grants would remain open as a rolling programme with applications being reported to the Community Development Committee on a quarterly basis.

Proposed by Councillor Lynch

Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

**the 8 Small Grant applications requesting a total of £6,920.95 be approved.**

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

### 3.5 CP/CP/113 BARNARDO'S - THE THRIVE PROJECT

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval to revise the current governance arrangements and Council representation on the THRIVE Project Board.**

#### 1. Introduction

The THRIVE Project was a collaboration of local parents, schools, community and voluntary organisations and statutory agencies working together to help children and young people in Macedon and Threemilewater DEA's achieve their full potential and have the best start in life.

Elected Members from both the Macedon DEA and the Threemilewater DEA were nominated to serve on the THRIVE Board at the Annual Council Meeting on 2 June 2025 with Cllr Gilmour and Cllr Brady nominated for their respective DEA's.

#### 2. Previous Decision of Council

It was agreed at the May 2025 Community Development Committee, to review the current governance arrangements in respect of Members' participation on the THRIVE Project Board.

#### 3. Financial Position

It was agreed at the April 2025 Community Development Committee to provide £25,000 in financial assistance to THRIVE for 2025/26 subject to a quarterly performance report being provided.

#### 4. Governance

The THRIVE Project Board was made up of Officers from other relevant community planning partner organisations including the Northern Health and Social Care Trust, the Department of Education, the Department of Justice and the Public Health Agency.

Officers had reviewed the current governance arrangements in respect of Elected Members' participation on the THRIVE Project Board. Given the operational nature of the Project Board, it was recommended that the Head of Community Development replaced the Elected Members currently serving on the THRIVE Project Board with immediate effect.

Given the remit of this Officer their participation on the Board would strengthen the links between THRIVE and the various relevant areas of work such as Areas at Risk and Neighbourhood Renewal.

Officers would continue to work with the THRIVE Project Board and Community Planning partners to manage the performance of the Project.



Quarterly performance reports would continue to be reported to the Community Development Committee.

## 5. Summary

Following a governance review of the Council's representation on the THRiVE Project Board, it was proposed that the Head of Community Development replace the Elected Members currently serving on the THRiVE Project Board with immediate effect.

This change reflected the operational focus of the Board and would ensure consistency with other community planning partner's participation on the Project Board.

In response to a Member's query regarding the recommendation, the Head of Community Development confirmed that a senior officer's presence was suggested to support operational participation and governance. Councillor Gilmour, having served on the project board, echoed this view and noted that there were typically three or four meetings per year, each lasting between 60 and 90 minutes each.

Proposed by Councillor Lynch

Seconded by Alderman Ross and agreed that

**the Head of Community Development replace the Elected Members nominated to serve on the THRiVE Project Board from both the Macedon DEA and the Threemilewater DEA with immediate effect.**

*ACTION BY: Will McDowell, DEA Engagement Coordinator*

## 3.6 **AC/GEN/111 CULTURAL GRANT AID AND BURSARIES PROGRAMME 2025-2026**

### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval to award 32 Irish language bursaries at a total cost of £8,000 from the Cultural Grant Aid and Bursaries Programme.**

### 2. Introduction/Background

The aim of the Cultural Grant Aid and Bursaries Programme was to provide support to constituted groups and individuals in the Borough to participate in, develop and promote cultural activities and projects. Funding was available for projects that develop artistic talent and knowledge, showcase the arts and promote participation and inclusion, celebrate shared heritage and contribute to the understanding of minority languages and cultural diversity.

As part of the Programme, ten bursaries of £250 are available for individuals to contribute to costs associated with attending Irish language summer schools.

### 3. Previous Decision of Council

The delivery of the Cultural Grant Aid and Bursaries Programme for 2025, including the Irish language bursaries with a budget of £2,500, was approved at the February 2025 Community Development Committee.

### 4. Irish Language Bursary Awards 2025

The Irish language bursary scheme opened for online applications on 1 April 2025 and closed on 26 May 2025.

Applicants were required to meet the following criteria:

- Be a resident of the Borough
- Have parental/guardian permission to attend if under 18
- Be in post-primary education
- Be registered to attend an Irish language course in Summer 2025
- Not to have received Council funding in the previous two years.

Members were advised that 43 applications were received with 32 meeting the criteria above.

### 5. Assessment

Irish language bursaries were assessed on a pass/fail basis. Given the high number of applications received for these bursaries, it was proposed to fund all eligible applications and review the assessment criteria and budget for future years.

Details of the proposed successful applicants were circulated.

### 6. Finance

The Cultural Grant Aid and Bursaries Programme budget for 2025/26 was £23,000, with £1,000 of grant aid previously approved by the Committee. If the 32 Irish language bursaries were approved, the remaining budget would be £14,000. For comparison, the total spend against this budget in 2024/25 was £14,293.

### 7. Governance

In order to receive the bursary, successful recipients would be required to provide proof of payment for attendance at the Irish language school.

### 8. Summary

It was proposed to fund all 32 eligible applicants for Irish language bursaries at a cost of £8,000, the provision for which existed in the Cultural Grant Aid and Bursaries Programme.

Proposed by Councillor O'Lone

Seconded by Councillor Burbank and agreed that

**all 32 eligible applications for Irish language bursaries be funded at a total cost of £8,000.**

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

### **3.7 CP/CD/479 SENIORS' CHRISTMAS EVENT GRANT 2025**

#### **1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval in relation to modifications to the Seniors Christmas Event Grant programme 2025.**

#### **2. Background**

As part of its Community Development Grant Aid Programme the Council operated a Seniors Christmas Event Grant to support local seniors' activities taking place in the Borough over the Christmas period. This may include the provision of Christmas Dinners, Tea Dances or other Christmas Celebration Events. Applications were assessed in an eligibility pass/fail format with a maximum grant award of £500.

#### **3. Previous Decisions of Council**

It was approved at the October 2019 Community Planning and Regeneration Committee, that the annual opportunity for Senior Citizens Groups in Antrim to apply for funding to run Christmas events be extended to fund legacy Newtownabbey Senior Citizens Groups.

Modifications to the Community Development Directorate grant funding programmes, including the Seniors Christmas Event Grant, were approved at the February 2025 Community Development Committee.

It had been agreed in response to a Member's query that a further report would be brought back to the Community Development Committee prior to the opening of the Seniors Christmas Event Grant programme.

#### **4. Seniors' Christmas Event Grant Funding Programme Proposal**

The Seniors Christmas Event Grant programme had been reviewed and some modifications were proposed for Members' consideration as follows:

<b>COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT</b>				
<b>Grant Programme</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Budget 2025/26</b>	<b>Proposed Change</b>	<b>Reason for Change</b>
Seniors' Christmas Event Grant	To support local senior's activities taking place in the Borough over the Christmas period. This may include the provision of Christmas Dinners	£55,000	Inclusion of Churches and Friends of folds as eligible applicants	Seniors Christmas Events, are often delivered by groups best placed in the community that are broader than traditional Community

	Tea Dances or other Christmas Celebration Events.			Development groups.
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## 5. Financial Implication

The total budget for the 2025/26 Senior Christmas Event Grant was £55,000 as approved in the 2025/26 Community Development budgets.

The proposed changes to the programme would have no impact upon the budget allocation.

## 6. Governance

Responsibility for the design and delivery of the Community Development grant funding programmes remained with the Community Development Directorate. The Grant Funding Unit would support relevant Officers in relation to the significant administration required to operate all of the grant funding programmes.

Any new grant funding programmes or future modifications to existing grant funding programmes would continue to be reported to the Community Development Committee for approval. Application calls and proposed funding awards would also continue to be reported to the Committee for approval.

The proposed changes to the Seniors Christmas Event Grant had been recommended in order to improve arrangements for the benefit of applicants. The Seniors Christmas Event Grant guidance document had been revised and circulated for Members' information.

A Section 75 Equality Screening exercise, Rural Proofing and Data Processing Impact Assessment had been carried out in relation to the Grant Funding Policy.

The Seniors Christmas Event Grant would open for applications on 15 July 2025 with the closing date for receipt of completed applications being Wednesday 12 August 2025.

## 7. Summary

The Seniors Christmas Event Grant had been reviewed. It was proposed that applications from community organisations, churches and friends of fold organisations were eligible with grant guidance notes amended to include such groups.

The programmes would open for applications on 15 July 2025 and close on 12 August 2025.

A Member sought clarification on whether the grant could be applied to services that do not operate within a physical venue, referencing a Meals on

Wheels type initiative that delivers food to individuals unable to leave their homes. Noting that similar groups had operated this in the past using their own funds and asked whether discretion was built into the grant mechanism to support such services. The Head of Community Development clarified the eligibility criteria and confirmed that non-venue-based community food services could qualify under the grant, subject to compliance with the grant terms and conditions and audit requirements.

In response to a Member's query regarding consideration of the inclusion of "Friends of Fold" organisations with folds being commercial organisations whereby residents make contributions towards social activity, the Head of Community Development confirmed that eligible organisations must be not-for-profit.

He confirmed they must meet the necessary constitutional and memorandum governance requirements, assuring that all generated income relating to the project must be recorded as part of the normal grant vouching procedures. The issue of "Friends of Fold" organisations which operate similarly to parent-teacher associations was acknowledged and will be reviewed as part of the annual grants review.

Proposed by Councillor Dunlop  
Seconded by Councillor Lynch and agreed that

**the proposed modifications to the Seniors' Christmas Event Grant guidance notes for 2025 be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Stef Buchanan, Community Development Manager*

### **3.8 COMD/CD/002 PEACEPLUS PROGRAMME**

#### **1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report was to update Members regarding the elements of the PEACEPLUS Action Plan that were due to be delivered by the Community Development Section over the next three years including the Project Plan.**

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

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 was 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.

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 Council

It had been 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.

### 4. Key Issues

Within the Local Community Action Plan Programme 4, 'Our Shared Borough' was to be delivered by the Community Development Section. A copy of the Delivery Plan had been circulated for Members' information.

This **Programme would consist of a number of individual programmes** designed to empower local communities through a range of initiatives aimed at enhancing and increasing capacity, strengthening local leadership, and supporting sustainable development.

The main objectives of the programmes were:

- To identify, grow, and nurture groups whether they were new, existing, or those who were ready to progress into the first stages of becoming a social enterprise, by helping and supporting groups to be more self-sustaining.
- To support established groups through a wide variety of education and learning. A community and voluntary sector capacity building programme would be designed to support emerging and new community groups, develop and grow existing community groups to become active and sustainable, and nurture groups who aimed to expand and establish themselves as service providers.
- To deliver a mentoring programme which would be developed through the use of more established and experienced individuals to build capacity through learning and also improve the ability of groups and organisations to form partnerships and collaborations at all levels.

The individual Programmes included:

- **“We Connect” a Digital Governance Resource & Support Hub:** Establishing a centralized platform for online resources and community-led digital governance and support.
- **Community ‘Grant Finder’ Platform:** A digital tool connecting communities to a diverse range of external funding opportunities for local projects.

- **Community Quality Assurance Accreditation Scheme:** Implementing standards and measures to ensure the ongoing effectiveness and impact of community development within the Borough.
- **Development of 7 x DEA Community Development Locality Plans:** Tailored plans addressing unique needs and community development priorities within the seven DEA's
- **Community Facilities Management:** Supporting and strengthening the management and sustainability of community facilities.
- **“Ignite and Inspire” Programme:** Offering support to local community/voluntary groups participating in the Bonfire Management Programme by enhancing their capacity to administer, plan, deliver and manage safe, inclusive and well organised cultural celebration events.
- **Bespoke Community Capacity Building Programme to include:**
  - **Community Ask:** An initiative offering support to Community/Voluntary Groups through consultancy, training and other forms of assistance.
  - **Community Champions Project:** Mentoring project for those with an interest in community development, fostering skills development and employment.
  - **Diploma in Community Development Practice:** Providing formal education and training to local leaders and activists in community development.
- **Creation of a Borough wide Community Forum:** A platform for dialogue, idea-sharing, and problem-solving among community representatives.
- **Development of a Community Support Plan:** Creating a comprehensive, strategic plan to enhance community development practises, fostering community capacity, growth and sustainability.

The outputs of this programme were anticipated to be as follows:

- Minimum of 600 participants to take part in the programme.
- Delivery of a programme that provided a minimum of 24 hours of meaningful contact on a cross-community basis.
- Creation and delivery of a number of community development programmes, including digital tools, to support local community and voluntary organisations further support themselves and their local communities.
- Creation of a local Community Support Plan and 7 x DEA Local Community Development Locality Plans.
- Creation of a Borough wide Community Forum

The next steps in the process would be:

- Procurements would be led by the Council's Procurement Manager in line with the Council's Financial Regulations and SEUPB PEACEPLUS Programme Rules. Opportunities would be advertised and/or signposted

on eSourcingNI, eTendersNI and eTendersIE to attract a wide pool of potential suppliers.

- Supplier engagement events would be held by the PEACEPLUS Team in late August/early September 2025 to raise awareness of opportunities and encourage collaboration among interested delivery agents in supporting programme delivery.
- Establishment of a Service Level Agreement between the PEACEPLUS Partnership and the Community Development section.
- Establishment of monthly departmental working groups; and
- Recruitment of 0.5 FTE temporary programme staff member for 28 months.

#### 5. Financial Implication

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

There was no additional financial contribution required from Council.

#### 6. Governance

The 'Our Shared Borough' programme elements would be 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.

#### 7. Summary

The Community Development Directorate would lead on the delivery of Programme 4: 'Our Shared Borough' of the Antrim and Newtownabbey PEACEPLUS Local Community Action Plan, with a total budget of €512,506.80 (£445,658.09). An SLA would be established with the PEACEPLUS Partnership and regular performance updates would be submitted to the PEACEPLUS Partnership and Community Development Committee.

Proposed by Councillor Dunlop

Seconded by Councillor Lynch and agreed that

**(a) The update on PEACEPLUS Programme 4: 'Our Shared Borough' be noted;**

**(b) The delivery of the programme through a Service Level Agreement with the PEACEPLUS Partnership be approved;**



- (c) The recruitment of 0.5 FTE temporary staff member for 28 months to support the delivery of the programme with costs included within the budget.**

*ACTION BY: Jonathan Henderson, Community Services Co-ordinator and Stef Buchanan, Community Development Manager*

*Having declared an Interest in Item 3.9 Councillor Cooper left the Chamber.*

### **3.9 CP/CD/201 COMMUNITY FACILITIES – TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF HIRE**

#### **1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for updated Community Facility terms and conditions of hire including corresponding updates to Service Management Agreements for community facilities operated by community organisations.**

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

There were 8 community facilities 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
- Dunanney Centre
- Lilian Bland Pavillion

In addition, there were three Council owned community facilities currently operated under Service Management Agreements (SMA) with community organisations running the facilities in partnership with the Council as follows:

- Monkstown Jubilee Centre, operated by Monkstown Community Association
- The Sovereign Complex, operated by Rathfern Community Regeneration Group Ltd
- NI Centenary Community Centre Ballyduff, operated by Ballyduff Community Redevelopment Group

Community facilities were available for hire by individuals, groups and organisations for a diverse range of activities such childcare, birthday parties, meetings, sport and social activities.

There was a schedule of charges for hire of facilities which included two-tier pricing with a standard hire charge and discounted community hire charge applied to all space available for hire. For all bookings, terms and conditions of hire were applied, which outlined the obligations of the Council and the hirer.

The facilities could be booked in person, over the telephone and online. Anyone making a booking was required to complete a booking form and as part of this agree to the relevant terms and conditions which applied to the particular facility being booked.

For the three community facilities operated by community organisations their Service Management Agreements set out the conditions with which the Council and the group had agreed to in relation to the operation of these facilities.

### 3. Previous Decision of Council

The updated facility terms and conditions of hire for all facilities managed and operated by the Community Development Directorate had been approved at the Community Development Committee in September 2024.

The current Service Management Agreements in place were approved as follows:

At the December 2024 Community Development Committee it was agreed that the Service Management Agreement for Ballyduff Community Redevelopment Group to operate The Northern Ireland Centenary Community Centre Ballyduff to 31 March 2028, with an annual support grant of £15,000. It was further agreed that the Service Management Agreement for Monkstown Community Association to operate Monkstown Jubilee Centre to 31 March 2028 with an annual support grant of £45,000. It was also further agreed that the Service Management Agreement for Rathfern Community Regeneration Group Ltd to operate The Sovereign Complex to 31 March 2028 with an annual support grant of £45,000.

### 4. Key issues

Since approval of both the terms and conditions of hire and the Service Management Agreements, a number of updates had been identified in relation to:

- Childcare activities
- Equipment storage arrangements
- Third party insurance and
- Licensing requirements for copyrighted content.

The following specific updates had been made to the terms and conditions of hire (and Service Management Agreements where relevant):

- the requirement that any childcare providers operating within community facilities were registered with the appropriate regulatory body (Northern Health and Social Care Trust) and complied with the Councils safeguarding policies and procedures.
- the requirement that permission be sought for any storage of equipment on Council operated community facilities and that groups do so at their own risk with their own insurance cover in place.

- the requirement that any third party engaged by a group or individual provided their own insurance - the level of which must be appropriate for the risk of the given activity (it should be noted that Bouncy Castle/Inflatable providers must have £10million in public liability cover).
- the requirement for Groups to comply with any licencing requirements for showing of copyrighted motion picture content.

Updated booking terms and conditions of hire were circulated for Members' information. Relevant updates, where applicable, had been made to the three Service Management Agreements (circulated).

## 5. Governance and Finance

The review of facility terms and conditions of hire provided improved clarity for customers hiring the various Council venues managed and operated by the Community Development Section and reduced any risk to the Council from potential improper use of these facilities.

There were no costs or financial implications associated with this exercise and Facility Pricing Schedules would continue to be reviewed on an annual basis and reported to Committee for Members' approval.

The updated Service Management Agreements now reflected the minimum legislative requirements for the delivery of childcare provision at these facilities and ensured there was no risk to the Council from the delivery of such activity on Council owned premises.

## 6. Summary

The Community Development Section managed and operated a wide range of facilities, which were available for hire by individuals and groups. All facility bookings were subject to specific terms and conditions of hire which set out Council and hirers obligations.

These terms and conditions of hire had been updated in relation to a number of issues to ensure that they remained current, robust and appropriate. Any individual or group booking any of the facilities would be required to agree to the relevant facility terms and conditions. Service Management Agreements for Community organisations operating community facilities had also been updated in relation to childcare provision at these facilities.

It was proposed that revised terms and conditions of hire and updated management agreements apply from 1 July 2025.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour

Seconded by Councillor Cosgrove and agreed that

**(a) the updated facility terms and conditions of hire for all community facilities managed and operated by the Community Development Section be approved and applied from 1 July 2025.**

- (b) the updated Service Management Agreements for the operation of Monkstown Jubilee Centre, The Sovereign Complex, and the NI Centenary Community Centre Ballyduff, be approved and applied from 1 July 2025**

*ACTION BY: Paul Townsend, Community Facilities Coordinator*

*Councillor Cooper returned to the Chamber during Item 3.10.*

### **3.10 CP/CF/001 COMMUNITY FACILITIES SCHEDULE OF CHARGES 2025/26**

#### **1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval in relation to the updated schedule of charges for the hire of facilities managed by the Community Development Section in 2025/2026.**

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

A review of charges for facilities managed by the Community Development Section was carried out annually.

The Schedule of charges included both a standard rate and discounted community rates, for voluntary, community and charitable organisations operating within the Council area.

Groups were required to evidence their eligible status as part of the booking process.

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

The current schedule of charges was approved at the January 2025 Community Development Committee.

It was approved that all 'out of hours' booking requests be charged at the standard rate and that the applicant would be charged for staffing costs, at £15 p/h as well as for additional furniture hire and transport costs, if applicable.

#### **4. Key Issues**

##### **Community Centre Out of Hours Bookings**

Out of hours bookings related to one-off event bookings that took place outside the core opening hours of Community Facilities. These tended to be annual events and often required additional staffing as the organisers may request to sell/serve alcohol or have a large attendance.

In recent months a number of requests had been received which had been tested under the new out of hours schedule of charges. It had been

evidenced that a review of the approach was required and in particular there was a need to clarify what 'out of hours' meant. Officers had reviewed current approved arrangements, and it was proposed to make the following changes:

- Core hours for all facilities was to be defined as Monday to Friday 9am – 10pm and 9am – 6pm at weekends.
- Any booking requests outside of the core hours would be considered 'Out of Hours' and charged at the standard rate.
- These rates would include provision of one member of staff. If the nature of the out of hours event required additional staff, they would be charged at £15 p/h.

### **Community Spaces**

A number of new areas were introduced to the schedule of charges at Community Facilities, as follows;

- Neillsbrook Community Centre Lower Car Park - £100 per day
- Muckamore Community Centre - Grass Field - £100 per day

Members were advised that for both areas daily use of the spaces for recreational play by Community Centre users or keyholders would continue to be accommodated free of charge, subject to adequate risk assessments being in place.

It was proposed that if any group wished to book the space for commercial activity, then they can do so at a cost of £50 per day.

The proposed updated schedule of charges for 2025/2026 was circulated for Members' information.

### **5. Financial Position**

An income target of £198,209 for Community Facility hire and tenancy agreement charges had been included in the 2025-26 revenue budgets.

It was anticipated the proposed changes would have no significant impact on 2025-26 projected income targets.

### **6. Summary**

The Schedule of Charges for hiring facilities managed by the Community Development Section was updated and approved by the Community Development Committee at the start of each calendar year.

Additional charges introduced this year, including 'out of hours' bookings fees, had been reviewed and new charges had been proposed following testing of this approach to address unintended issues of affordability for some booking requests.

In response to a Member's query that consideration be given to a Community rate for 3G sports pitches at community centres, during school holidays, the Chief Executive proposed that a report be brought to Full Council in June to review MUGA and 3G facility pricing to allow a decision to be made prior to school holidays.

Additionally, the Member questioned whether the £50 stage rental fee applied to both transporting the stage or set up within the same facility. The Head of Community Development confirmed the stage rental and set up is applicable to bookings that request such a set up, but Officers would continue to work with Centre tenants to ensure requests for use of the stage for events such as the Muckamore pre-school annual graduation ceremony were facilitated through normal Centre operations.

Proposed by Councillor Dunlop

Seconded by Councillor Lynch and agreed that

**A report be brought to Full Council in June to review MUGA and 3G facility pricing linked to Community Centres.**

*ACTION BY: Paul Townsend, Community Facilities Coordinator*

### **3.11 CP/CD/343 & CP/CF/006 THE GLOBE AFTERSCHOOL CLUB AND BALLYDUFF COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT GROUP OUTDOOR PLAY EQUIPMENT REQUESTS**

#### **1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for Globe Afterschool Club and Ballyduff Community Redevelopment Group to install outdoor play equipment on Council land at Stiles Community Centre and the Northern Ireland Centenary Community Centre Ballyduff.**

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

Members were reminded that Globe Afterschool Club was a registered Afterschools Provider that had been operating from Stiles Community Centre for over 23 years. They currently book the Centre Monday-Friday during the academic year and also delivered a summer scheme during July and August.

The Globe Afterschool Club recently won the Family First award for best Afterschool Provider in Northern Ireland, a prestigious award that was recognised recently with a Mayoral visit.

Globe Afterschool Club had requested permission to install outdoor play equipment on land owned by the Council at the front of the Centre.

A separate request had been received from Ballyduff Community Redevelopment Group who had been operating the Northern Ireland Centenary Community Centre Ballyduff under a Service Management Agreement with the Council since 1 January 2024.

Ballyduff Community Redevelopment Group requested permission to install outdoor play equipment on land owned by Council at the rear of the Centre.

### 3. Previous Decision of Council

A similar request for development of an outdoor garden had been made by Ballyduff Community Redevelopment Group to use Council land adjacent to Ballyduff Community Centre. This had been approved at the Council meeting on 30 August 2022 and the group granted a licence for this project.

### 4. Key Issues

A request had been received from Globe Afterschool Club for the installation of outdoor play equipment on land owned by Council at the front of the Centre. An aerial map of the Stiles Community Centre land, with the outdoor play area highlighted was circulated.

The proposed project included a climbing frame adventure playset, which would be custom made and installed by a professional climbing frame provider. There were no issues of displacement arising from this proposed project.

A separate request had been received from Ballyduff Community Redevelopment Group who had been operating the Northern Ireland Centenary Community Centre Ballyduff under a Service Management Agreement with the Council since 1 January 2024.

The group was seeking permission to install outdoor play equipment within the grounds of the Community Centre. The group's funder, Bryson, currently owned a small wooden play unit which was being replaced at another location and had offered this to the group for installation.

It was proposed that the play unit would be situated within the rear garden area of the Centre enclosed by the perimeter fence. An aerial map of the Northern Ireland Centenary Community Centre Ballyduff land, with the outdoor play area highlighted was circulated.

The group also had received an offer from NIHE for installation of safety surface matting around the play unit. The play unit would be made available to Centre users. There were no issues of displacement arising from the proposed project.

### 5. Financial Implication

Globe Afterschool's Club have advised that they would fund the project and that there would be no cost to the Council.

Ballyduff Community Redevelopment Group's funder, Bryson would provide the equipment to the Group at no cost and there would be no cost to the Council.

## 6. Governance

It was proposed that the respective groups would be responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the outdoor areas and that an agreement be granted by the Council to both the Globe Afterschool's Club and Ballyduff Community Redevelopment Group to permit these developments and manage the use, maintenance, insurance and associated risk assessments of the outdoor play equipment.

## 7. Summary

Requests had been received from Globe Afterschool's Club and Ballyduff Community Redevelopment Group for the development of outdoor play areas on land owned by the Council at the Stiles Community Centre and the Northern Ireland Centenary Community Centre Ballyduff, respectively.

There would be no cost to the Council and both groups had agreed to be responsible for the ongoing management, maintenance and insurance of the equipment.

It was proposed that both requests be approved, and a written agreement be drafted by the Council. This would detail each group's responsibilities in terms of management, maintenance, insurance and risk assessments for the outdoor equipment.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour

Seconded by Councillor Lynch and agreed that

- (a) the proposed installation of outdoor play equipment by Globe Afterschool's Club at the Stiles Community Centre at no cost to the Council be approved and the group be granted an agreement for this project.**
- (b) the proposed installation of outdoor play equipment by Ballyduff Community Redevelopment Group at the Northern Ireland Centenary Community Centre Ballyduff at no cost to the Council be approved and the group be granted an agreement for this project.**
- (c) written agreements between the Council and both groups, outlining their responsibilities in relation to management, maintenance, insurance and risk for this equipment be developed and agreed.**

*ACTION BY: Paul Townsend, Community Facilities Coordinator*

*Having declared an Interest in Items 3.12 and 3.13, the Chairperson, Councillor Wilson left the Chamber and the Vice Chairperson, Councillor Brady took to the Chair.*

*Alderman Clarke declared an Interest in Item 3.12 at this point of the meeting and left the Chamber.*



*Having declared an Interest in Item 3.12, Councillor Dunlop also left the Chamber.*

### **3.12 COMD/CD/005 CAPITAL PREMISES AND EQUIPMENT GRANT FUND PROGRAMME 2025**

#### **1. Purpose**

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

#### **2. Background**

The Capital Premises and Equipment Grant Programme provided financial assistance to support groups within the Borough which 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.

The first call for applications to the 2025/26 Capital Premises and Equipment Grant Fund opened on Monday 7 April 2025 and closed on Monday 19 May 2025. 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 pass threshold of 60% applied to applications to the Programme and groups were not required to demonstrate match funding. Proposed awards were also subject to the receipt of all relevant supporting documentation, or the offer of funding would be withdrawn.

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

The Capital Premises and Equipment Grant Fund had been 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 Community Development Committee in September 2024, it was agreed to fund 1 Capital Premises and 8 Equipment Grant awards to the successful applicants totalling £61,675.08.

At the February 2025 Community Development Committee delivery of the 2025/26 Capital Premises and Equipment Grant Fund Programme was approved.

#### **4. Capital Premises and Equipment Grant Programme**

Details of this funding programme as reported to the February Community Development Committee were outlined below:

## **Capital Premises Grant Fund**

The aim of this programme would be to support long established community organisations based in the Borough and providing community support to update and enhance their facilities.

It was proposed that organisations may apply for up to £15,000 for eligible projects which might include refurbishment of existing facilities and external ground enhancements.

## **Equipment Grant Fund**

The aim of this programme was to support long established community organisations based in the Borough and providing community support to update and purchase essential equipment.

It was proposed that organisations may apply for up to £5,000 for equipment that they could demonstrate would deliver benefit to their community activity.

Principles of these new grant funding programmes would include:

- Grants would only be awarded to constituted groups based in the Borough and operational for at least ten years.
- All applicants must provide robust information on grant purposes.
- Applications must be accompanied by core supporting documentation including (but not limited to) copies of the organisation's constitution, the organisation's most recent accounts, confirmation of insurance and the organisation's safeguarding policy (if relevant).
- All applications would be scored by Officers against defined criteria relevant to the scheme and recommendations presented to the Community Development Committee.
- Evidence of match funding would not be an essential requirement for grant aid however where an organisation could demonstrate match funding, this would be positively reflected in the scoring process.
- Awards would be made up to 100% of the funding requested (subject to consideration of the financial viability of the proposed project as part of the assessment process), up to a maximum of the specific grant category ceiling.
- All awards would be 100% vouched.
- Groups applying must be able to demonstrate clear financial need.
- Payment would be 50% in advance upon receipt of the signed acceptance form and 50% upon satisfactory vouching of the first payment.
- Risk assessments and insurances must be in place, where relevant, for all planned activities before payments are issued.
- Retrospective funding would not be considered.
- Council support must be acknowledged in all publicity material. The Council logo must be used on all material relating to the funding awards.
- Applicants must participate in post event evaluations if required. Failure to do so may result in awards having to be re-paid.

## 5. Financial Implication

The total budget available for the Capital Premises and Equipment Grant Fund for 2025/26 was £120,000 with an indicative allocation of £45,000 for premises and £75,000 for equipment.

A total of 25 applications were received and assessed by a panel of Officers with 13 applications (2 Capital Premises and 11 Equipment) totalling £83,213.44 achieving the required 60% pass threshold, details of which were circulated.

## 6. Summary

The Capital Premises and Equipment Grant Programme approved by the Community Development Committee in February 2025 opened for applications on 7 April 2025 and closed on the 19 May 2025. It was proposed to award 2 Capital Premises and 11 Equipment Grant awards to the successful applicants, who all met the criteria and achieved the required score to be successful, totalling £83,213.44 as outlined.

Members sought clarity on a second grant call, the Head of Community Development advised it was not intended to open a second grant call as the budget underspend incurred would be used to offset previous Community Development grant programmes that have been approved with overspends incurred this year. Members requested additional information on the financial position of all Directorate grant programmes.

The Chief Executive proposed to bring a report back to a future Committee meeting detailing a six-month financial position on all grant programmes expenditure.

Proposed by Alderman Ross

Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

- a) the 13 successful applications for funding under the Capital Premises and Equipment Grant Fund totalling £83,213.44 be approved and**
- b) that a report be brought back to a future Committee detailing a six-month financial position on all grant programmes expenditure.**

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

*Alderman Clarke and Councillor Dunlop returned to the Chamber.*

*Councillor Dunlop declared an Interest in Item 3.13 at this point of the meeting and he did not leave the Chamber.*

### 3.13 AC/GEN/085 COMMUNITY FESTIVAL FUND GRANT AID

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for a community festival grant award for 2025/2026.**

#### 2. Background

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

A community festival had been 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 represented. 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 the Council

It had been approved at the Community Development Committee in November 2024 to open a one-year call for community festival funding for 2025/2026. This call opened on 2 December 2024 and closed on 6 January 2025.

At the Community Development Committee in March 2025 three successful community festival applications for funding totalling £17,750 were approved. This included approval to award The Royal Black District Chapter £5,000 towards the delivery of its festival in 2025 which was being held in Antrim in August. It was reported to this meeting that previous multi year approvals resulted in funding commitments of £115,570.

#### 4. Review of Award

As part of this application process applicants could apply for up to a maximum of £5,000 if their festival would attract less than 5,000 attendees, however, they were eligible to apply for up to £10,000 if their event was going to attract in excess of 5,000 attendees.

In its original application for funding submitted by the 6 January 2025 deadline The Royal Black District Chapter indicated that they anticipated 6,000 attendees to their festival but applied only for £5,000 in funding support, which was approved at the March 2025 Committee.

Representatives of the Royal Black District Chapter had contacted Officers requesting a review of their funding award on the basis that they were eligible to apply for up to £10,000 in funding support as their event would

attract in excess of 5,000 attendees, however in error made an application for the lower award.

They had submitted an updated financial and cost plan for the event which demonstrated need for this increased level of funding support for which they were eligible at time of application.

#### 5. Finance

It was reported to the Committee in March that there was £135,570 in the 2025/26 community festival budget. As £115,570 was already committed following previous approvals for multi year funding the total allocation from this budget was now £133,320.

#### 6. Governance

A call to the community festival fund for 2025/2026 opened on 2 December 2024 and closed on 6 January 2025.

The Royal Black District Chapter made an application for £5,000, however were eligible to apply for £10,000 given anticipated attendance at their event of 6,000 as highlighted in this application.

All Community Development Grant Funding Programme awards required approval through Committee.

#### 7. Summary

The Royal Black District Chapter were awarded £5,000 community festival funding to deliver their event in August 2025 in Antrim. As event organisers had developed their understanding of the actual costs of the event, they had identified a significant shortfall from costs estimated in their original application. They were eligible at the time of application to apply for up to £10,000 for their event and had requested that that their grant be increased from £5,000 to £10,000 given that this higher award was available for their event, and they made an error in their original application by not applying for the higher award and that their developed understanding of event costs demonstrates a need for this additional funding. They have provided an updated financial plan for the event.

Proposed by Alderman Ross

Seconded by Councillor Cosgrove and agreed that

**on the basis of the application from The Royal Black District Chapter being eligible for the higher award of £10,000, that provision of additional Community Festival funding to The Royal Black District Chapter of £5,000 be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Development*

*Councillor Wilson returned to the Chamber and resumed as Chair.*

### **3.14 CP/CP/196 PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT WITH THE NORTHERN IRELAND FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

#### **1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the Council to enter into a partnership agreement with the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS).**

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

The NIFRS was one of the Council's statutory community planning partners. The Council engaged with the NIFRS on a variety of community safety issues as well as in relation to event planning and multi-agency emergency responses such as the recent example of storm Eowyn.

#### **3. Partnership Agreement**

The Chief Executive and Director of Community Development met recently with the new Group Commander of NIFRS Northern Area Command, which included the Borough within its scope. He presented the draft partnership agreement, the purpose of which was to ensure those at risk in the community were receiving the help they needed through collaborative working.

The draft agreement proposed (circulated) would be maintained by the NIFRS on behalf of both organisations.

It was proposed that the Council entered into this partnership agreement with the NIFRS.

#### **4. Finance**

There were no financial commitments arising from the partnership agreement with the NIFRS.

#### **5. Governance**

The agreement would remain valid until superseded by a revised agreement, mutually endorsed by each organisation and until such times as the partnership had been terminated. Any update relating to the agreement would be brought to a future meeting of the Committee for approval.

#### **6. Summary**

In order to ensure those most at risk in the community were receiving the help they needed through the collaborative working between the Council and one of the council's statutory community planning partners, the NIFRS, it was proposed that the Council enter into a partnership agreement with the NIFRS. Any changes or updates to this agreement would be reported to a future meeting of the Committee.

Proposed by Councillor Cosgrove  
Seconded by Councillor O'Lone and agreed that

**the partnership agreement between the NIRFS and the Council be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Development*

#### **4 ITEMS FOR NOTING**

##### **4.1 PT/CI/065 DIRECTORATE BUSINESS PLAN 2024/25 PERFORMANCE PROGRESS BI-ANNUAL UPDATE REPORT**

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

**The purpose of this report was to recommend to Members that the Directorate Business Plans Performance Progress Bi-Annual Report be noted.**

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

Part 12 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 puts in place a framework to support the continuous improvement of Council services.

The Council's Directorate Business Plans for 2024/25 had been approved by the Committee in March 2024. These set out the key actions and objectives of the Directorate, which informed how the wide remit of services would be delivered in 2024/25. The Plan also summarised the operational context within which actions would be delivered in terms of staff and financial resources, risks and historical performance.

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

Annual Directorate Business Plans were agreed at the March 2024 Council meeting. It was agreed that bi-annual Directorate performance progress reports would be presented to the relevant committee.

###### **4. Key Points**

The bi-annual performance progress reports for Community Development, Arts, Culture, Tourism & Events, Marketing, Communications and PR had been circulated for Members' information.

Proposed by Councillor Cosgrove  
Seconded by Councillor Stewart and agreed that

**the Directorate Business Plans 2024/25 Performance Progress Bi-Annual Report be noted.**

*NO ACTION*

## **4.2 PT/CI/060 PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2024/25 PERFORMANCE PROGRESS REPORT (COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT) QUARTER 4**

### **1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report was to recommend to Members that the Performance and Improvement Plan 2024/25 Performance Progress Report Quarter 4 be noted.**

### **2. Previous Decision of Council**

As agreed at the August 2023 Council meeting, quarterly performance reports would be presented to the relevant Committee.

### **3. Key Points**

The fourth quarter performance progress report for Arts, Culture, Heritage, Tourism and Events, Community Development and Marketing, Communications and PR had been circulated for Members' information.

### **4. Summary**

1. The Council's two flagship events, Garden Show Ireland and Enchanted Winter Garden, were both impacted significantly by adverse weather in 2024 and failed to meet their attendance targets. Both events were however delivered within budget in spite of this.
2. The performance of the Council's theatres had been transformed with an increase of 9,832 in attendance, £417,656 in ticket income and 3% increase in occupancy when compared to 2023/2024.
3. Customer satisfaction with theatres and events was 92% and 82% respectively.
4. £155,947 more in community grant funding was issued when compared with 2023/2024 and 99.5% of grant awards were issued within 30 days of closing date.
5. 2,849 community centre bookings in excess of the 2024/25 target were made.
6. 93% satisfaction achieved with community development events and programmes.
7. 81.5% satisfaction achieved with the quality of information on the Council's website.
8. Almost 7,550 more followers on the Council's social media platforms than the target for 2024/25.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour



Seconded by Councillor O'Lone and agreed that

**the Performance and Improvement Plan 2024/25 Performance Progress Report (Community Development Directorate) Quarter 4 be noted.**

NO ACTION

#### **4.3 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**

The quarterly update Partnership Minutes as listed below could be viewed in the electronic folder "**Partnership Minutes for Members Information**" on Members' Ipads.

<b>Community Development</b>		
<b>File Ref</b>	<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Name of Partnership</b>
D/Gen/91	-	Community Advice Antrim and Newtownabbey
D/DP/67	25.02.2025 25.03.2025	Rathcoole Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership
D/CSP/48	25.09.2024 29.01.2025	Antrim and Newtownabbey Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP)
D/DP/67	27.02.2025 27.03.2025	Grange Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership
CP/GR/43	25.10.2024	Traveller Issues Local Government Partnership

Proposed by Councillor Lynch

Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

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

NO ACTION

#### **4.4 CP/PCSP/088 PCSP LETTER OF OFFER AND FUNDING AGREEMENT 2025/2026**

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

**The purpose of this report was to update Members on the offer of Policing and Community Safety Partnership funding from the Joint Committee.**

## 2. Background

Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSP) were created regionally across NI in 2012. The Joint Committee (Department of Justice and Northern Ireland Policing Board) provided annual funding in relation to the operation of the PCSP to the Council, subject to the approval of a Local Action Plan.

## 3. Previous Decision of Council

It had been reported to the Community Development Committee in September 2024 that funding of £303,540 for 2024/25 from the Joint Committee and funding of £14,000 from the Northern Ireland Policing Board to fund Members expenses had been offered to the Council.

## 4. Letter of Offer

Correspondence (circulated) had been received from the Joint Committee confirming that the Council was being offered PCSP funding of £303,540 for 2025/26.

An additional £12,500 from the Northern Ireland Policing Board had been awarded to fund Members' expenses and meeting allowances. This offer of funding had been accepted by the Department's deadline of 16 June 2025.

## 5. Financial implications

Council was providing a contribution of £99,656 towards delivery of the 2025/26 PCSP Action Plan and provision for this had been made within the 2025/26 Community Development budget.

Applications had been submitted to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive towards delivery of PCSP Action Plan priority projects, namely: Community Safety Wardens Scheme and 4 Tier Security Scheme to support delivery costs and additional funding of £37,000 had been secured.

## 6. Governance

Antrim and Newtownabbey PCSP, was a statutory body established under the Justice Act (NI) 2011. A Joint Committee comprising representatives from the Northern Ireland Policing Board and the Department of Justice oversees the work of the PCSP, which contained a membership locally of 10 Elected Members, 9 Independent Members and representatives from 7 designated statutory bodies.

The PCSP Officers provided a secretariat function to the Partnership, ensuring Action Plan delivery in accordance with relevant Council policies and procedures and effective financial management.

## 7. Summary

The Council had received an offer for funding of £303,540 from the Joint Committee for the costs associated with the PCSP for the period of 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. In addition, The Northern Ireland Policing Board would provide funding in relation to Members meeting expenses, to a maximum of £12,500.

Proposed by Alderman Ross

Seconded by Councillor Dunlop and agreed that

**the offer of Policing and Community Safety Partnership funding of £303,540 from the Joint Committee be noted.**

*NO ACTION*

### 4.5 AC/MU/003 NATIONAL MUSEUMS NI – CORPORATE STRATEGY 2025-2030

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to inform Members that National Museums NI had launched their Corporate Strategy 2025–2030.**

#### 2. Introduction/Background

The National Museums NI had been working towards the development of a new Strategy for the period 2025–2030.

#### 3. Key Issues

Correspondence (circulated) had been received from the National Museums NI advising that their Corporate Strategy 2025–2030 had been launched .

Proposed by Alderman Ross

Seconded by Councillor Dunlop and agreed that

**the National Museum’s NI Corporate Strategy 2025-2030 be noted.**

*NO ACTION*

### 4.6 CE/OA/013 NORTHERN IRELAND HOUSING COUNCIL

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to provide Members with copies of minutes from the Northern Ireland Housing Council meeting for 10 April 2025.**

## 2. Introduction/Background

Correspondence (circulated) had been received from the Northern Ireland Housing Council providing a copy of the minutes of their meeting of 10 April 2025.

## 3. Previous Decision of Council

At the Community Development Committee in May 2025 the minutes of the Northern Ireland Housing Council meeting held on 13 March 2025 were noted.

Proposed by Alderman Ross

Seconded by Councillor Dunlop and agreed that

**the minutes of the Northern Ireland Housing Council of 10 April 2025 be noted.**

NO ACTION

## 4.7 **G/MSMO/2/VOL2 CHANGE IN MEMBERSHIP OF THE POLICING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP BY SINN FÉIN**

### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to inform Members of the change in nomination to the Policing and Community Safety Partnership by Sinn Féin.**

### 2. Introduction

It was agreed at the Annual Meeting in May 2023 that 10 Members be appointed to the Policing and Community Safety Partnership for the term of Council by the d'Hondt method.

At this meeting the Sinn Féin Party nominated Councillors Annie O'Lone and Michael Goodman to the Partnership.

### 3. Key Issue

The Sinn Féin Nominating Officer had now advised that, with immediate effect, Councillor Taylor McGrann was to replace Councillor Annie O'Lone on this Partnership for the remainder of the term of Council.

Proposed by Alderman Ross

Seconded by Councillor Dunlop and agreed that

**the change in nomination to the Policing and Community Safety Partnership by Sinn Féin for the remainder of the term of the Council from Councillor Annie O'Lone to Councillor Taylor McGrann be noted.**

NO ACTION

## **4.8 AC/ACG/012 ANTRIM CASTLE GARDENS EVENTS**

### **1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report was to update Members on plans to apply for planning permission to allow Antrim Castle Gardens to be used for temporary events.**

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

Antrim Castle Gardens hosted a number of Council events each year, including Enchanted Winter Garden, Garden Show Ireland, Antrim Live and Party in the Park. Under the Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015, the area of the Gardens outside of the curtilage of Clotworthy House could be used for temporary events for up to 28 days in a calendar year without the need for planning permission.

Plans were being considered to extend the duration of Enchanted Winter Garden by an additional fortnight in 2025, and to ensure continued compliance with legislation now and in future years, Officers proposed to apply for planning permission for the temporary use of Antrim Castle Gardens for events on up to 100 days each year.

Any future recommendations for new events at Antrim Castle Gardens, or for the extension of existing events, would be subject to prior approval from the Community Development Committee.

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

Approval to extend Enchanted Winter Garden until Saturday 3 January 2026 had been given at the March 2025 Community Development Committee meeting.

### **4. Summary**

In order to ensure continued compliance with planning legislation, and to allow Elected Members the flexibility to approve new or extended events in Antrim Castle Gardens in the future, Officers intend to apply for planning permission for the temporary use of Antrim Castle Gardens for events on up to 100 days each year.

A Member expressed concerns regarding flooding in Antrim Castle Gardens which had impacted recent events, noting that previous drainage improvements had been ineffective. The Head of Arts, Culture, Tourism and Events assured that the matter was being reviewed by the Parks team and he would report back to Committee when an assessment had been carried out.

In relation to a Member's concerns regarding closure to Antrim Castle Gardens for events, it was noted that full closure impacted on people with accessibility and mobility challenges. The Head of Arts, Culture, Tourism and

Events clarified that full closure was required because of insurance and safety issues.

Proposed by Alderman Ross  
Seconded by Councillor Dunlop and agreed that

**the report be noted.**

*NO ACTION*

#### **4.9 CCS/EDP/007 SECTION 75 EQUALITY SCREENING AND RURAL NEEDS SCREENING FORMS**

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

**The purpose of this report was to note the Section 75 Equality Screening process relating to the reports referenced:**

**CP/TD/050** SCHOOL UNIFORM RE-USE SCHEME

**CP/TD/105 and CP/CD/484** – SOCIAL SUPERMARKET AND FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMME

**CP/TD/062** – HARDSHIP SCHEME

**CP/GR/164** – HOLOCAUST PROGRAMME

**CP/CD/426** – CHRISTMAS TOY SCHEME

**CP/GEN/005/VOL3** – COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP – DRAFT LOVE LIVING HERE DELIVERY PLAN 2030

**CP/CP/243** – ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS (EVAWG)

**CP/TD/104 and CP/TD/107** – AREAS AT RISK FUNDING

**AC/ACG/012** - DEVELOPMENT OF WALKING TOURS

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

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 above policies had been subject to Section 75 Equality Screening and had been screened out for the need of an Equality Impact Assessment. A copy of each Section 75 Equality Screening Forms were circulated.

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 applicable for School Uniform Re-Use Scheme, Social Supermarket and Family Support Programme and Community Planning Partnership – Draft Love Living Here Delivery Plan 2030.

In response to a Member's query in relation to the Section 75 screening process and where it had been initiated, the Chief Executive clarified that Section 75 screening had been identified as an area for improvement by the internal auditor.

Proposed by Alderman Ross  
Seconded by Councillor Dunlop and agreed that

**the Section 75 Equality Screening and Rural Needs Screening for the reports listed be noted.**

*NO ACTION*

## **5 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS**

There was no Any Other Relevant Business.

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

Proposed by Councillor Cosgrove  
Seconded by Councillor Dunlop and agreed that

**the following Committee business be taken In Confidence and the livestream and audio recording would cease at this point.**

## **6 ITEM IN CONFIDENCE**

### **6.1 IN CONFIDENCE CP/CD/444 ANTRIM AND NEWTOWNABBEY SENIORS' FORUM**

#### **1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report was to provide Members with a detailed breakdown of the budget expenditure for the Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors Forum.**

#### **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.

### 3. Previous Decision of Council

The Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors' Forum Quarter 4 2024-25 performance report was approved at the May Community Development Committee with a request for a detailed breakdown of the budget expenditure, to be provided at the next committee meeting in June.

It was agreed at the March 2025 Community Development Committee to provide funding of £15,000 through a service level agreement for the 2025/26 financial year to 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.

### 4. Financial Position/Implication

Provision of £15,000 financial support for the Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors Forum had been provided for in the 2025/26 Community Planning budget. Other Community Planning partners 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

A Service Level Agreement between Council and Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors' Forum for 2025/26 had been developed. A detailed breakdown of expenditure for the last six months of 2024/25 was provided for Members' information.

<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Nov</b>	<b>Dec</b>	<b>Jan</b>	<b>Feb</b>	<b>March</b>
<b>Salaries (Incl. Pensions)</b>	£3,826.60	£3,826.80	£3,826.60	£3,826.60	£3,826.60	£3,826.60
<b>PAYE</b>	£760.09	£759.89	£759.69	£760.09	£759.69	£759.89
<b>Telephone</b>	£15.97	£15.97	£15.97	£15.97	£15.97	£15.97
<b>Bank Fees</b>	£7.17	£16.96	£6.14	£9.52	£5.56	£7.37
<b>Auditor</b>	£0.00	£0.00	£517.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
<b>Rent</b>	£0.00	£0.00	£1,250	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	£34.00	£109.00	£0.00	£25.50	£13.60	£20.40
	<b>£4,643.83</b>	<b>£4,728.62</b>	<b>£6,375.40</b>	<b>£4,637.68</b>	<b>£4,621.42</b>	<b>£4,630.23</b>

TOTAL - **£29,637.18**

The funding supports 1 F/T Officer and 1 P/T administrative support Officer to deliver the programme and action plan which was agreed by all the partners, with some miscellaneous costs such as telephone and office costs.



## 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 would be provided to Officers for the purposes of performance management.

## 6. Summary

Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors' Forum was supported by the Council and its Community Planning partners with £15,000 in funding allocated annually with matching contributions from the Northern Health and Social Care Trust, Public Health Agency, and NI Housing Executive. A detailed breakdown of the Forum's expenditures for the last six months of the 2024/25-year totalled £29,637.18, covering staffing, PAYE, communications, auditing, rent, and miscellaneous costs. Governance of the Forum was maintained through a Service Level Agreement, with performance monitored via quarterly reports.

In relation to concerns raised by Members, the Head of Community Development agreed to explore potential duplication of funding and details relating to the rent payment.

Proposed by Councillor Lynch  
Seconded by Councillor Dunlop and agreed that

**the detailed breakdown of the budget expenditure for the Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors' Forum be noted.**

NO ACTION

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

Proposed by Councillor Lynch  
Seconded by Councillor O'Lone and agreed that

**the remainder of Committee business be taken in Open Session.**

The Chairperson advised that audio-recording would recommence.

There being no further Committee business, the Chairperson thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting concluded at 7.34pm.

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**MAYOR**