MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE HELD IN THE ROUND TOWER CHAMBER, ANTRIM CIVIC CENTRE ON MONDAY 5 OCTOBER 2026 AT 6.30 PM

In the Chair	:	Councillor E McLaughlin
Committee Members (In person)	:	Aldermen – P Bradley, L Clarke and J Smyth Councillors – M Cooper, S Flanagan, J Gilmour, N Kelly and S Ward
Committee Members (Remote)	:	Councillors - R Foster, A McAuley, L O'Hagan and V McWilliam
Non Committee Members (In person)	:	Councillor B Webb
Non Committee Members: (Remote)	:	Alderman – S Ross Councillors – M Goodman and R Lynch
Officers Present	:	Director of Environment Services and Sustainability – M Laverty Director of Estates and Recreation – J News Borough Lawyer (Legal, Land, Governance and Policy) - Paul Casey Head of Leisure – D O'Hagan Head of Parks - P Mawhinney Head of Waste Strategy & Sustainability – L Daly Head of Environmental Health & Wellbeing – C Kelly ICT Project Officer – C Bell Member Services Officer – E Skillen

CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

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

He noted that the last Operations Committee meeting for Deaglan O'Hagan, Head of Leisure and thanked Deaglan for his work and contribution to the Council and wished him every success in his new role.

1 APOLOGIES

Councillors – AM Logue and L Kirkpatrick

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

3 INTRODUCTION OF NEW STAFF

None

4.1 EH/EHS/FC/022 CONSULTATION ON RESTRICTING PROMOTIONS OF PRODUCTS HIGH IN FAT, SUGAR AND SALT.

1. <u>Purpose</u>

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the draft response to the Food Standards Agency (FSA) consultation on restricting promotions of products high in fat, sugar and salt (HFSS) in Northern Ireland.

2. <u>Background</u>

Obesity remained one of the most significant public health challenges facing Northern Ireland. People living with overweight or obesity were at increased risk of a range of serious health conditions, including cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and some cancers.

The Department of Health's Healthy Futures obesity strategic framework set out a whole-system approach to creating environmental conditions that supported healthier eating. It recognised that a major driver in choosing food was its marketing, promotion and placement of high in fat, sugar and salt (HFSS) products. The framework highlighted the need to address health inequalities, food availability while acknowledging that the burden of overweight and obesity was not evenly shared across society.

Members were reminded that Regulations to restrict the promotion of HFSS products by location and volume price had already been implemented in England and Wales, and Scotland were introducing restrictions in October 2026.

Evidence indicated that:

- **Price promotions based on volume**, including multibuy offers, could encourage consumers to purchase and consume greater quantities of HFSS products, with children particularly susceptible to these influences.

- **Prominent product placement** could encourage unplanned purchases and increase exposure to HFSS foods, potentially reinforcing less healthy dietary choices.

- **High consumption of HFSS foods and drinks** contributed to overweight and obesity and was associated with an increased risk of diet-related diseases, including type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and certain cancers.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) and the Department of Health (DoH) launched a public consultation on 29th July 2026 which sought views on proposals to introduce restrictions on the promotion and placement of products high in fat, sugar and salt (HFSS) in Northern Ireland.

Full details of the consultation were available via below link:

https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-restricting-promotionsproducts-high-fat-sugar-and-salt-hfss

3. Key Issues

The proposed restrictions would apply to certain volume price promotions, the placement of HFSS products in prominent retail locations, and free refill promotions for sugar-sweetened soft drinks.

The purpose of this consultation was to seek views on proposed measures to:

1. Reduce people's exposure to HFSS promotions and impulse purchase drivers.

2. Support healthier shopping environments and shift the balance of promotions to increase the affordability of healthier options.

3. Ensure Northern Ireland maintained policy coherence with the rest of the UK food market to minimise complexity for industry.

A draft response to the consultation (circulated) on this had been prepared by Officers in conjunction with the Northern Ireland Councils Regional Working Group.

A summary of the proposals contained in the consultation was set out below:

- Restrict volume price promotions on HFSS products;
- Restrict the placement of HFSS products at prominent locations like store entrances, checkouts & ends of aisles;
- Restrict free refills of sugar-sweetened soft drinks.

Businesses covered by the proposals:

- Volume price restrictions would apply to retail businesses with 50 or more employees;
- Location restrictions would apply to retail businesses with 50 or more employees, where the store had a relevant floor area of 2,000 square feet or more;
- Businesses such as care homes and schools, as well as food provided by charities in the course of their charitable activities, would be exempt from the restrictions.

Food Affordability and Food Poverty

In the draft response Council recognised the public health rationale for restricting the promotion and placement of HFSS products but emphasised that consideration should also be given to the potential impact of the proposals on food affordability and food poverty.

Restricting volume-based promotions may reduce access to lower-cost promotional offers for some households, particularly those experiencing financial pressures or food insecurity.

Council considered that measures to reduce the consumption of HFSS products should be complemented by action to improve the availability, affordability and promotion of healthier food choices. This would help ensure that healthier options were accessible and represented good value for households across Northern Ireland, including those on lower incomes.

Enforcement

Effective enforcement would be essential to ensure any restrictions on the promotion and placement of HFSS products were applied consistently, proportionately and in line with existing food law practice in Northern Ireland.

As enforcement in Northern Ireland was expected to be undertaken by local Councils, consistent with arrangements for other food law controls, the consultation considered two enforcement approaches, neither of which were ideal. The draft Council response outlined the challenges with both suggested options, highlighting that significant funding, training, guidance and clarity was required due the complexity of this work, which did not align with existing regulatory frameworks.

Additionally, the suggested 12-month lead in period was considered insufficient time to prepare for the implementation and delivery of this work stream.

Summary of Council's draft response is below;

Council supported the introduction of restrictions on the promotion and placement of high fat, sugar and salt (HFSS) products in Northern Ireland and supported a legislative approach similar to that adopted in Great Britain.

However, the draft response highlighted concerns regarding enforcement, resourcing and the complexity of the proposed regulations. In particular:

- consideration be given to Northern Ireland Trading Standards having the role as the enforcing body given its existing responsibilities for marketing, pricing and advertising;
- if councils were required to enforce the regulations, additional ring-fenced funding, staffing and training would be essential;
- the Nutrient Profiling Model and proposed requirements around store size, employee numbers, product classification and store layouts were considered complex and potentially difficult to enforce;
- concerns that small independent retailers operating under franchise or symbol group arrangements, which could fall within scope despite being small businesses individually. These businesses may have fewer resources to understand and implement the requirements;
- the proposed 12-month lead-in period could be insufficient, particularly if new legislation, recruitment, training and technical guidance were required;
- a central Nutrient Profile Model calculator/database and comprehensive national guidance would help businesses and enforcement officers apply the regulations consistently;
- Council recognised the public health rationale for the proposals but considered that restrictions should be complemented by measures to increase the affordability and accessibility of healthier food choices;
- Council had concerns about potential increased costs for businesses and consumers, including reduced promotional offers and costs associated with changing store layouts.

4. Financial Implication

The introduction of proposed legislative restrictions would have a financial impact due to the additional environmental health resource that would be required to deliver on this work area. No additional funding had been identified for local authorities.

5. Summary

Council supported the principle of the proposed HFSS restrictions and recognised the important public health objective of encouraging healthier food choices and addressing obesity. However, Council also recognised the importance of food affordability and the need to ensure that measures to improve diets did not place additional financial pressures on households.

The draft response highlighted concerns regarding the practical implementation and enforcement of the proposed legislation in Northern Ireland. In particular, the complexity of the regulations, the number of businesses that may fall within scope, and additional financial burden on Council resources.

Dedicated, ring-fenced funding, additional staffing, comprehensive training and clear national guidance would be critical to the successful implementation of the proposals if enforcement was to be undertaken by Councils. In addition, the proposed 12 month lead-in period could be insufficient.

Proposed by Councillor Kelly
Seconded by Alderman Smyth and agreed that

the draft consultation response be approved.

ACTION BY: Christina McErlean, Deputy Head of Environment Health (Commercial)

4.2 EH/EHS/LR/015 ADOPTION OF PROPOSED DEPARTMENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE (DFI) MODEL LICENCE CONDITIONS FOR CARAVAN SITES

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to advise Members of the publication of an updated Model Licence Conditions for Caravan and Campsites by the Department for Infrastructure and to seek approval for its adoption by Council.

2. Background

The Caravans Act (Northern Ireland) 1963 provided for the licensing and control of caravan sites by District Councils. Under the legislation, Councils could attach specific conditions to a site licence relating to the use and management of the site and the provision and maintenance of facilities and equipment.

The Department for Infrastructure have responsibility for Model Licence Conditions, regulating the layout and provision of facilities, services and equipment including water supply, electricity and fire safety provision.
In determining appropriate conditions to add to a site licence, Councils were required to have regard to these Model Licence Conditions.

3. Key Issues

On 1 July 2025, the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) published the Model Licence Conditions 2025 for Residential Sites and Holiday Sites. These replaced the previous Model Licence Conditions for Caravan Sites 1992 and Residential Caravan Sites 1994, which ceased to have effect from 1 July 2025.

The updated conditions applied to permanent residential caravan sites, holiday caravan sites and touring caravan sites. They largely maintained the previous requirements, with updates including emergency telephones, flood risk and fire safety measures. The conditions represented standards normally expected as a matter of good practice and should be applied having regard to the circumstances of each site. Where existing licence conditions remained adequate, new conditions did not necessarily need to be applied.

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council had one licensed caravan/camping site within the Borough. Council owned and operated caravan sites were exempt from the requirement to hold a caravan site licence. However, Councils were required to have regard to the Model Licence Conditions when considering standards and requirements for caravan sites.

Officers had reviewed the 2025 Model Licence Conditions against the arrangements and standards currently in place at Castlewood Holiday Park. The site was considered to be operating in accordance with the relevant requirements of the updated conditions and, as a result, their introduction was not expected to require significant operational changes or additional works by the site operator.
Adopting the Model Licence Conditions 2025 would ensure that the Council's licensing framework reflected current DfI guidance and provided a consistent approach to the consideration of caravan site licences.

Subject to Members' approval, Officers would have regard to the Model Licence Conditions 2025 when considering new caravan site licence applications and the review or variation of existing licences, taking into account the individual circumstances of each site.

A copy of the new Model Licence Conditions was circulated for Members' Information.

4. Financial implications

There were no additional financial or significant resource implications arising from the adoption of the updated Model Licence Conditions. Compliance monitoring would continue to be undertaken within existing Environmental Health resources.

5. Summary

The report sought Members' approval to adopt the DfI Model Licence Conditions 2025 for caravan and campsite licensing. The updated conditions replaced the previous requirements and included changes relating to fire safety, flood risk and emergency telephones. Officers had reviewed the conditions against the existing licenced site and found the site to be compliant, with no significant operational changes anticipated. Approval was sought for Officers to have regard to the new conditions when considering future licence applications and reviews.

In response to a Member's query, the Head of Environmental Health advised that the scope of the licence was restricted to facilities, locations and fire safety measures, excluding restrictions on annual operating periods which was a planning issue.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour
Seconded by Councillor McAuley and agreed that

Members approve the adoption of the Model Licence Conditions 2025 for use by Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council in the licensing and regulation of relevant caravan sites within the Borough.

ACTION BY: Sonya Gordon, Environmental Health Manager

4.3 EH/EHS/008 DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL AFFAIRS CONSULTATION ON A CLEAN AIR STRATEGY FOR NORTHERN IRELAND TO 2032

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the submission of Council's response to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) consultation on a Clean Air Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2032: "*A Proposed Strategy for Protecting Human Health and the Environment*".

2. Background

Air pollution was one of the most serious environmental health challenges in Northern Ireland. Poor air quality posed a significant risk to human health, particularly for children and young people, vulnerable groups and those living in more deprived communities. It also had wider environmental impacts, including effects on ecosystems.

Councils across Northern Ireland work collaboratively with DAERA to support improvements in air quality, with the aim of ensuring cleaner air for all.

The proposed Clean Air Strategy represented Northern Ireland's first dedicated strategic framework for clean air and replaced the previous 2007 UK-wide policy approach. The Strategy set out a long-term commitment to improving air quality by 2032, with the aim of strengthening air quality protections, increasing public understanding of air pollution and establishing the foundations for continued long-term improvement.

A copy of the full consultation document could be accessed at the link below:

NI Clean Air Strategy to 2032 - final for publication 1 Sept 26_0.pdf

3. Key Issues

Northern Ireland faced a number of air quality challenges, including emissions associated with residential solid fuel burning and ammonia from agriculture. Some pollutants in parts of Northern Ireland continued to exceed air quality objectives, and continued action to reduce air pollution was important to protect human health and the environment.

The central ambition of the Clean Air Strategy was to improve air quality across Northern Ireland by 2032. To achieve this, DAERA had proposed three specific goals:

1. To improve air quality to support better human health and prevent ill health and premature deaths associated with air pollution.
2. To reduce air pollution for a cleaner environment.
3. To increase public awareness of air quality issues and empower the public to take personal action to improve air quality.

These goals were supported by five Strategic Objectives:

1. Develop our evidence base – improving air quality monitoring, scientific data and research to better understand air pollution.
2. Improve legislation – updating legislation and introducing more ambitious air quality standards, particularly in relation to PM10 and PM2.5.
3. Raise awareness and bring about behaviour change – providing clear and accurate information and encouraging actions that could improve air quality.
4. Work towards zero pollution – preventing pollution at source and reducing emissions from activities including transport and domestic heating.
5. Deliver change through partners – working collaboratively with government departments, Councils, businesses and communities to improve air quality.

The development of a dedicated, strategic and collaborative approach to improving air quality in Northern Ireland was welcomed and the draft response broadly supported the Strategy's proposed goals and Strategic Objectives.

A copy of the draft response was circulated for Member's information.

Key points from Council's draft consultation response included:

- Support for the strengthening and expansion of Northern Ireland's air quality monitoring network;
- Any proposals and initiatives were supported by sustained funding, technical support, and data analysis;
- Support of stronger and more health-focused PM2.5 and PM10 standards;
- Increased public awareness of the health impacts of air pollution and coordinated behavioural change campaigns;
- Support in the principle of phasing out coal, manufactured solid fuels and unseasoned wood for domestic heating taking account of fuel poverty, rural circumstances and the availability and affordability of alternative heating options;
- The need for further action to address transport-related air pollution;
- Support the establishment of a Northern Ireland Clean Air Forum and increased partnership working.
- Concern that the proposed indicators, in their current form, would fully measure the success of the Strategy including the reliance on high-level data from a relatively small number of monitoring sites;
- Support the consideration given to rural and equality impact within the Strategy with particular consideration given to rural communities that may have greater reliance on domestic solid fuel heating, longer travel distances and fewer affordable transport or heating alternatives and the disproportionate impact on vulnerable households or exacerbate fuel poverty.

4. Financial Implication

There were no immediate significant financial implications arising from the consultation response. However, implementation of the Strategy would require additional resources for monitoring, assessment and enforcement.

5. Summary

The proposed Clean Air Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2032 provided a strategic framework for improving air quality and protecting human health and the environment. The draft response broadly supported the overall aims, goals and strategic objectives of the Strategy and welcomed the emphasis on partnership working, improved monitoring, public awareness and reducing pollution at source.

The draft response highlighted that successful implementation would require clear roles and responsibilities, effective governance, reliable data sharing and appropriate, sustained funding. Particular attention should be given to pollution sources that were outside the direct control of Councils, including road transport, domestic solid fuel combustion, agriculture and cross-boundary pollution.

Finally, the draft response highlighted rural communities and households experiencing fuel poverty who could be disproportionately affected by the proposals.

Proposed by Councillor Kelly
Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

the draft consultation response be approved.

ACTION BY: Mark Sloan, Deputy Head of Environmental Health

4.4 PK/GEN/217 CELEBRATING THE ANNIVERSARY OF CREAVERY PRIMARY SCHOOL

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the installation of a commemorative disc to mark Creavery Primary School's 200th anniversary.

2. Introduction/Background

Creavery Primary School would celebrate its 200th anniversary in 2027, marking a significant milestone in the school's history. Over the past two centuries, the school had played an important role within the local community, contributing to the education and development of generations of children and maintaining strong relationships with pupils, families and the wider community.

To mark the bicentenary, it was proposed that a commemorative disc be displayed for a four-week period during April 2027. Council Officers had been, and would continue to, liaise with the school representatives in this regard.

3. Previous Decision of Council

Council had previously approved the placement of celebratory and anniversary discs throughout the Borough to recognise significant achievements and milestones associated with local individuals, clubs and community organisations.

4. Financial Implication

The cost of producing and installing the commemorative disc was estimated at approximately £350. It was proposed that the disc would be displayed at the Battlement Walls in Antrim, providing a prominent location to acknowledge this significant milestone and the school's longstanding contribution to the local community.

Proposed by Alderman Clarke
Seconded by Councillor Kelly and agreed that

Members approve the installation of a commemorative disc at the Battlement Walls in Antrim for a four-week period during April 2027 to mark Creavery Primary School's 200th anniversary.

ACTION BY: Nadine Campbell, Parks Development Manager

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

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek approval for the most recent Minutes of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Group meeting held on 8 September 2026.

2. Summary

At the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Group meeting on 8 September 2026, Members considered a detailed report which provided a range of updates from the Parks section. The minutes of the meeting were circulated for Members' consideration.

In response to a Member's query regarding grass cutting at the 'Top of the Town' in Antrim, the Director of Estates and Recreation reported that the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) had been contacted and it was hoped they would present to the Operations Committee next month.

Further to another Member's query, it was noted membership of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Group was open to all Members. The Head of Parks confirmed that the meeting invitation to attend the sub-group would be re-issued to all Members.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Alderman Clarke and agreed that

the minutes of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Group meeting held on 8 September 2026 be approved.

ACTION BY: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

5 ITEMS FOR NOTING

5.1 EH/EHS/DC/043 RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERSHIP EVENTS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to advise Members of two Responsible Dog Ownership events planned for October 2026.

2. Introduction

The Council's Environmental Health Enforcement Team was responsible for a range of dog control functions across the Borough, including dog licensing, stray dogs, dog attacks, dog fouling, livestock worrying, dangerous and prescribed breeds, and the enforcement of Dog Control Orders.

In addition to its enforcement responsibilities, the Team promoted responsible dog ownership through education, advice and engagement with dog owners and members of the public.

3. Key issues

As part of this ongoing work, two Responsible Dog Ownership events had been arranged for October 2026. The events would provide an opportunity for Council officers and partner organisations to engage directly with dog owners and members of the public, and to provide practical advice and support on a range of responsible dog ownership matters.

The events formed part of the Council's wider approach to promoting responsible dog ownership through a combination of education, community engagement, advice and enforcement.

The events would take place as follows:

Hazelbank Park
Wednesday 7 October 2026
11.00am – 3.00pm

Crumlin Glen
Thursday 8 October 2026
11.00am – 3.00pm

The events would be led by Council's Environmental Health Enforcement Team and would focus on promoting responsible dog ownership in a positive and accessible way.

Information and advice would be available on a range of matters including:

- Dog licensing and microchipping;
- Responsible behaviour when exercising dogs in public places;
- Dog fouling and the requirement to clean up after dogs;
- Keeping dogs under proper control;
- Dog Control Orders;

- Dog attacks and livestock worrying;
- Responsible ownership and welfare; and
- Other relevant dog control and animal welfare matters.

Free dog waste bags and other promotional and educational materials would also be available to members of the public.

The events would be supported by a number of partner organisations, providing an opportunity to bring together Council services and specialist organisations to provide a wider range of advice and information to the public.

The Council's Animal Welfare Service and Rosie's Trust would support the events. Dogs Trust had also confirmed its attendance at the Crumlin Glen event and would provide promotional and educational materials to support the responsible dog ownership message.

Free microchipping would also be available as part of the events. This would provide an additional opportunity to promote responsible ownership and encourage dog owners to meet relevant legal requirements.

4. Financial implications

The events would be delivered within the Council's existing resources, with any associated costs being met from the current Environmental Health budget.

5. Summary

Two Responsible Dog Ownership events would be held at Hazelbank Park on 7 October 2026 and Crumlin Glen on 8 October 2026, from 11.00am to 3.00pm.

The events would promote responsible dog ownership through advice, education, free microchipping and direct engagement with dog owners. The events would be delivered in partnership with the Council's Animal Welfare Service, Rosie's Trust and Dogs Trust, providing a range of information and support to members of the public.

Proposed by Councillor Kelly
Seconded by Councillor Flanagan and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.2 EH/GEN/009 NATIVE AFRICAN/ASIAN FOODS LIMITED – ENFORCEMENT ACTION

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to advise Members of the recent successful prosecution of Native African/Asian Foods Limited following enforcement action undertaken and to acknowledge the Food Standards Agency letter.

2. Background

Environmental Health have responsibility for enforcing food safety legislation within the Borough and play a key role in protecting public health and safeguarding the interests of consumers.

In January 2025, Council Officers undertook an inspection of Native African/Asian Foods Limited. Following the initial inspection, further investigations were undertaken by the Council's Environmental Health team.

The investigation involved consideration of a number of matters requiring ongoing engagement with relevant partner organisations. The complexity of the case resulted in a coordinated approach involving Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, the Food Standards Agency (FSA), the National Food Crime Unit (NFCU), the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and the Agri-Food Biosciences Institute (AFBI).

Following the investigation, a summons was issued and the matter was brought before the Court, resulting in a successful prosecution.

3. Key issues

Council successfully prosecuted Native African Asian Foods Ltd, 7 Greystone Shopping Centre, Antrim, for four food safety offences at Ballymena Magistrates' Court on 26 August 2026.

The company pleaded guilty to four offences under Food Safety legislation following investigations by Council Environmental Health Officers between January and July 2025.

The offences included placing approximately 284kg of sheep meat identified as "smokies" on the market when it was deemed unfit for human consumption, providing false invoices relating to food traceability, removing 13 tubs of cultured milk which had been formally detained by Environmental Health Officers, and making a false representation concerning the milk.

The court fined the company £4,000 in total, comprising £1,000 for the unsafe food offence and £750 for each of the three remaining offences. The company was also ordered to pay £500 in legal costs and £250 in disposal costs.
Following the successful conclusion of the prosecution, the Council received correspondence from the FSA (circulated) acknowledging the work undertaken by Council.

The FSA highlighted Council's Environmental Health and Legal teams for their diligent and persistent work throughout the case, from the initial inspection in January 2025, through the follow-up inspections, issuing of the summons and subsequent court proceedings, to the successful prosecution.
The FSA further highlighted this case as an important example of the vital role played by Environmental Health Officers in protecting public health and safeguarding the interests of consumers in relation to food.

4. Summary

Council successfully prosecuted Native African/Asian Foods Limited for four food safety offences following an investigation led by the Council's Environmental Health team.

The case involved extensive investigation and multi-agency collaboration with the FSA, NFCU, DAERA and AFBI. Following the successful prosecution, the FSA formally acknowledged the diligence, persistence and commitment of the Council's Environmental Health and Legal teams.

The FSA highlighted the case as an example of the important role of Environmental Health Officers in protecting public health and safeguarding consumers and recognised the value of effective partnership working in complex food safety investigations.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Councillor Kelly and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.3 EH/PHWB/019 INTERNATIONAL MEN'S HEALTH DAY 2026

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members on arrangements for the International Men's Health Day event, which would take place at the Old Courthouse Theatre on 19 November 2026 which would celebrate the positive contribution men and boys make to families, communities and society, while encouraging conversations around wellbeing and positive role models.

2. Background

Council had recognised the importance of promoting men's health and wellbeing with support of International Men's Health Day. Members agreed to deliver an event each year reflecting the themes and objectives associated with International Men's Health Day.

The 2026 event would provide an opportunity to engage around issues including confidence, resilience, wellbeing and finding purpose, while highlighting the positive contribution men and boys make within their families, communities and wider society.

The theme for International Men's Day 2026 was "The Future is Everyone". The event would encourage attendees to consider their own future, wellbeing and the positive contribution they can make within their communities.

3. Key Issues

Council was pleased to welcome motivational speaker Gavin Oates, who would deliver his keynote presentation, "Confidently Lost – Living with Joy in a Chaotic World."

The two sessions would explore confidence, resilience, wellbeing and finding purpose while navigating the challenges and uncertainties of modern life. The presentation would be engaging and thought-provoking and would encourage attendees to reflect on their future, personal wellbeing and the positive contribution they could make to their communities.

The event sessions would take place as follows:

Date: Thursday 19 November 2026
Times: 11.00am–12.00pm & 7:30pm – 8:30pm
Venue: The Old Courthouse, Antrim
Age: 16+
Cost: Free

The event would be open to all; however particular encouragement would be given to younger males aged 16 and over to attend. It was anticipated that 200 people would attend both sessions.
The morning session would be mainly for individuals from local schools and Council with the evening session targeting community groups and the wider general public.

All persons attending the event would receive a copy of Gavin Oates' book, "Confidently Lost."

The events would be promoted through appropriate Council communication channels, including the Council website and social media, with invitations also being circulated directly to local schools for the morning event.

Following the event, a further update would be provided to Members on attendance and outcomes, as appropriate.

4. Financial Position

The event was included in the Environmental Health budget and would cost approximately £10,000.

5. Equality and Rural Needs Screening Requirements

An Equality and Rural Needs Screening exercise had been completed in accordance with Council policy. No adverse equality or rural impacts had been identified.
The event would be open to all persons aged 16 and over, with an effort made to encourage participation from young men, in keeping with the focus of International Men's Day and the objectives of the event.

6. Summary

The report provided an update to Members on arrangements for the Council's 2026 International Men's Day event, (two sessions) taking place at The Old Courthouse, Antrim, on Thursday 19 November 2026.

The event would feature a keynote presentation by Gavin Oates, "Confidently Lost – Living with Joy in a Chaotic World," and would focus on confidence, resilience, wellbeing, finding purpose and positive role models.

The event would be free to attend and open to all aged 16 and over, with encouragement for younger males to participate. Local schools would be invited to attend, with advance booking required.

Proposed by Councillor Kelly
Seconded by Councillor Cooper and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.4 WM/WM/037/VOL3 PERFORMANCE UPDATE ON THE HARMONISATION OF WASTE AND RECYCLING COLLECTION SERVICES

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to provide an update on waste and recycling collection services in the legacy Antrim area following the harmonisation of waste collection services.

2. Background

In October 2025, Council commenced the process of harmonising waste and recycling collections services in the Borough. Residents in the legacy Antrim area changed from 240L residual waste dry recycling bins to a 180L bin for residual waste and a 300L wheelie box for dry recyclables.

3. Findings

Members were reminded that despite the successful and timely completion of the rollout process of bins and wheelie boxes to residents, the service of the containers did not meet service requirements due to the contractor performance and adverse weather.

These issues were addressed through a combination of Member engagement, contract management including improved direct monitoring of the service, and targeted customer communications.

Performance Data for January to June 2026

Dry Recyclables

The analysis showed that, during the period January to June 2026, domestic recycling tonnages across the Borough increased by 8% compared with the corresponding period in 2025.

The increase was particularly significant within the legacy Antrim area, where domestic recycling tonnages increased by 27% compared to the tonnage collected through the old blue bin scheme for the same period in 2025. This equated to an additional 305 tonnes of recyclable material collected.

ANBC Kerbside Recycling Tonnages			
Year	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jan -June
2025	1809.5	1730.62	3540.12
2026	1990.55	1830.04	3820.59
% Change	10%	6%	8%
T Difference	181.05	99.42	280.47

Antrim Kerbside Recycling Tonnages			
Year	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jan -June
2025	554.89	590.01	1144.9
2026	756.08	693.79	1449.87
% Change	36%	18%	27%
T Difference	201.19	103.78	304.97

In the Antrim area, there had also been a significant reduction in contamination levels within domestic recycling collections since the introduction of the kerbside sort collection service. Between January and June 2026, only 1.45 tonnes of contaminated recyclable material was recorded, compared with 232.7 tonnes during the corresponding period in 2025 under the previous blue bin scheme.

Blue Bin v Wheelie Box Contamination			
Year	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jan -June
2025	120.1	112.6	232.7
2026	0.76	0.69	1.45
% Change	-99.37%	-99.39%	-99.38%
T Difference	119.34	111.91	231.25

This represented a reduction of approximately 99.4% in contamination, demonstrating a substantial improvement in the quality of recyclable materials collected.

The reduction in contamination was a key benefit of the kerbside sort collection service, as it helped to improve the value and recyclability of collected materials while reducing the risk of recyclable loads being rejected for processing. For example, our card was no longer shipped overseas and was now processed locally at Lurgan.

Domestic Residual

Following the introduction of 180-litre black bins for domestic residual waste in the Antrim area, a reduction in residual waste tonnages was observed across the Borough. Between January and June 2026, the amount of residual waste collected at the kerbside decreased by 6% compared with the corresponding period in 2025, equating to a reduction of 679.91 tonnes.

The reduction was more significant within the Antrim area, where residual waste tonnages decreased by 18%, equating to 765 tonnes over the same period.

ANBC Kerbside Residual Tonnages			
Year	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jan -June
2025-2026	5862.27	5444.25	11306.52
2026-2027	5290.10	5336.51	10626.61
% Change	-10%	-2%	-6%
T Difference	-572.17	-107.74	-679.91
Antrim Kerbside Residual Tonnages			
Year	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jan -June
2025-2026	2262.3	2056.49	4318.79
2026-2027	1769.26	1784.18	3553.44
% Change	-22%	-13%	-18%
T Difference	-493.04	-272.31	-765.35

This outcome was anticipated and was consistent with previous experience in the Newtownabbey area of the Borough, where the introduction of 180-litre black bins also resulted in a notable reduction in residual waste arisings.

Residual waste collected at Household Recycling Centres (HRCs) increased by 8% across the Borough between January and June 2026 compared with the corresponding period in 2025, equating to an additional 538.62 tonnes.

Within the Antrim area, residual waste collected at HRC sites increased by 16% over the same period, equating to an increase of 387 tonnes. The most significant increase was recorded in January, which was consistent with established seasonal trends following the festive period, when households typically generate higher volumes of waste and unwanted materials.

However, the level of increase in residual waste received at HRC sites had steadily reduced throughout the period from January to June 2026 and appeared to have plateaued in recent months. This suggested that the initial rise may, in part, reflect a transitional response to the introduction of the revised waste collection arrangements, with disposal behaviours beginning to stabilise as residents became accustomed to the new service. Continued monitoring of HRC tonnages would help determine whether this trend was sustained over the longer term.

4. Summary

The analysis of collection tonnages for the period January to June 2026 demonstrated that the introduction of the kerbside sort collection service and 180-litre residual waste bins in the Antrim area had a positive impact on waste management performance.

The data showed a significant increase in domestic recycling tonnages, particularly within the Antrim area, alongside a substantial reduction in recycling contamination levels. The marked decrease in contamination had improved the quality of recyclable materials collected and supported more efficient and effective recycling processes.

While increases in both cardboard and residual waste tonnages at Household Recycling Centres had been observed, these trends appeared to be influenced by a combination of changing consumer behaviours and an initial adjustment to the revised collection arrangements. The recent stabilisation of residual waste tonnages at HRC sites suggested that residents were adapting to the new service model.

Proposed by Councillor Cooper
Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

the report be noted.

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

5.5 PT/CI/058 APSE AWARDS 2026

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to advise Members of the recent success achieved by Council at the APSE Annual Service Awards 2026.

2. Introduction

The Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) Annual Service Awards recognised excellence and innovation in the delivery of frontline public services across the United Kingdom. The awards provided an opportunity to showcase high-performing local authority services and acknowledge the commitment, professionalism and achievements of employees delivering essential services to local communities.

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council achieved significant recognition at the 2026 awards, with four Council service areas shortlisted across a number of categories as well as Council of the Year. The shortlisted services were:

- Best Service Team of the Year: Cemetery and Crematorium Best Service Team
- Best Service Team of the Year: Sports, Leisure and Cultural
- Best Service Team: Street Cleansing and Street Scene Services
- Best Health and Well-being Initiative: Sports, Leisure and Cultural
- Council of the Year: Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council

Being shortlisted at a UK-wide level represented significant achievement and demonstrated the high standard of services being delivered across the Borough. It also reflected the dedication, professionalism and continued commitment of Council employees in providing high-quality services to residents, visitors and local communities.

Council subsequently achieved considerable success at the awards, securing two APSE Annual Service Awards:

- Best Service Team: Bereavement and Cemetery Services
- Best Service Team: Sports, Leisure and Cultural Services

These awards provided important external recognition of the quality and effectiveness of Council's frontline service delivery. In particular, they acknowledged the commitment of staff within the successful service areas and the contribution they made to supporting residents and communities across the Borough.

The recognition of Waste Operations Street Cleansing as a finalist was a notable achievement and reflected the service's continued commitment to maintaining high standards of street cleanliness and environmental quality across the Borough. The Leisure Services team was also shortlisted for the Best Health and Well-being Initiative, recognising its contribution to promoting health, wellbeing and positive social outcomes through accessible opportunities for residents of all ages and backgrounds. In addition, Council was nominated for Council of the Year, providing broader recognition of its approach to service delivery, organisational performance and continuous improvement. Collectively, these nominations demonstrated the breadth of work being undertaken across Council and the professionalism and commitment of employees in delivering high-quality services to residents and communities.

The Chairperson congratulated the Council's Bereavement and Cemetery Services Team and Leisure Team on winning Best Service Team Awards in their respective categories at the APSE Awards 2026. He also extended congratulations to all those Council teams that had been shortlisted.

Members echoed these congratulations and commended the achievements of the successful and shortlisted teams, noting that the awards reflected the commitment and dedication of Council staff, particularly those delivering frontline services.

Proposed by Alderman Bradley
Seconded by Councillor Cooper and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.6 PK/GEN/177 BELFAST HILLS PARTNERSHIP - "JOURNEY 30X30" PROJECT AT RATHFERN

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members on the biodiversity pilot project being delivered by Belfast Hills Partnership on land adjacent to the Sovereign Centre, Newtownabbey.

2. Background

Members were reminded that approval was granted in April 2026 to progress the Journey to 30x30 project, a pilot initiative being delivered by the Belfast Hills Partnership on Council-owned land adjacent to the Sovereign Centre in Newtownabbey.

The project formed part of a wider approach to enhancing local green spaces and supported the protection and restoration of biodiversity across the area. It would seek to improve the ecological value of the site through appropriate biodiversity measures, while also creating opportunities for greater community involvement and engagement with the natural environment.

The initiative supported the ongoing work between Council and the Belfast Hills Partnership to enhance the natural landscape within Antrim and Newtownabbey section of the Belfast Hills, ensuring that local communities and visitors of all ages could access, enjoy and benefit from improved natural spaces.

3. Key Considerations for the Project

Belfast Hills Partnership (BHP) had commissioned a Biodiversity Report as part of the DAERA Challenge Fund-supported Journey to 30x30 project. The report, which was circulated for Members' information, included an ecological survey and associated management plan, identifying a range of initial conservation measures and opportunities to enhance biodiversity across the site.

BHP project staff and appointed contractors were working closely with Council Officers and staff at the Sovereign Centre to ensure that the project remained both landowner and community led. This collaborative approach would help ensure that proposed interventions were appropriate, sustainable and compatible with the ongoing use and management of the site.

Management recommendations within the report included the removal of invasive and non-native species, including Fuchsia, Berberis, Cotoneaster and Flowering Currant. Further measures included introducing native pond plants to enhance biodiversity and water quality, using barley straw to assist with the management of algal blooms, and establishing wildflower areas and deadwood habitats to support pollinators and other wildlife.

The Biodiversity Report provided a baseline assessment of existing habitats, species presence and ecological considerations, which would help inform future management decisions and biodiversity improvements within and around the Sovereign Centre site.

4. Financial Implications for Council

The Journey to 30×30 was a fully funded project supported by the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA). There would be no financial cost to Council associated with supporting or assisting in the delivery of this project.

A Member highlighted the need for a single swathe grass cut adjacent to the wall at the Rathfern Centre. The Head of Parks Operations agreed to investigate the matter.

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

the report be noted.

ACTION BY: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks, Operations

5.7 L/LEI/VLC/001/VOL2 VALLEY LEISURE CENTRE 50TH ANNIVERSARY

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to advise Members of Officers' proposed approach to mark the occasion of the Valley Leisure Centre's 50th anniversary in 2027-28.

2. Introduction/Background

Members would recall that Antrim Forum celebrated its 50th anniversary in May 2023. To mark the occasion, Officers delivered a number of initiatives, including:

- Videography: a video was produced featuring employees from across the years sharing their memories: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dEeMp4Ik44M
- Press release and photocall: a press release and photocall were arranged to promote the anniversary.
- Pop-up displays: displays were installed in the centre, using previous branding to create a nostalgic feel.
- Website and social media: Officers invited the public to share their memories of Antrim Forum by submitting a form and photographs.

3. Valley Leisure Centre 50th Anniversary Proposal

It was proposed that a similar approach be adopted for the Valley Leisure Centre, including the production of a video, a press release and photocall.

Officers would promote the anniversary online and invite members of the public to share memories and photographs to support the development of an exhibition celebrating the centre's 50-year history.

Members were invited to provide any suggestions on how best to celebrate this milestone.

4. Financial Implications

The anniversary celebrations, including the production of the video, marketing displays and associated event costs, would be resourced within approved budgets.

Members welcomed the report and requested that a promotional video similar to that produced for the Antrim Forum, be developed to commemorate the occasion. It was suggested that the video could feature local athletes, former pupils who had attended the centre for lessons, former members of staff and sports clubs associated with the Centre since its opening.

A member requested that the pond adjacent to the Valley Leisure Centre be cleared of debris before any filming takes place.

A Member requested that Council consider relocating the Christmas tree at the Valley Leisure Centre to the front of the building.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour
Seconded by Councillor Flanagan and agreed that

Members note the proposals outlined within this report and provide any suggestions for consideration.

ACTION BY: Conor McCallion Leisure Development Manager and Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks, Operations

5.8 PBS/PS/016 ESTATE SERVICES ENERGY UPDATE

1. Purpose

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

2. Background

Members were reminded that energy across the Council estate was managed by the Estate Services Section, covering consumption, emissions, costs, monitoring and billing. Council had previously approved annual and ongoing investment, through its Energy Fund, to support energy efficiency initiatives, complementing standalone capital-funded projects.

3. Completed Projects

In the last financial year, 2025-26, Estate Services delivered a series of improvements aimed at reducing costs, emissions and fossil fuel dependency.

Key projects included:

- Heating and Building Management System upgrades at Mossley Mill, Sixmile Leisure Centre, and Theatre at the Mill, with modern Heating Ventilation Air Conditioning (HVAC) controllers installed.
- HVAC profile optimisation at Theatre at the Mill and Mossley Mill to better align energy use with building occupancy.
- Boiler replacement at Antrim Forum, with four cascading high-efficiency, modulating gas boilers installed.
- Reconfiguration of the Combined Heat and Power boiler at Antrim Forum to maximise performance.
- Refurbishment of Sixmile Leisure Centre's biomass boiler, reducing reliance on gas.
- Installation of 8 new EV charging points at the Environmental Services Depot, integrated under a single management system.
- Introduction of charging at 9no. Council EV locations, creating a revenue stream to fund ongoing maintenance and expansion.
- Installation of a new buffer tank at Antrim Forum, supporting the sites heat strategy by improving energy efficiency and system performance
- Replacement of the Spa dehumidifier unit had been completed, enhancing operational efficiency, environmental control and overall plant performance.

4. Results

The Council's total energy consumption was trending downwards in the period 2022 to 2026, reflecting the impact of staff awareness and investment in energy efficiency projects, such as those noted above. However, the renewed volatility in global energy markets (and associated pricing) since March 2026, alongside Council's statutory obligations to reduce CO2e emissions, underscored the importance of continued energy efficiency and sustainability across the Council estate.

5. Pending Projects 2026–2027

Looking ahead to 31 March 2027, Estate Services would continue to prioritise the reduction of oil and gas used by rolling out renewable technologies and major plant upgrades. Planned projects included:

- Heating control and BMS upgrades at Valley Leisure Centre, Antrim Forum Leisure Centre, and Ballyearl Leisure Centre
- HVAC replacements at Antrim Forum and Crumlin Leisure Centre
- Solar panels at Mossley Mill
- Capital project for LED floodlighting upgrades at Antrim Forum, Valley, Crumlin, Allen Park, and Sixmile Leisure Centres, with automated and remote controls
- Expansion of energy monitoring to top 15 sites, representing 90% of energy usage ongoing.
- Review opportunities for wind turbines, heat pumps, and large-scale solar installations, including car park canopies
- Expansion of EV charging network (21no. EV charge points)

6. Future Development

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

- Extending automated metering for energy and water to enable benchmarking and performance tracking;
- Wind turbine and solar panels at the Environmental Services Depot;
- Solar canopies, hydro electrical projects to be evaluated across the estate;
- Investigating building fabric thermal improvements;
- Maximising heat recovery in ventilation systems at major sites;
- Monitoring and replacing plant and equipment (boilers, coils, generators, pumps) to maintain efficiency levels; and
- Implementing a pool cover replacement programme to reduce heating costs across leisure centres.

Proposed by Councillor Flanagan
Seconded by Councillor Kelly and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.9 EH/EHS/LR/006 CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES – PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR – COUNCIL MOTION ON AFFORDABILITY, HOUSING STANDARDS AND SUPPLY

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to advise Members of the Minister for Communities' response following Council's correspondence issued after a Motion on affordability, housing standards and supply within the Private Rented Sector.

2. Background

Members were reminded that, at a previous meeting of Council, a Notice of Motion was considered concerning the challenges facing private renters across the Borough, including the affordability of private rents, housing standards, timely repairs and the supply of affordable rented accommodation.

Council agreed to write to the Minister for Communities seeking:
- a review of minimum fitness standards in the private rented sector;
- consideration of statutory timeframes for landlords to undertake essential repairs; and
- measures to increase the supply of affordable rented accommodation, including consideration of short-term holiday lets and bringing empty homes back into use.

Council also welcomed the Department's Affordable Rent programme and requested consideration of extending similar Affordable or Intermediate Rent provision to the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council area.

A copy of the Council's correspondence (circulated) was issued to the Minister and available for Members' information.

3. Key Issues

A response had now been received from the Minister for Communities, a copy of which was circulated for Members information.

The Minister had confirmed a commitment, through the Warm Healthy Homes Strategy, to establish improved fitness standards for all tenures by 2030. Work was also progressing on the potential introduction of Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards for the private rented sector, with the aim of improving thermal comfort and the energy efficiency of rented homes.

In relation to essential repairs, the Minister acknowledged that there were currently no statutory minimum repair timescales in Northern Ireland. It was advised that statutory repair timescales and other enforcement measures may be considered as part of the planned review and update of the Fitness Standard.

The Minister also advised that the Landlord Registration Scheme was being strengthened, including a requirement for landlords to provide additional information confirming compliance with existing safety and property standards legislation. The consultation on these proposals had now closed and responses were being considered by Departmental officials. Members were advised that Council had previously provided a response to the consultation.

With regard to affordable rented accommodation, the Minister confirmed support for expanding affordable rent provision across Northern Ireland, including within the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council area. Members were advised that 'Maple & May' Housing was exploring a scheme of 20 new build dwellings at Niblock Road, Antrim, during 2027, subject to statutory permissions and contractual arrangements. The Department was also considering how affordable rent delivery could be expanded and intended to engage with key housing stakeholders, including local Councils.

In relation to short-term lets, the Minister advised that the Department was working with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Department for Infrastructure and Department for the Economy to research the extent and impact of short-term lets on local housing markets. The findings were intended to inform consideration of potential future policy options.

The Minister also advised that a two-year vacant property pilot was being developed with Derry and Strabane, Lisburn and Castlereagh, and Mid Ulster Councils. The pilot would seek to improve understanding of the scale and distribution of vacant properties and engage with owners, where possible, to encourage properties back into use. The pilot was not intended to provide

funding for refurbishment or acquisition and was expected to commence before the end of 2026, subject to budget approval.

The Department had indicated that it would continue to engage with councils and other housing stakeholders as these initiatives developed.

4. Summary

Following Members' request, correspondence was issued to the Minister for Communities regarding affordability, housing standards and supply within the private rented sector.

The Department had acknowledged the issues raised and confirmed ongoing work to improve fitness standards, consider statutory repair timescales and develop Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards.

The Minister had also welcomed the expansion of affordable rent provision, including a potential 20-home scheme in Antrim, and advised of ongoing research into short-term lets and a vacant property pilot involving three Councils.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour
Seconded by Councillor Kelly and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

6 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

6.1 CLOTHING WORN IN COUNCIL LEISURE FACILITIES

In response to a Member's query regarding the wearing of clothing displaying political messaging in Council leisure facilities, the Director of Estates and Recreation undertook to investigate the query and provide a report to the Committee as soon as possible.

ACTION BY: John News, Director of Estates and Recreation.

6.2 NI LITTER ORDER 1994

In response to a Member's question, the Director of Environment Services and Sustainability stated that the Council was tasked with litter collection under the provisions of the NI Litter Order 1994, adding that all activities undertaken were subject to health and safety risk assessments.

ACTION BY: Michael Laverty, Director of Environment Services and Sustainability.

6.3 MANAGEMENT OF CREMATED REMAINS

In response to a Member's query regarding the management of cremated remains, the Director of Estates and Recreation advised that Council provided a number of options for bereaved families including placement within the Crematorium's Panorama Niche (columbarium) for a period of 25 years; interment within an existing grave or memorial plot; or use of the Crematorium Scattering Lawn.

NO ACTION

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED 'IN CONFIDENCE

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Councillor Foster 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 WM/arc21/4/VOL 11 arc21 JOINT COMMITTEE PAPERS

1. Purpose

This report was to update Members on the September arc21 Joint Committee meeting.

2. Introduction

The arc21 Joint Committee meet monthly and each month the papers were reviewed by the Operations Committee.

3. Previous Decisions of Council

All previous papers had been noted.

4. Main Report

The papers for the arc21 Joint Committee Meeting were circulated for Members information:

- 24 September 2026

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

5. Summary

[redacted]

[redacted]

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor Flanagan and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

7.2 IN CONFIDENCE G/LEG/3/381 REQUEST BY THE HENDERSON GROUP REGARDING FARMLEY CAR PARK, GLENGORMLEY

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to inform Members of a request by the Henderson Group to carry out works and to have access rights at Farmley Carpark, Glengormley.

2. Background

Members were reminded that a report was brought to the Operations Committee in June in relation to a planning application submitted by the Henderson Group which involved access to and works at Farmley Carpark. As owner of the carpark the Council was notified of the application.

The details of the works proposed in the planning application was a new entrance to the existing Eurospar retail unit along with associated works to pathways, boundary treatments and landscaping. This would include pedestrian access to and from the Eurospar via Farmley Carpark.

At the Operations Committee in June Members resolved that the matter be considered at a meeting of DEA Members, with no action to be taken at that stage.

Thereafter the Borough Lawyer met with the DEA Members and the following submission was made in relation to the planning application:

- The Council was concerned that the proposed plans as detailed in the planning application submitted by the Henderson Group, which incorporated the Council's Farmley carpark, may lead to the carpark being dominated by Eurospar customers to the detriment of other users of the carpark and other businesses in the area.

- The Council was also concerned as to why the proposed new entrance to the Eurospar store was not dealt with in the previous planning application for the Eurospar store. As essentially the new proposed entrance may be seen as, and may become, the main entrance to the store.

3. Update

In July the Planning Committee approved the planning application submitted by the Henderson Group for a new entrance to the existing Eurospar retail unit along with associated works to pathways, boundary treatments and landscaping. This would include pedestrian access to and from the Eurospar via Farmley Carpark.

The Henderson Group submitted the proposal (circulated) outlining their request to Council to carry out works at Farmley carpark to facilitate the entrance to their Eurospar and access to and from Farmley Carpark.

4. Legal Matters

The request by the Henderson Group to use a portion of Council land and to have an easement over Farmley Carpark would have a monetary value to the Council. At this stage Officers had not sought a valuation regarding the same.

Proposed by Alderman Bradley
Seconded by Councillor McAuley and agreed that

the Borough Lawyer to respond in writing to the Henderson Group, declining their request in relation to Farmley Car Park, Glengormley.

ACTION BY: Paul Casey, Head of Legal, Land and Governance.

7.3 IN CONFIDENCE PK/GEN/197, PK/GEN/185 COLUMBARIUM WALLS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to provide Members with an update on proposals for the introduction and use of columbarium walls across Council's cemetery and crematorium sites.

2. Background

Members would be aware that Council provided dedicated Garden of Remembrance plots across a number of its cemetery sites for the interment of

cremated remains. These plots provided families with a designated and maintained location for the burial of ashes and formed an important part of Council's overall bereavement services provision.

Demand for Garden of Remembrance plots continued to be monitored to ensure that sufficient capacity was available to meet both current and future requirements across the Borough. Current projections indicated that there was a relatively good level of provision at Ballyclare Cemetery, with an estimated remaining capacity of 15 years, and at Mallusk Cemetery, with an estimated capacity of 10 years. However, capacity at Carnmoney Cemetery was considerably more limited, with approximately 0.4 years of provision remaining. In addition, there was currently no dedicated Garden of Remembrance provision within the Antrim/Belmont Cemetery, highlighting the need to consider future provision and capacity across the cemetery estate.
Council currently provided two types of Gardens of Remembrance plots across its cemetery and crematorium sites. Within Council's cemeteries, cremated remains were interred directly into designated plots within the ground. At the crematorium site, cremated remains were placed within purpose-built niches above the ground.

3. Key Considerations for Cemetery Sites

As space was limited across all cemetery sites, the introduction of columbarium walls would provide Council with a practical and sustainable approach to addressing capacity pressures within its cemeteries. Columbarium walls were specifically designed to accommodate cremated remains within individual above-ground niches and could provide a significant number of interment spaces within a comparatively small footprint. Their vertical design enables more efficient use of limited cemetery land and could allow underutilised areas to contribute to future capacity.

Columbarium walls were available in a wide range of sizes, configurations and architectural styles, allowing the design to be tailored to the available space and character of each cemetery or crematorium site. Options could include traditional straight or linear walls, curved and circular arrangements, freestanding structures and bespoke feature designs, including geometric configurations such as star-shaped layouts. The structures could also be single or double-sided to maximise the number of niches provided within the available footprint. Each wall comprised a series of secure individual niches designed for the interment of cremated remains, with niches capable of accommodating up to four urns.
A range of indicative design options were circulated for Members' consideration, demonstrating the various configurations available and how these could be adapted to meet the individual requirements, available space and character of each site.

4. Financial Implications for Council

Officers had undertaken an initial market-testing exercise to establish indicative costs for the provision of columbarium walls across the cemetery and crematorium estate. The indicative pricing included concept and detailed

design, manufacture, construction, packaging and initial shipping of the structures.

Members were asked to note that these figures did not represent the full installed cost. Additional expenditure would be required for final delivery, offloading and positioning, foundations and associated groundworks, specialist plant and equipment, and any site-specific access requirements.

The final cost of each installation would therefore depend on the design and scale of the structure, number of niches, site location, ground conditions and access arrangements. Full costs would be developed on a site-by-site basis before any scheme was progressed for formal approval.

By way of illustration, current indicative costs identified through the market-testing exercise were:

- a 16-niche columbarium wall, capable of accommodating up to 4 urns per niche, providing a maximum capacity of 64 urns, was estimated at £[redacted] and
- a star columbarium design, comprising 120 niches and capable of accommodating up to 2 urns per niche, providing a maximum capacity of 240 urns, was estimated at £[redacted]
- a circular-style columbarium wall, comprising 72 niches and capable of accommodating up to 4 urns per niche, providing a maximum capacity of 288 urns, was estimated at £[redacted]

These options demonstrated the flexibility available in terms of design, scale and capacity, enabling future provision to be tailored to the specific requirements and available space at each site.

Council currently provided columbarium niche facilities at the crematorium, offering families a dedicated and secure location for the interment of cremated remains. The existing columbarium provided two niche options to accommodate differing family requirements. The first option had capacity for up to three urns, while the larger option could accommodate up to four urns. The niches were currently offered on a 25-year lease arrangement, providing families with a dedicated memorial space for the duration of the agreed period. The current charge for a niche capable of accommodating up to three urns was £1,200, while the charge for the larger niche, accommodating up to four urns, was £1,600.

Based on Council's current charging structure for columbarium niches, the potential income associated with each design option had been calculated. Assuming that all niches were leased at the prevailing rate and achieved full occupancy, the indicative income would be as follows:

- 16-niche columbarium wall, with capacity for up to four urns per niche, at £1,600 per niche: £[redacted]
- 120-niche star-shaped columbarium, with capacity for up to two urns per niche, based on the £1,200 niche rate: £[redacted] and

- 72-niche circular columbarium wall, with capacity for up to four urns per niche, at £1,600 per niche: £[redacted]

These figures represented the potential gross income over the 25-year lease period and were based on full uptake of all available niches. Actual income would be dependent upon demand, the rate at which niches were leased and the final charging structure approved by Council.

These existing arrangements provided an established basis from which Council could consider the future expansion of columbarium provision across its cemetery and crematorium estate. Any future proposals would also provide an opportunity to review niche sizes, lease periods and the associated charging structure to ensure that provision remained appropriate, sustainable and consistent across Council sites.

Members welcomed the report and highlighted a number of issues for consideration within the business case process including benchmarking good practice in respect of niche lease periods, pricing and design. Following a comprehensive discussion of the report, the Head of Parks Operations thanked Members for the feedback and noted that this would help inform the business case for the pilot scheme and updates would be provided to the Operations Committee as the project moves forward.

Proposed by Alderman Clarke
Seconded by Councillor Cooper and agreed that

Officers proceed with the development of a proportionate business case to implement a pilot scheme for columbarium provision at Carnmoney Cemetery and Antrim/Belmont Cemetery. The business case would consider site suitability, design options, capacity requirements, capital and installation costs, projected income and future demand, with a further report to be presented to Members for consideration prior to any scheme being progressed.

ACTION BY: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED OUT OF 'IN CONFIDENCE'

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Alderman Clarke 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 7.48pm

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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.