



27 August 2025

Committee Chair: Alderman J Smyth

Committee Vice-Chair: Councillor L O'Hagan

Committee Members: Aldermen – P Bradley and L Boyle

Councillors – J Archibald-Brown, R Foster, J Gilmour,  
N Kelly, AM Logue, A McAuley, E McLaughlin,  
V McWilliam, M Stewart and S Ward

Dear Member

**MEETING OF THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE**

A meeting of the Operations Committee will be held in the **Round Tower Chamber, Antrim Civic Centre on Monday 1 September 2025 at 6.30 pm.**

You are requested to attend.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Baker', is written over a light blue circular stamp.

Richard Baker, GM MSc  
**Chief Executive, Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council**

**PLEASE NOTE: Refreshments will be available in the Café from 5.20pm**

**For any queries please contact Member Services:**  
Tel: 028 9448 1301

[memberservices@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk](mailto:memberservices@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk)

## **A G E N D A**

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**REPORT ON BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE  
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING ON  
MONDAY 1 SEPTEMBER 2025**

**3 PRESENTATION**

**3.1 PBS/PS/016 ESTATE SERVICES ENERGY UPDATE**

**1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this presentation is to provide Members with an update on energy management across all Council facilities.**

**2. Introduction**

Members are advised that David Blair, Head of Estate Services will make a short presentation on energy management.

**3. Recommendation**

**It is recommended that the presentation be noted.**

Agreed and Approved by: Matt McDowell, Director of Parks and Leisure Operations

## 4 ITEMS FOR DECISION

### 4.1 L/LEI/002/VOL4 LEISURE GRANT AID PROGRAMME

#### 1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the recommendations set within the 2nd call of the Leisure Grant Aid Programme.

#### 2. Introduction

Members are advised that for the period 1 June – 31 July 2025, 32 applications were received, 3 applications were deemed ineligible and 29 met the criteria for funding. Details of the grant programme criteria are enclosed.

A table setting out details and recommendations is enclosed for Member's reference. Upon approval of the listed grants, the remaining balances in each funding category are outlined below:

| Category                                  | Budget          | No. of apps. Call: 1 | Approved spend to date 25/26 | No. of apps. Call: 2 | Grants proposed (£) | Funding Balance remaining (subject to approval of application) |
|---|-----------------|----------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|--|
| Capital Grants                            | £40,000         | 4                    | £29,750                      | 1                    | £10,000             | £250   |
| Grants to Clubs                           | £50,000         | 3                    | £9,445                       | 4                    | £27,140             | £13,415  |
| Grants to Athletes Bursaries              | £40,000         | 25                   | £22,739                      | 20                   | £15,137             | £2,124   |
| Grants to Coaches and Officials Bursaries | £5,000          | 4                    | £720                         | 0                    | 0                   | £4,280   |
| Sports Event Grant                        | £30,000         | 8                    | £17,706                      | 2                    | £2,000              | £10,294  |
| Defibrillator Grant                       | £5,000          | 2                    | £1,500                       | 0                    | 0                   | £3,500   |
| <b>Allocation total</b>                   | £170,000        | 46                   | <b>£81,860</b>               | <b>27</b>            | <b>£54,277</b>      | <b>£33,863</b>   |
| Fitness suite Gold Card                   | 20 Applications | <b>6</b>             | 4 applications               | 5                    | 4 eligible          | 12 applications  |

### 3. Financial Position/Implication

The overall budget for the 2025/26 programme is £170,000. £81,860 was previously approved in July 2025. Should approval be given for the grants listed, the total spend to date would total £136,137, with a remaining balance of £33,863. A further call for applications opened on 1 August and will close on 31 October 2025.

### 4. Recommendation

**It is recommended the Leisure Grant Aid Programme, covering the period from June – July 2025 be approved.**

Prepared by: Anna Boyle, Funding Unit Manager and Conor McCallion,  
Leisure Development Manager

Agreed by: John Balmer, Deputy Director of Finance and Deaglan O'Hagan,  
Head of Leisure Operations

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance and Matt  
McDowell, Director of Parks and Leisure

## 4.2 PK/GEN/022 NORTHERN IRELAND AMENITY COUNCIL (BEST KEPT COMMUNITY HERO AWARD)

### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is to seek approval for three individual nominations as part of Council's submission to the Northern Ireland Amenity Council (NIAC) 'Best Kept Community Hero' award 2025.**

### 2. Background

The Northern Ireland Amenity Council (NIAC), established to promote the protection and enhancement of the physical environment, plays a key role in supporting initiatives such as the Best Kept Awards. NIAC also oversees the Northern Ireland Amenity Awards, which have become a benchmark for similar environmental competitions across the UK, the Republic of Ireland, and Europe, including prominent programmes such as Tidy Towns and Entente Florale.

As part of the Best Kept Awards, there is a dedicated "Community Hero" category. This category recognises individuals who have played an active role in the competition and have demonstrated exceptional commitment to their community. Nominees should be individuals who have inspired and motivated others to get involved, shown a strong passion for the environment, consistently gone above and beyond in their efforts, and made a tangible, positive difference to their local area.

Each Council is permitted to submit a maximum of three individual nominations. All entries must be submitted by 12 September 2025. The winner will be announced during the Best Kept Awards Ceremony, to be held on Wednesday, 15 October 2025, at The Burnavon Arts Centre in Cookstown.

### 3. Nominations for 2025

This year nominations have all be actively involved in the 'Best Kept Awards' competition and have a passion for the environment and always go that extra mile and making a positive difference in improving the environment for their community.

| Name              | Group                        |
|-------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Lyndsay Wilson | TIDAL in Toome               |
| 2. Jackie Wells   | Ballynure Friendship Group   |
| 3. Noel Hamilton  | Friends of Coronation Garden |

### 4. Recommendation

**It is recommended that the above nominations for the Northern Ireland Amenity Council (NIAC) 'Best Kept Community Hero' award 2025 be approved.**

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

Approved by: Matt McDowell, Director of Parks and Leisure Operations

### 4.3 PK/GEN/177 BELFAST HILLS PARTNERSHIP FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION FROM COUNCIL

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is to seek approval for an annual financial contribution of £19,036 to the Belfast Hills Partnership for a four-year period from April 2026 to March 2030.**

#### 2. Introduction/Background

Members will be aware that Council is a key partner in the Belfast Hills Partnership. This Partnership was originally established with the legacy Newtownabbey Borough Council in 2004 and has continued under Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council since its formation in 2015.

The Partnership delivers a broad range of initiatives focused on enhancing local sites, protecting and restoring biodiversity, and fostering community engagement across all age groups. These efforts help ensure that both residents and visitors can access, enjoy, and benefit from the natural landscape within Antrim and Newtownabbey section of the Belfast Hills. The Belfast Hills span approximately 5,500 hectares in total, with 1,243 hectares, representing 22.6% of the area located within the Borough.

As part of its ongoing efforts to support Council's One Million Trees initiative, the Partnership has successfully planted 31,652 trees across 14 hectares of land and established approximately 1,700 metres of new hedgerow. These activities not only contribute to carbon reduction and biodiversity enhancement but also support long-term climate resilience and ecosystem connectivity within the Borough. In addition to tree planting, the Partnership has played a key role in engaging the local community through the coordination and supervision of volunteer activities at several strategic sites. These include Carnmoney Hill, Valley Park, and Glas-Na-Bradán Wood.

#### 3. Previous Decision of Council

Members are reminded that in November 2023, Council approved an annual funding contribution of £19,036 for a two-year period from 2023 to 2025.

#### 4. Financial Position/Implication

Correspondence, including a newsletter, has been received from the Partnership (copies **enclosed**) requesting that the Council continue its annual financial contribution of £19,036 for a further four-year period (April 2026 – March 2030). The proposed extension would provide the Partnership with greater financial certainty and enable longer-term financial planning.

## 5. Recommendation

**It is recommended that the financial contribution of £19,036 per annum to Belfast Hills Partnership for the next four years from April 2026 – March 2030 be approved.**

Prepared by: Nadine Campbell, Parks Development Manager

Agreed by: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

Approved by: Matt McDowell, Director of Parks and Leisure Operations.

#### 4.4 PK/GEN/ 217 CELEBRATING THE 35<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF SAM MOULDINGS

##### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the installation of a celebratory disc in recognition of the 35th anniversary of SAM Mouldings based in Antrim.**

##### 2. Introduction/Background

In 2025, SAM Mouldings proudly celebrates its 35th anniversary, marking over three decades of excellence in the moulding and manufacturing industry. Established in 1990, the company has grown to become a trusted and respected name, recognised for its high-quality products, continuous innovation, and exceptional customer service. As a longstanding local employer, SAM Mouldings has demonstrated an enduring commitment to the Antrim area, contributing significantly to the local economy and community over the past 35 years.

##### 3. Previous Decision of Council

Council has previously approved the placement of celebratory and anniversary discs throughout the Borough in recognition of the significant achievements or milestones of local individuals, clubs, community organisations and businesses.

##### 4. Financial Implication

The installation of the anniversary celebratory disc will cost of circa £350. The proposed location for the disc is on Greystone Roundabout.

##### 5. Recommendation

**It is recommended that approval for the installation of the anniversary celebratory disc for SAM Mouldings be granted.**

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

Approved by: Matt McDowell, Director of Parks and Leisure Operations

## 4.5 EH/EHS/002 SERVICE DELIVERY OF ANIMAL WELFARE SERVICE

### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Members on the delivery of the Animal Welfare Service and to seek funding for the continued delivery of the service.**

### 2. Background

Members are reminded, since April 2015, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council (MEA) has acted as the Sub-Regional Lead Council for the delivery of the Animal Welfare Service across the Northern Region (Mid and East Antrim, Antrim and Newtownabbey, and Causeway Coast and Glens).

Historically, the 11 councils in Northern Ireland received 100% funding (£1.25M) from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) to cover the cost of the service. However, DAERA has confirmed in writing (April 2024) that, due to budget reductions, it can no longer provide financial support to Councils.

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council sought a judicial review of DAERA's decision on behalf of the 11 councils. The hearing took place in February 2025, and while an outcome had been expected before summer, no judgement has yet been issued.

### 3. Previous Decision of Council

In November 2023 and June 2024, Members agreed that Council approved the use of Council funds to finance the Animal Welfare Service during 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 to enable continued service delivery at a cost of approximately £140,000.

### 4. Key Issues

In April 2024, DAERA advised Councils that an additional resource allocation of £625,000 had been made for 2023–2024. This was distributed among the 11 Councils as a partial contribution towards costs already incurred. However, the allocation did not cover the full cost of service delivery, and Councils were required to contribute from their own budgets.

DAERA has also confirmed that, unless further funding is provided by the Northern Ireland Executive, no finance will be available for 2025–2026 or subsequent financial years. For this Council, the shortfall equates to approximately £140,000 annually.

MEA has requested assurance from Council and Causeway Coast and Glens Council that their 2025–2026 contributions will be transferred to MEA to support continued service delivery. Given that the Animal Welfare Service for non-farmed animals is a statutory responsibility, Officers recommend that

Council provides the required contribution as this remains the most cost-effective method of delivery.

The funding requirement has been included in the 2025-26 budgets. When the judicial review outcome has been issued a further report will be presented to Members.

## 5. Summary

In April 2024, DAERA advised Council that it was withdrawing financial assistance for the Animal Welfare Service. However, no funding has been available since 2024. NI councils have sought a judicial review of DAERA's decision, and this process is ongoing.

At present, MEA provides this service for Council and has requested confirmation that Council wish to continue the agreement in 2025-26. Given that this is a statutory duty of Council and the current arrangement is deemed to be the most efficient way to deliver service, Officers recommend approval of the funding request. Monies have been included in the 2025-26 budget for this service.

## 6. Recommendation

**It is recommended that the current delivery mechanism for the Animal Welfare Service through Mid and East Antrim Borough Council at an estimated cost of £140,000 in 2025-2026 be approved.**

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

Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Sustainability

## 4.6 L/LEI/001 UK ACTIVE AWARDS 2025

### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the submission to the 2025 UK Active Awards and seek approval for nominees to attend the awards in International Convention Centre in Birmingham on Thursday 30 October 2025.**

### 2. Introduction

UK Active is a leisure industry body with over 4,000 members ranging from public, private and third sectors. The UK Active Annual Awards are the largest and most prestigious accolades in the leisure industry, designed to recognise and celebrate excellence and innovation across health, wellbeing and fitness in the UK.

To be shortlisted as a finalist, entries must pass a two-stage assessment process, with the centres undergoing a third stage of a mystery shop deciding the overall winner.

Members are reminded that in 2024, Ballyearl Arts and Leisure Centre was shortlisted, and subsequently retained the Regional Centre of the Year, following the success in 2023 with award of Regional and National Leisure Centre of the Year. In 2022 the Valley Leisure Centre was awarded Regional Leisure Centre of the Year.

### 3. Awards Ceremony

The award ceremony will take place on 30 October 2025 at the International Convention Centre, Birmingham.

This year, Ballyearl Arts and Leisure Centre has once again been shortlisted as a finalist in both the Regional Leisure Centre of the Year and National Leisure Centre of the Year categories. The Antrim Forum has also reached the finals, reflecting the continued strength of the Borough's leisure facilities.

In addition to facility recognition, acknowledgement has been given to individuals and programmes. Arlene McMinn, Health Intervention Officer, has been nominated for Physical Activity Hero of the Year in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the Council's Health Intervention Programme. Furthermore, the Health Intervention Programme itself has been shortlisted for the Healthy Communities Award.

### 4. Recommendation

**It is recommended the attendance of the Mayor, Chair of the Operations Committee or their nominees and relevant Council Officers at the UK Active Awards Ceremony at the International Convention Centre in Birmingham on 30 October 2025 be approved.**

Prepared by: Conor McCallion, Leisure Development Manager

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

Approved by: Matt McDowell, Director of Parks and Leisure Operations

## 4.7 WM/WG/002 WINTER GRITTING OPERATIONS 2025-26

### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report seek approval for Winter Gritting Operations 2025-26.**

### 2. Background

From November to April each year, Council implements a Winter Operations Plan to help staff deliver services as safely and efficiently as possible during the winter months. The plan (**enclosed**) includes provisions for gritting all Council facilities and designated areas such as town centres and car parks. It also outlines procedures for maintaining waste collection services during adverse weather and for carrying out snow clearance operations.

In addition Council has a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), with the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) Roads regarding the clearance of designated "*town centre footways and pedestrian areas*" of snow and ice during periods of "*heavy snowfall or prolonged*" adverse weather. As part of this agreement DfI Roads provides Council with the salt/grit mix free of charge, pays an annual service fee, £2,358, and extends its indemnity to Council.

### 3. Key Issues

The Plan is activated when there is a strong likelihood of ice, as indicated by Met Office warnings and media weather reports. Once activated, it results in the gritting of designated areas, including town and village centres. A copy of the designated areas is included (**enclosed**) for Members' information.

As per last year's Winter Operations, it is proposed that gritting operations will be carried out by staff and as well as an external contractor in order to maintain the level of service required over the winter period. It is estimated that it will cost up to £24,000 depending on the severity of the winter.

#### Community Winter Resilience Kits

Council will continue to offer a limited number of Community Winter Resilience Kits which include a salt spreader, salt, grit box, snow shovels, ice grippers, gloves, and hi-vis vests. These Kits can be requested by individuals and community groups who are willing to provide a gritting or snow clearance service in their local community. Each group or individual receiving a Kit will also be given health and safety guidance notes.

#### Community Grit Piles

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

#### **4. Recommendation**

**It is recommended that:**

- a) the Winter Operations Plan be noted;**
- b) Additional contractor gritting costs of up to approximately £24,000 be approved.**

Prepared by: Darren Purdy, Head of Waste Operations

Agreed by and Approved by: Michael Lavery, Director of Sustainability &  
Matt McDowell, Director of Parks and Leisure

## 4.8 PK/GEN/057 GREEN FLAG AWARDS 2025 COMMUNITY NOMINATIONS

### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is to seek approval for nominations for the 2025 Green Flag Community “Best of the Best” Awards**

### 2. Introduction/Background

The Green Flag Award is an internationally recognised benchmark of excellence for parks and green spaces, celebrating sites that are well-managed, welcoming, safe, and environmentally sustainable. Administered by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, the award highlights spaces that not only meet high standards but also actively involve their local communities. Each site is rigorously assessed by trained judges against strict criteria, ensuring that only the best receive the prestigious Green Flag status.

As part of this programme, the Community “Best of the Best” Awards shines a spotlight on those exceptional locations that go above and beyond in engaging their local communities. These awards honour the dedication, creativity, and hard work of community groups and volunteers who help to make their green spaces truly outstanding.

### 3. Submissions for 2025

This year’s nominees have all been actively involved in the **Green Flag Awards** competition and have made a positive difference by improving the environment for their communities.

| Category                          | Group/Project  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Volunteer Team of the Year        | Tidy Randalstown,<br>Ballynure Friend Group<br>Carnmoney Community Group |
| Best Habitat/Biodiversity Project | Creation of Wildflower meadows   |

The winners of the Community “Best of the Best” Awards will be announced at a virtual award ceremony on 20th November 2025.

### 4. Recommendation

**It is recommended that the above nominations be approved for submission to the 2025 Green Flag Community “Best of the Best” Awards.**

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

Approved by: Matt McDowell, Director of Parks and Leisure Operations

## 5 ITEMS FOR NOTING

### 5.1 L/LEI/SD/018 HEALTH INTERVENTION REPORT QUARTER 1 2025-26

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is to provide a Quarter 1 update on Council's Health Intervention Action Plan for 2025–26.**

#### 2. Introduction/Background

Members are advised that Council approved the Health Intervention Action Plan (2022-27) in November 2022, a copy is **enclosed** for Member's reference. The Action Plan is designed to increase regular and sustainable participation in exercise across all age groups, with the wider aim of tackling wider health issues in vulnerable and inactive groups.

#### 3. Key Issues

Officers continue to lead and coordinate a diverse range of programmes, working in partnership with relevant organisations to ensure the effective implementation of the Action Plan.

In Quarter 1 of 2025–26, a total of 6,147 participants engaged in Council-supported programmes. The performance against targets is outlined below:

| <b>Programmes</b>   | <b>25/26 Annual Target</b> | <b>Q1 Target</b> | <b>Q1 Actual</b> |
|---|----------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Physical Activity Referral Scheme (PARS)  | 170                        | 45               | 39               |
| Move More Cancer Rehabilitation and Rehabilitation Programme                              | 100                        | 25               | 16               |
| Age Friendly (Live Long, Fall's Prevention, Walking Netball, Aqua Fit and Nordic Walking) | 22,000                     | 5500             | 4837             |
| Exercise for Mental Health Programme  | 2000                       | 500              | 364              |
| Respiratory Rehabilitation and Maintenance Programme                                      | 600                        | 115              | 168              |
| Cardiac Rehabilitation and Maintenance Programmes   | 1200                       | 300              | 352              |
| Programmes for People with a Disability   | 500                        | 125              | 188              |
| Pre-Post Natal (new)  | 100                        | 0                | 0                |
| Substance mis-use (new)   | 20                         | 0                | 0                |
| Veterans  | 30                         | 0                | 0                |

#### 4. New Programmes

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

In **Quarter 3**, new initiatives will be launched supporting **pre- and post-natal health** and to address **substance misuse**. Building on the success of last year, another Veteran's programme will also take place in Quarter 3.

In addition, funding secured from the **Public Health Agency** will enable the delivery of a **bespoke Cancer and Golf Rehabilitation Programme** which will take place in Quarter 3.

#### 5. Financial Position/Implication

The Council directly employs **three Health Intervention Officers** to support delivery of the Action Plan. This work is part-funded through external sources, with the table below providing a breakdown of confirmed external funding for **2025–26**.

| <b>Programme</b>                                 | <b>Funded by</b> | <b>Total</b>   |
|--|------------------|----------------|
| Physical Activity Referral Schemes (PARS)        | PHA              | £33,506        |
| Healthy Kids Schools Programme                   | NHLP             | £4000          |
| Cancer & Golf rehab programme                    | NHLP             | £4000          |
| Walking Football Programme TBC                   | NHSCT            | £3,000 TBC     |
| Falls Prevention Steady and Strong Programme TBC | NHSCT            | £1,870<br>TBC  |
| Move More (Cancer Rehabilitation Programme)      | Macmillan        | £5,000<br>TBC  |
| <b>Total</b>                                     |                  | <b>£51,376</b> |

#### 6. Recommendation

**It is recommended that the report be noted.**

Prepared by: Kevin Madden Sport and Physical Activity Manager

Agreed by: Deaglan O'Hagan Head of Leisure Operations

Approved by: Matt McDowell, Director of Parks and Leisure Operations

## 5.2 FI/FIN/004 BUDGET REPORT – PERIOD 4 APRIL 2025 TO JULY 2025

### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is to provide financial performance information at period 4 (April 2025 – July 2025) for Parks, Leisure and Estate Services and Sustainability.**

### 2. Introduction/Background

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

### 3. Summary

Budget reports for Parks, Leisure & Estate Services and Sustainability for Period 4 – April 2025 to July 2025 are **enclosed** for Members' information.

At present the Parks and Leisure Directorate has a favourable variance of £257k, or 6.4%, against the budgeted financial performance for the period and this is due to:

- Staff vacancies
- Leisure Membership & Golf income higher than budgeted

The Sustainability Directorate has a favourable variance of £300k, or 3.5%, against the budgeted financial performance for the period and this is due to:

- Staff vacancies;
- Lower than estimated waste arisings;
- Delay in payment for Animal Welfare Service.

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

### 4. Recommendation

**It is recommended that the report be noted.**

Prepared by: John Balmer, Deputy Director of Finance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

### 5.3 EH/EHS/FC/012 DRINKING WATER QUALITY REPORT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is to remind Members that Northern Ireland Water publishes an annual report on water quality for each council, based on compliance with the 2017 Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations (Northern Ireland).**

#### 2. Background

Northern Ireland Water's supply area is divided into Water Supply Zones, each serving up to 100,000 people, with seven across the Borough. Random water samples are taken from customer taps and planned samples from Supply Points in each zone. The NI Water Drinking Water report (**enclosed**) details water quality in the Council's area, based on compliance percentages from these samples.

The water supplied in all zones within the Council's area complied with all the physico-chemical and microbiological standards laid down in the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017 with only minor issues related to aluminium parameters at Killylane, Ballynure and these were rectified after an audit of the treatment works.

#### 3. Summary

In 2024, the compliance rate at customer taps within the Borough was 99.9%. All zones in the Council's area met the physico-chemical and microbiological standards set by the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017, with only minor exceedances of aluminium levels at Killylane, Ballynure.

It should be noted that this study does not include testing for microplastics as there are currently no standards or thresholds in the Regulations for this.

#### 4. Recommendation

**It is recommended that the report be noted.**

Prepared by: Christina McErlean, Deputy Head of Environmental Health

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

Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Sustainability

## 5.4 EH/PHWB/012 SILVER SUMMER SCHEME

### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the Age Friendly initiative “Silver Summer Scheme,” which encourages older people to stay active with a week of creative and fun activities.**

### 2. Background

Members are reminded that Environmental Health leads the Age Friendly agenda by making the Borough a better place to age. During the summer months, many community groups and programmes for older residents pause their activities, resulting in a lack of accessible, structured opportunities for social engagement and participation. This can lead to increased social isolation and reduced wellbeing among older adults.

### 3. Key Issues

To address this issue the Health and Wellbeing team within Environmental Health launched the first ever Silver Summer Scheme, a new initiative designed to help older residents stay active, connected, and engaged. Running from **21 to 25 July**, this was the only initiative of its kind in Northern Ireland. It offered a week of free, diverse activities, including Nordic walking, gardening, arts and crafts, live entertainment, and social cafés.

The programme was delivered in partnership with the **Waste, Leisure, Parks, Arts and Culture teams, arc 21**, and **Libraries NI**, and successfully hosted events across all **seven District Electoral Areas (DEAs)**. Activities included Nordic Walking, Bag Making Workshop, Tea and Tidy Litter Pick, Boccia and Brew, Pebble Art, Picnic and Planting and more. There was no financial impact on Council.

A total of 127 residents took part in the events with 100% of residents enjoying the events with 98% approving of the range of activities offered.

Feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive, with comments such as:

*“Keep up what you do, I enjoyed the bingo, music and getting to talk to other people I didn’t know.”*

*“The team is very enthusiastic and I would try to support future summer events. There is definitely a gap in summer for people without families.”*

Building on the success of this year’s Silver Summer Scheme, the Health and Wellbeing team is planning an expanded and enhanced Silver Summer Scheme in 2026 to reach even more residents.

For those unable to attend Silver Summer Scheme events, the Council website provides an age friendly section featuring the “News for You” older persons

magazine and “Ask the Age Friendly Officer” feature where older residents can submit questions to the Age Friendly Officer. A link is below

<https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/residents/community-initiatives/age-friendly/>

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

A Section 75 screening and Rural Needs Assessment have been carried out for the Silver Summer Scheme (**enclosed**).

#### 5. Summary

The **Silver Summer Scheme** successfully filled a gap in summer engagement opportunities for older residents by delivering a week-long series of free, inclusive events across the Borough. With 127 participants and outstanding feedback, the programme demonstrated a clear need for structured social and wellbeing activities during the summer. Building on this success, the scheme will be expanded in 2026 to further support older residents' health, connection, and enjoyment.

#### 6. **Recommendation**

**It is recommended that:**

- a) The report be noted;**
- b) The outcome of the Section 75 Equality Screening and Rural Proofing carried out for the Silver Summer Scheme be noted.**

Prepared by: James O'Kane, Health and Wellbeing Manager

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

Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Sustainability

## 5.5 EH/PHWB/005 COST OF LIVING BOOKLET

### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is to inform Members that a cost of living and wellbeing support booklet entitled 'Live Well Local' has been created by Environmental Health in contribution to the Anti-Poverty work.**

### 2. Background

Members are reminded that during the 2023 review of the Borough's *Love Living Here* Community Plan, poverty was identified as a key concern. In response, the Council agreed in January 2024 to establish a cross-party Anti-Poverty Steering Group.

Working in partnership with statutory agencies, community organisations, and the voluntary sector, the Steering Group has developed a strategic framework, the **Anti-Poverty Strategy** designed to deliver long-term, sustainable change for residents.

The Strategy focuses on:

- **Enabling economic opportunities** through access to employment and skills development.
- **Maximising partnership working** by collaborating across sectors to increase impact.
- **Promoting social inclusion**, ensuring that no one is left behind.
- **Improving access to essential services**, including financial advice, energy support, and food provision.

Raising awareness and signposting residents to available support is a central element of this work. To assist with this, Environmental Health has produced a resident information booklet entitled '*Live Well Local – Cost of Living and Wellbeing Support*'.

### 3. Key Issues

The '*Live Well Local*' booklet provides residents with key information and contact details for statutory, community, and voluntary organisations offering support. The content is structured around five pillars: employment and skills, family and wellbeing support, energy support, food support, and financial support.

The booklet is being promoted through the Council's website and social media channels, with hard copies distributed at Council events and made available to residents and community organisations on request. It will be reviewed and updated annually in partnership with members of the Council's Anti-Poverty Steering Group.

The '*Live Well Local*' booklet can be found at;  
[antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/cost-of-living](http://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/cost-of-living)

#### **4. Recommendation**

**It is recommended that the report be noted.**

Prepared by: James O'Kane, Health and Wellbeing Manager

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

Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Sustainability

## 5.6 WM/RC/001 REVIEW OF BOOKING SYSTEM FOR VANS AT HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING CENTRES

### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is to update Members on the booking system for medium and large vans at Household Recycling Centres.**

### 2. Background

As Members are aware, the new booking system for medium and large vans was introduced to Household Recycling Centres in November 2024.

Household Recycling Centres are extensively used by residents with almost 50% of the waste collected by Council (~ 50,000 tonnes) generated through the Centres. Waste is brought to the Centres by residents predominantly in cars and vans, with approximately 680,000 users per annum.

Since November, anyone visiting the Recycling Centres in a medium or large van have to book into one of the designated slots which allows staff to manage the number of vans on site.

### 3. Key Issues

As a result of the implementation of the booking system, the following has been reported by staff operating on site

- Less vans on site has given staff more time to spend helping residents in cars.
- Van visits are spread more evenly throughout the day.
- Visiting times for residents have been reduced due to increased access to parking bays and less congestion on site.
- Increased efficiency and effectiveness and a decrease in health and safety risks onsite.

The table below shows the percentage of vans slots used at each of the Recycling Centres since the introduction of the new booking system in November 2024, which would indicate that no users were prevented from using the sites if they were permitted to do so.

| <b>Recycling Centre</b> | <b>% Van Slots Used</b> |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Bruslee                 | 29.1%                   |
| Craigmore               | 11.6%                   |
| Crumlin                 | 16.6%                   |
| O'Neill Road            | 54.4%                   |
| Newpark                 | 34.1%                   |

In addition, the table below shows the comparison in tonnes delivered to the Recycling Centres between November and April over the last two year:

|                       | <b>Total Waste Received at Recycling Centres (tonnes)</b> |
|-----------------------|---|
| Nov 2023 – April 2024 | 24,433  |
| Nov 2024 – April 2025 | 24,238  |

The table below indicates that there has been a reduction in the amount of waste being received at Council's recycling centres. The reduction in tonnage is approximately 200 tonnes (-1%) and this equates to savings of around £20,000 on treatment/disposal costs. It should be noted that the recycling centres have been experiencing annual increases in waste received with a 6% increase from 2023-24 to 2024-25.

The data collected within the six-month trial period indicates that there is a small number of vans (0.2%) are using the sites on multiple occasions and responsible for 6% of the total number of visits. If the van owner lives in the Borough and is carrying waste that originates from a domestic household, staff will allow access to the recycling centre.

It is proposed that the current booking system is maintained and feedback is sought from users on the current arrangements with a further report to Members after the system has been in operation for 12 months. In addition, Officers can consider measures to reduce the number of van users visiting the Centres on multiple occasions if Members wish.

#### 4. Budgetary Implications

There was a small cost to update and activate of the booking system used during COVID pandemic but this has been recouped by the reduction in the waste received on site.

#### 5. Summary

The booking system for vans was successfully implemented in November 2024 and this has resulted in safer and more efficient operations at the recycling centres. In addition, there has been a small reduction in the tonnage of waste received at the sites. A further report will be presented to Members when the booking system has been in operation for 12 months.

#### 6. Recommendation

**It is recommended that the report is noted.**

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

Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Sustainability

## 5.7 WM/RC/001 UPDATE ON CAPITAL WORKS AT CRAIGMORE HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING CENTRE

### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is to update Members on the capital works at Craigmore Household Recycling Centre.**

### 2. Background

Over the last number of years, the condition of the Centre has deteriorated due to the volume of road traffic and heavy machinery that use the facility. This has resulted in the following issues:

- Pot-holed road surface
- Faulty drainage system
- Damage to concrete retaining walls

To address these issues, remedial works are scheduled to commence on 15 September, with an expected completion date of 4 December. The works will be carried out over three phases to minimise disruption to the daily operation of the centre. During this period the site will partially remain open, with access maintained, where possible, to allow continued use of the facilities.

### 3. Site Works

The works will be conducted under three phases.

Phase One will focus on the repair of the bay walls, installation of a drainage system with new interceptor tank and improvements to the layout. In addition, resurfacing works and the installation of new fencing.

Phase Two will consist of further drainage works, the installation of a new kerbline, and additional resurfacing.

Phase Three will address gully patch repairs, surface strip repairs, and further drainage system repairs.

### 4. Site Operations During Works

While Phases One and Two are in progress, access to the compactors will be available, however, all bays will be closed for the duration of these works, affecting the receipt of green waste, wood and rubble.

To facilitate service continuity:

- Small amounts of these waste types will still be accepted on site.
- Larger amounts will be redirected to Newpark HRC, where they can be disposed of appropriately.
- Public will be advised through direct messaging on site and social media channels.

When Phase Three commences, operations will be adjusted to ensure services continue:

- The compactors will be closed.
- Vehicles and skips will be available to accept general waste.
- Small amounts of rubble, wood and building material will also be accepted to minimise inconvenience to the public.

The above plans are flexible and Officers may need to amend as the works develop, with any significant changes communicated to Members and the site users.

#### 5. Financial implications

To maintain partial site operations during Phases 2 and 3, additional resources are required due to the unavailability of compactors. It is proposed to hire two Refuse Collection Vehicles, an agency driver, and four skips for wood and metal disposal at an estimated cost of £17,000. While financial provision has not been made for these measures, the cost can be absorbed by savings within the waste management budget.

#### 6. Summary

Throughout Phases One and Two, the site will remain open at the compactors, while all bays will be closed. This will limit the Council's ability to take green waste, wood, and rubble. Small amounts will still be accepted, with larger volumes redirected to Newpark HRC.

While we recognise there will be some inconvenience to members of the public, these works are essential for the long-term sustainability of the site. As a result, residents will be advised of the changes to minimise inconvenience during the required works.

#### 7. Recommendation

**It is recommended that the report be noted.**

Prepared by: Darren Purdy, Head of Waste Operations

Agreed and Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Sustainability

## 5.8 PBS/PS/016 ENERGY PROJECTS UPDATE

### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the Council's Energy Management performance, highlighting completed work, projects currently planned, and longer-term development priorities.**

### 2. Background

Members will be aware that energy across the Council estate is managed by the Estate Services Section, covering consumption, emissions, costs, monitoring, and billing. To support this, a £300k Energy Fund is available for energy efficiency initiatives in addition to stand alone capital-funded projects.

### 3. Completed Projects

Over the first quarter of the 2025/26 financial year, Estate Services has delivered a series of improvements aimed at reducing costs, emissions, and fossil fuel dependency. Key projects include:

- Heating and Building Management System upgrades at Mossley Mill, Sixmile Leisure Centre, and Theatre at the Mill, with modern Heating Ventilation Air Conditioning (HVAC) controllers installed.
- HVAC profile optimisation at Theatre at the Mill and Mossley Mill to better align energy use with building occupancy.
- Boiler replacement at Antrim Forum, with two high-efficiency, modulating gas boilers installed.
- Reconfiguration of the Combined Heat and Power boiler at Antrim Forum to maximise performance.
- Refurbishment of Sixmile Leisure Centre's biomass boiler, reducing reliance on gas.
- Installation of 8 new EV charging points at the Environmental Services Depot, integrated under a single management system.
- Introduction of charging at 9 Council EV locations, creating a revenue stream to fund ongoing maintenance and expansion.

### 4. Results

In comparison to Quarter 1 2024/25, energy consumption has fallen by 21.5%, costs by 12.5% (£66k), and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 22% in Q1 2025/26.

### 5. Pending Projects 2025–2026

Looking forward, the Estate Services Section will continue to prioritise the reduction of oil and gas use by rolling out renewable technologies and major plant upgrades. Planned projects include:

- Solar panels at Mossley Mill
- Wind turbine and solar panels at the Environmental Services Depot

- Heating control and BMS upgrades at Valley Leisure Centre, Forum Leisure Centre, and Ballyearl Leisure Centre
- Energy audit of Mossley Mill by the Capital Development Team to assess renewable opportunities (biogas, hydrogen, heat pumps, solar canopies, hydro/wind)
- Expansion of EV charging network, with approximately 21 Council-controlled charge points by December 2025
- HVAC replacements at Antrim Forum and Crumlin Leisure Centre by March 2026
- LED floodlighting upgrades at Antrim Forum, Valley, Crumlin, Allen Park, and Sixmile Leisure Centres, with automated and remote controls
- Expansion of energy monitoring to the top 15 consuming sites, representing 90% of usage
- Consultant reviews of opportunities for wind turbines, heat pumps, and large-scale solar installations, including car park canopies

#### 6. Future Development

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

- Investigating building fabric thermal improvements (for example Sixmile Leisure Centre)
- Maximising heat recovery in ventilation systems at major sites
- Extending automated metering for energy and water to enable benchmarking and performance tracking
- Monitoring and replacing plant and equipment (boilers, coils, generators, pumps) to maintain efficiency
- Implementing a pool cover replacement programme to reduce heating costs across leisure centres

#### 7. Recommendation

**It is recommended that the report be noted.**

Prepared by: David Blair, Head of Estate Services

Agreed and Approved by: Matt McDowell, Director of Parks and Leisure Operations

**6 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS**

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