



**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD
AT MOSSLEY MILL ON MONDAY 29 SEPTEMBER 2025 AT 6.30 PM**

- In the Chair** : Mayor (Councillor L Kirkpatrick)
- Members Present** : Aldermen – L Boyle, M Magill, P Michael, S Ross and J Smyth
- : Councillors – J Archibald-Brown, A Bennington, S Cosgrove, H Cushinan, P Dunlop, R Foster, J Gilmour, N Kelly, R Kinnear, AM Logue, A McAuley, T McGrann, E McLaughlin, M Ní Chonghaile, A O’Lone, M Stewart, S Ward and S Wilson
- Members Present (Remotely)** : Aldermen – P Bradley, M Cosgrove and J McGrath,
- : Councillors - M Brady, J Burbank, M Cooper, S Flanagan, M Goodman, R Lynch, H Magill, B Mallon, V McWilliam, L O’Hagan and B Webb
- In Attendance (In person)** : Dr Steve Blockwell, Head of Investment Management, NI Water
Roy Mooney Pre-Development Manager, NI Water
- Officers Present** : Chief Executive - R Baker
Director of Economic Development and Planning – M McAlister
Director of Community Development – U Fay
Director of Sustainability, Operations – M Laverty
Director of Parks and Leisure, Operations – M McDowell
Director of Finance and Governance – S Cole
Deputy Director of Governance – L Johnston
Borough Lawyer and Head of Legal Services – P Casey
ICT Systems Support Officer – C Bell
ICT Exchange Officer – A Cole
Member Services Manager – A Duffy
Member Services Officer – L McDonald

1 BIBLE READING, PRAYER AND WELCOME

The Mayor welcomed all present to the meeting and advised Members of the audio recording procedures.

The meeting opened with a Bible reading and prayer by Reverend John Gilkinson.

Alderman Boyle and Councillors Cushman, Goodman, Kinnear, Logue, McAuley, McGrann, McLaughlin, Ní Chonghaile, O'Hagan and O'Lone joined the meeting at this point.

2 APOLOGIES

Alderman – T Campbell.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

The Mayor advised that the presentation from NI Water would be taken at this point of the meeting.

11.1 G/MSMO/7 NORTHERN IRELAND WATER UPDATE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this presentation was to provide Members with an update on the works of Northern Ireland Water across the Borough.

2. Introduction

The Mayor welcomed Dr Stephen Blockwell, Head of Investment Management, and Mr Roy Mooney, Pre-Development Manager from NI Water to the meeting. Dr. Blockwell provided an overview of current investments, challenges and development constraints related to growth and environmental factors.

Dr Blockwell and Mr Mooney responded to Members' queries regarding refusal of domestic and commercial connections in Metropolitan Newtownabbey area and highlighted the importance of early developer engagement for assessment. They addressed the ongoing issues with algae bloom from Lough Neagh and delivery constraints regarding Whitehouse pumping station due to funding shortfalls.

The Mayor and Members thanked Dr Blockwell and Mr Mooney for the presentation, and they left the meeting.

Moved by Councillor Brady
Seconded by Councillor Webb and

RESOLVED – that Council acknowledges the Northern Ireland Water presentation and expresses its concern in relation to the lack of funding available and the associated constraints on economic growth, health and wellbeing impacts on residents and highlights these concerns with central government.

ACTION BY: Richard Baker, Chief Executive and Majella McAlister, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Economic Development and Planning.

4 MINUTES OF THE ANTRIM AND NEWTOWNABBEY BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING

Moved by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor Wilson and

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Meeting of Tuesday 26 August 2025 be taken as read and signed as correct.

5 MINUTES OF THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

Moved by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Councillor McAuley and

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Operations Committee Meeting of Monday 1 September 2025 be approved and adopted.

Alderman Ross and Councillor Ward left the Chamber at Item 6.

6 MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

Moved by Councillor Webb
Seconded by Councillor Magill and

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Policy and Governance Committee Meeting of Tuesday 2 September 2025 be approved and adopted.

Alderman Magill left and returned to the Chamber during Item 7.

7 MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

AMENDMENT TO THE DECISION MADE AT ITEM 3.5

Moved by Councillor Brady
Seconded by Councillor Cosgrove that

Members reconsider Item 3.5 Bonfire Management Programme 2025 and agree that

(a) due to the final inspection carried out, no sanction be applied in relation to the four sites where flag burning incidents occurred.

- (b) due to the final inspection carried out, no sanctions be applied in 2026 to the Neillsbrook bonfire site given the presence of asbestos;
- (c) the current programme remains in place.

On the amendment being put to the meeting and a recorded vote having been requested by Councillor Brady, Members voted as follows:

In favour of the Amendment 20 Members viz	Against the Amendment 18 Members viz	Abstentions 0 Members viz
Aldermen – Bradley, Cosgrove, Magill, Michael, Ross and Smyth Councillors – Archibald-Brown, Bennington, Brady, Cooper, Cosgrove, Dunlop Flanagan, Foster, Kirkpatrick McWilliam, Magill, Mallon, Ward and Wilson	Aldermen – Boyle and McGrath Councillors – Burbank, Cushinan, Gilmour, Goodman, Kelly, Kinnear, Logue, Lynch, McAuley, McGrann, McLaughlin, Ní Chonghaile, O’Hagan O’Lone, Stewart and Webb	

The amendment was declared carried and became the substantive Motion.

The Chief Executive addressed a Member's Point of Order concerning the decision made and voted on at the Community Development Committee and confirmed that the minutes of that meeting are subsequently presented to Full Council for ratification. He further clarified that the application of sanctions as prescribed in the bonfire management programme, is entirely a matter for Members to decide.

A further amendment was then put to the meeting.

Proposed by Councillor McGrann
Seconded by Councillor O’Lone that

- (a) that a penalty of 21% be applied in 2026 to each of the four sites where flag burning incidents occurred
- (b) a funding reduction of 21% be applied in 2026 to the Neillsbrook bonfire site given the presence of asbestos;
- (c) a review of the current programme including funding arrangements be carried out, with proposals brought back to a future meeting of the Committee.

On the above amendment being put to the meeting 17 Members voted in favour, 21 against and 0 abstentions.

The amendment was declared not carried.

On the substantive proposal being put the meeting 19 Members voted in favour, 18 against and 0 abstentions.
The substantive proposal was declared carried and it was agreed that

Moved by Councillor Brady
Seconded by Councillor Cosgrove that

- (a) due to the final inspection carried out, no sanction be applied in relation to the four sites where flag burning incidents occurred**
- (b) due to the final inspection carried out, no sanctions be applied in 2026 to the Neillsbrook bonfire site given the presence of asbestos;**
- (c) the current programme remains in place.**

Moved by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Councillor Cosgrove and

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Community Development Committee Meeting of Monday 8 September 2025 with the amendment to item 3.5 be approved and adopted.

8 MINTUES OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

Moved by Councillor Mallon
Seconded by Alderman Cosgrove and

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Economic Development Committee Meeting of Tuesday 9 September 2025 be approved and adopted.

9(a) MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING, PART 1

Moved by Councillor Kinnear
Seconded by Councillor Flanagan and

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee Meeting of Monday 15 September 2025 Part 1 be taken as read and signed as correct.

9(b) MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING, PART 2

Moved by Councillor Kinnear
Seconded by Councillor Flanagan and

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee Meeting of Monday 15 September 2025 Part 2 be approved and adopted.

Councillor Cosgrove left the Chamber during Item 10.

10 MINUTES OF THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING

Moved by Alderman McGrath

Seconded by Councillor Wilson and

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting of Tuesday 16 September 2025 be approved and adopted.

Alderman Ross and Councillors Cosgrove and Ward returned to the Chamber.

Councillors McLaughlin, Dunlop and Wilson left and returned to the Chamber during Item 12.

12 NOTICE OF MOTION

Proposed by Alderman Magill
Seconded by Councillor Archibald-Brown

"This Council notes with grave concern recent politically motivated violence and attacks on free speech.

Acknowledges that free speech and expression, within the law, are foundational to any democratic system and that violence can never be justified.

Reaffirms this Council's commitment to upholding such fundamental human rights and commits this Borough to be a welcoming place for open debate and the free exchange of opinion across the political and social spectrum, inclusive of views that may be considered by the majority as contentious, unsettling or otherwise unpopular."

AMENDMENT

It was proposed by Councillor Ní Chonghaile, Seconded by Councillor Cushman that to strengthen the Motion, the following wording be included in the last paragraph between 'welcoming place' and 'open for debate' *"for everyone which celebrates the diversity of our identities, religions or non, sexual orientation, gender, disability, age or ethnic origin*

Moved by Alderman Magill
Seconded by Councillor Archibald-Brown

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Acknowledges that free speech and expression, within the law, are foundational to any democratic system and that violence can never be justified.

Reaffirms this Council's commitment to upholding such fundamental human rights and commits this Borough to be a welcoming place for everyone which celebrates the diversity of our identities, religions or non, sexual orientation, gender, disability, age or ethnic origin and for open debate and the free exchange of opinion across the political and social spectrum, inclusive of views

that may be considered by the majority as contentious, unsettling or otherwise unpopular."

RESOLVED – the amended Motion was declared carried.

ACTION BY: Richard Baker, Chief Executive

13.1 ITEMS FOR DECISIONS

13.1 COMD/CD/009 CHRISTMAS FESTIVITY PROGRAMME 2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members approval for the delivery of the 2025 Christmas Festivity Programme and Spirit of Christmas Awards.

2. Background

Since November 2018, the Council had been delivering Christmas Lights Switch On Events in each District Electoral Area across the Borough.

The programme at each event encompasses a range of family entertainment to include: Christmas Fun Rides, The Santa Express, Street Entertainment, Festive Food Stalls, Arts and Crafts and a short programme of Christmas Readings, Carols and Music following which the Mayor accompanied by the Schools Competition Winner and Santa switch on the Christmas Tree Lights.

Local School Choirs, Traditional Music Groups, Dance Academies and other local artistes participate in the ninety-minute programme the theme for which changes on an annual basis.

3. Previous Decision of Council

Members were reminded that the "Step into the Season" themed Christmas Switch On Programme inspired by the 2024 Olympics and Paralympics was approved by the Community Development Committee in October 2024.

The programme was delivered live in each DEA and streamed online. In total the programme attracted in excess of 12,000 attendees.

4. Proposal for 2025

Since November 2018 Council had delivered 7 Christmas Light Switch On Events across the Borough. In 2024, the "Switch On" programme was delivered at a cost of £101,222.

Attendance at the events in 2024 is detailed below:

DEA	Date & Time	Attendees (approximate)
Airport DEA Crumlin Leisure Centre	Thursday 21 November 2024, 6.00pm - 7.30pm	800
Dunsilly DEA Randalstown - John Street Car Park	Friday 22 November 2024, 6.00pm - 7.30pm	2000
Glengormley DEA Lilian Bland Park	Saturday 23 November 2024, 4.30pm - 6.00pm	2000
Macedon DEA Hazelbank Park	Tuesday 26 November 2024, 7.00pm - 8.30pm	2500
Threemilewater DEA Mossley Mill	Wednesday 27 November 2024, 6.00pm - 7.30pm	300
Antrim DEA Railway Street Car Park	Thursday 28 November 2024, 6.00pm - 7.30pm	2000
Ballyclare DEA The Square Car Park	Saturday 30 November 2024, 4.30pm - 6.00pm	2500
Total		12,100

Online live streaming of each event was introduced in 2020 during the COVID pandemic; however, in 2024 the numbers viewing had dwindled from 78,483 at its peak in 2020 to only 9,580. This element of the events had taken up £10,000 of the overall budget and was hugely time intensive. However, detailed analysis shows that average watch time is just 2.7 minutes. It was therefore proposed to stop this element of the switch on events.

Analysis of Other Council Areas and Timeframes

An analysis of similar arrangements across the other ten Council areas indicated that the vast majority of other Council's deliver Christmas switch-on events within their respective legacy Council areas, rather than extending these events to each individual District Electoral Area.

The Council did not begin town centre illuminations or Christmas switch-on events until after 11 November, in respect of the Remembrance period. This created a narrow timeframe to deliver the seven existing events, which are ideally completed in November to support retail and precede the Enchanted Winter Garden, traditionally starting the last weekend of November. The Council also supported around 12 community led Christmas Switch on events over the same period. As a result, community events often clashed with Council Switch-Ons. The tight schedule also increased the risk of weather-related cancellations, with limited opportunity for rescheduling. In addition, some of the locations presented capacity, safety and logistical challenges.

Delivering seven large-scale switch-on events over a 7–10 day period required substantial staff resources, absorbing the Community Development officers from early September to late November. The online elements were particularly resource-intensive, and additional staff support resulted in significant time off in lieu post-Christmas. This placed considerable pressure on the team and limited

their capacity to undertake other vital community development work during that period.

Following a review and online evaluation of the 2024 Programme, which provided valuable feedback for future event planning, it was proposed that the existing 7 DEA Christmas Light Switch On Events be reduced to 3 major flagship events in 2025 as follows:

- Antrim Town Centre
- Newtownabbey (V36 at the Valley)
- Ballyclare Town Centre

The circulated map illustrated that the proposed locations above provided access for the vast majority of Borough residents within a 20-minute drive time and were balanced geographically covering both urban and rural areas.

The proposed locations, Antrim Town Centre, Newtownabbey (V36) and Ballyclare Town Centre had been chosen based on the following factors:

Proven Attendance

All three locations consistently achieved high audience numbers: Antrim Town Centre (2,000), Newtownabbey – Spooked Out Event at V36 (8,000+) and Ballyclare Town Centre (2,500) representing the largest and most engaged festive audiences across the Borough.

V36 at The Valley entertained annually 8,500 at the very successful Spooked Out at The Valley Halloween Event and had a purpose-built event space with parking, a range of accessible facilities and hospitality offering within the surrounding which has the potential to deliver an enhanced Newtownabbey flagship Switch On event.

Balanced Geographic Coverage & Venue Suitability

These venues ensured fair representation across the Borough, preventing any one area from being overlooked and maintained equitable access for all residents. Each site offered an established, safe, and accessible event space capable of hosting large crowds while supporting local business activity during the key pre-Christmas trading period.

Community Integration

The chosen locations complemented, rather than duplicated community led switch ons, providing flagship events that brought together surrounding towns and villages while allowing smaller communities to continue with their own celebrations.

The proposal to reduce the number of events from 7 to 3 has bring about the following benefits:

- Streamlining of Resources – Reducing the number of events allowed officers to streamline resources and focus on the logistics of fewer locations. This led to better planning and organisation, enhanced safety measures

and less time commitment from officers, on call events assistants and volunteers at this challenging time of the year.

- Enhanced Experience and Impact – By reducing the number of events from 7 to 3 would result in the remaining 3 events becoming larger and more spectacular, particularly the event proposed for V36 which could be seen as a “Big Unified Celebration” with much larger crowds similar in scale to those witnessed at the Annual Halloween Celebrations.
 - Increased Publicity and Social Media Coverage – Larger events such as that proposed for V36 attract more media coverage and social media buzz.
- Environmental Benefits – Reduced environmental impact, less energy consumption and waste produced. Reduced Carbon Footprint due to less travel by Event Promoters, Performers and Attendees.
- Economic Impact and Focus – A concentrated impact on 3 events as opposed to 7 would provide the opportunity to establish more strategic partnerships and stronger collaborative links between local businesses, sponsors and the wider community.
- Cost Savings – With fewer events resources could be concentrated on ensuring that the remaining events were larger, more inclusive, had a significantly greater impact and were of a higher quality.

Festive Lit Trees

Under this proposal existing festive and illuminated trees in Antrim Town Centre, Ballyclare Town Centre, Crumlin, Randalstown, Hazelbank Park, Monkstown and Glengormley Town Centre would remain with an additional tree being erected for the flagship event at V36.

5. 2025 Programme Delivery

Officers had started planning for this year's events and having taken into consideration feedback from 2024 the following was proposed for 2025:

- Delivery of the Consolidated Programme of 3 Christmas Light Switch On Events over the period: Thursday 20 – Saturday 22 November 2025. If the existing programme of 7 events continued to be delivered, then the events would take place over the period: Thursday 20 – Saturday 29 November 2025.
- Times would facilitate traffic management arrangements and ensure young families can enjoy the full experience of the events.
- The switching on of the Christmas Lights would once again take place at the mid-point of the proposed ninety-minute programme as opposed to the end in order to facilitate those attending with very young children.
- A programme of family fun entertainment to include: A Children's Pantomime, Live Festive Music, Carols, Switching on of the Christmas Tree Lights, Fun Fair Rides, Festive Food Stalls, Arts and Crafts Activities and Street Entertainment would be delivered at each venue.

- The end of online streaming of the switch on events which would achieve a cost savings of approximately £10,000.

The theme for this year's programme had yet to be decided but would be communicated to Members in advance of the events taking place.

All events would be advertised and promoted through an electronic and direct marketing campaign to encourage residents' participation.

6. Community Switch On Events

As part of the Community Development Grant Aid Programme Council operates a Christmas Celebration Events Fund to assist groups, in legacy locations across the Borough, that may wish to develop and deliver Christmas Celebration events in the absence of a Council installed tree and associated switch on ceremony.

At present financial assistance of up to £1,000 was available to each of the following 15 legacy sites across the Borough detailed as follows: Ballyduff, Ballynure, Ballyrobert, Bawnmore, Burnside, Doagh, Mallusk, Monkstown, New Mossley, Parkgate, Straid, Templepatrick, Tildarg, Toome and Whiteabbey.

Under the new proposal it was recommended that Crumlin and Randalstown be included.

If the Council reduced to three Christmas Light Switch On Events, it was proposed that the maximum grant award for the community led switch on events be increased to £2,000. This reflected the continued popularity of these events and their positive contribution to fostering local community spirit. Groups who availed of this funding were required to cover the cost of their tree and lighting if this was a requirement of their event.

7. The Spirit of Christmas Awards

In addition, Members were also reminded of the "Spirit of Christmas Awards" which were launched in October 2021 and continued to prove popular with in excess of 78 nominations received in 2024.

This year it was proposed that a similar competition be delivered with awards being presented under the following 7 categories:

- Light Up Award - The wider community working together to create the most outstanding Christmas display or the best lit street, village or town in the Borough.
- Rocking Around the Christmas Tree Award - Best programme of festive entertainment within a business or community setting.
- The Reason for the Season Award - The most festive school, church or community facility.

- The Making an Entrance Award - The best dressed entrance feature or shop front.
- Traditional Christmas Award - Recognising acts of goodwill during the festive season.
- Themed Award – To be confirmed once the theme for the events has been agreed.
- Mayors Award - Most outstanding Christmas Display or Event in the Borough - Chosen by the Mayor

Nominations for this year's competition would open on Wednesday 12 November and close on Monday 8 December at 4pm. Awards would be presented at a Christmas themed Celebration Event to be held in the Oriel Gallery, Antrim Castle Gardens on Wednesday 17 December 2025.

8. Financial Implication

Members were advised that provision of £100,000 for the 2025 Christmas Festivity Programme, The Spirit of Christmas Awards and £15,000 for the Christmas Celebration Events Fund had been included in the 2025/26 Community Development budgets.

Under the Consolidated Programme (3 events) it was proposed that the budget be allocated as follows:

Switch On Events	Amount
Antrim	£ 20,000
Newtownabbey (V36)	£ 20,000
Ballyclare Town Centre	£ 20,000
Christmas Celebration Events Fund	
17 Legacy Areas x £2,000	£ 34,000
Spirit of Christmas Awards	
Awards and Celebration Event	£ 2,000
Total Programme Cost	£ 96,000

9. Summary

It was proposed that the number of Christmas Light Switch On Events, to be delivered across the Borough in November 2025, be reduced to 3 with events to be held in Antrim Town Centre, Newtownabbey (V36) and Ballyclare Town Centre. If this proposal was approved the events would take place from Thursday 20 – Saturday 22 November 2025.

Lit Christmas trees would be provided in Antrim Town Centre, Ballyclare Town Centre, Crumlin, Randalstown, Hazelbank Park, Monkstown and Glengormley Town Centre would remain with an additional tree being erected for the flagship event at V36.

Should the Consolidated Christmas Light Switch On Events Programme be approved it was proposed that the Upper Grant Threshold for the Christmas Celebration Events Fund be increased from £1,000 - £2,000 per area in 2025.

Nominations for the "Spirit of Christmas Awards" competition would be opened on Wednesday 12 November and close on Monday 8 December 2025.

Members' comments regarding the rotation of days for DEA Switch On Events were noted.

Moved by Councillor McAuley
Seconded by Councillor Cooper and

RESOLVED – that

- (a) the delivery of 7 Christmas Light Switch On Events be maintained, with a review to be undertaken by a sub-group or working group in January/February 2026 to reassess the approach for the 2026 programme.**
- (b) The Live streaming of each event be discontinued.**
- (c) the 2025 Christmas Festivity Programme and proposals for the "Spirit of Christmas Awards" be approved.**

ACTION BY: Jonathan Henderson, Community Services Co-ordinator

13.2 EH/EHS/EP/003 DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL AFFAIRS (DAERA) DILAPIDATION BILL CONSULTATION

1. Purpose

This report was to seek Member approval for a consultation response to the revised Dilapidation Bill introduced to the Assembly by the Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs. The Bill aimed to address the growing problem of dilapidated buildings and neglected sites across Northern Ireland.

2. Introduction

Reports of dangerous structures, neglected sites and derelict buildings had increased significantly in recent years across Northern Ireland. Such sites negatively affected community safety, local economies and overall quality of life.

Work on a Dilapidation Bill began in 2012 following substantial engagement between government officials, councils and stakeholders, including two "Blight Summits," a DOE discussion paper (2014), and a DOE public consultation (2016).

The latest Dilapidation Bill, introduced on 23 June 2025, builds on the 2016 consultation. It was designed to give councils a modern, consistent enforcement framework across Northern Ireland to address dangerous or

neglected buildings. The Bill proposes new offences, stronger enforcement powers and mechanisms for cost recovery. These measures would enable councils either to compel owners/occupiers to carry out remedial works or to undertake works themselves and recover costs.

As part of the Assembly's normal legislative processes, the Dilapidation Bill had been referred to the Assembly's Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (AERA) for scrutiny and evaluation. The Committee was seeking views from stakeholders on the objectives, proposals and potential consequences of the Bill.

A link to the consultation can be found at:

<https://consult.nia-yourassembly.org.uk/agrienvra/dilapidation-bill/>

Members noted that Building Control Northern Ireland (BCNI), the voluntary umbrella body representing the Building Control departments of all 11 councils, would also submit its own consultation response. While this draft response (circulated) had been prepared by Environmental Health, it reflected the shared views of the Council's Environmental Health, Planning and Building Control services.

3. Key Issues

Councils currently lack consistent and effective powers to address neglected and dilapidated buildings. Existing legislation is fragmented, with limited provisions spread across planning legislation, nuisance legislation under environmental health and building control, outdated local authority statutes and ancillary powers held by other bodies such as the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

The main legislation presently used by Planning, Building Control and Environmental Health to address dangerous or neglected structures included:

- Public Health Acts Amendment Act 1907
- Pollution Control and Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 1978
- Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847
- Towns Improvement (Ireland) Act 1854
- Sections 64, 73 and 161 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 as it relates to the power to serve an 'Urgent Works Notice' on a Listed Building or a building within a Conservation Area as directed by the Department.

In addition, the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (NI) 2011 does not apply to listed buildings and cannot be used to deal with untidy or dilapidated premises.

While these statutes had been used to some effect, their narrow scope, age (some dating back to the 19th century) and enforcement challenges make them increasingly unfit for purpose. In particular, they provide inadequate powers to:

- Identify ownership
- Recover costs incurred by councils
- Respond to dangerous structures in emergencies
- Address abandoned buildings and building sites
- Provide clear legal definitions
- Set out council responsibilities for default works

Experience had shown that reliance on these outdated provisions often resulted in limited success, owing to unclear criteria, lack of guidance and overlapping responsibilities across different statutory agencies. This had prevented a consistent and strategic approach to tackling dilapidation.

The revised Dilapidation Bill, reflecting feedback from the 2016 consultation, seeks to modernise this framework and align Northern Ireland more closely with arrangements in England and Wales. It proposed:

1. Extending council powers to remedy, or recover costs for remedying, dangerous or nuisance premises.
2. Allowing cost recovery from those with a financial interest in a property, including mortgage lenders.
3. Empowering councils to take urgent action without court approval and to recover associated costs.
4. Enabling councils to require owners to tidy, demolish, or rebuild premises adversely affecting neighbourhood amenity.

The Bill was expected to give councils more effective tools to address dilapidation in towns and villages, allowing enforcement, works in default and cost recovery across a wider range of problematic sites.

The Consultation document included a series of questions, and a draft Council response was enclosed. The draft response raised the following concerns:

- Cost Recovery - Councils may be left carrying significant financial risk where costs are unrecoverable, or recovery requires lengthy legal proceedings.
- Clarity of Definitions- Terms such as “*detriment to local amenity*” require further definition to avoid ambiguity in implementation.
- Agency Roles- The Bill should explicitly reference other statutory bodies, including the Police Service of Northern Ireland and DfI Roads Service, to ensure clarity of roles and responsibilities.

Subject to Council approval, the draft response would be submitted by the 10 October 2025 deadline.

5. Financial Position/Implication

At this stage, no departmental guidance had been issued on financial implications. However, officers anticipated significant resource pressures on councils, both in staffing and in cases where councils must carry out works in

default. Recovery of costs may be delayed, particularly where statutory charges were placed against properties.

The Department's Regulatory Impact Assessment acknowledged potential costs for property owners, developers, and financial institutions, but highlighted offsetting benefits such as:

- Increased property values
- Greater construction activity
- Reduced anti-social behaviour
- Economic regeneration and job creation
- Improved built environment and tourism potential
- Potential increases in local and regional rate revenues

6. Equality and/or Rural Screening Requirements

The Department completed a Rural Needs Impact Assessment of the policy proposals and concluded that they do not reveal any significant adverse differential impact on people in rural areas.

7. Summary

The revised Dilapidation Bill offered a significant opportunity to modernise outdated legislation and equip councils with stronger, clearer and more consistent powers to tackle dilapidated and dangerous buildings across Northern Ireland. The proposals were broadly welcomed; however, concerns remain around cost recovery, the need for clearer definitions and stronger collaboration with other statutory agencies. Members were therefore asked to approve the Council's draft consultation response, which highlighted these issues to help ensure the legislation is both effective and practical in implementation.

Moved by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor Cosgrove and

RESOLVED - that Members approve the draft response to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) consultation on the new Dilapidation Bill.

ACTION BY: Liam Nicholas, Environmental Health Manager

13.3 CE/CA/003 NORTHERN IRELAND SOCIAL MEDIA AWARDS 2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for attendance at the 2025 Northern Ireland Social Media Awards in the Europa Hotel on Saturday 18 October 2025.

2. Introduction/Background

The Northern Ireland Social Media Awards (NISMA) honours and recognises organisations, freelancers, individuals, teams, agencies, and businesses delivering social media marketing and demonstrating excellence in their work as well as resilience in the face of adversity on social media. These awards recognise the power of social media in the context of navigating the challenges of the digital world.

3. Northern Ireland Social Media Awards Best Campaign Public Sector

The Marketing Communications and PR team submitted an entry to the 2025 awards for the Best Campaign – Public Sector category for the “It Starts With You” campaign. This campaign was delivered in March as part of the Councils Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) work and was designed to raise awareness and drive action on this vital subject. A multi-agency social media initiative combined bold messaging with platform-specific content to engage over one million people.

By transforming online engagement into tangible community impact, the campaign redefined how public-sector social media can deliver meaningful results highlighted below:

- A total of 1,165,307 impressions across social media platforms
- A 4.9% engagement rate – five times higher than standard industry norms (0.5-1%)
- Campaign assets (videos, graphics, toolkits) shared by The Executive Office as best practice for other councils.
- Engagement insights of this campaign now shaping a regional EVAWG social media framework.

The “It Starts With You!” campaign demonstrated the transformative power of social media in tackling one of society's most urgent issues. By blending creative storytelling, multi-platform strategy, and community-centred content, the Council turned online engagement into real-world change — from increased helpline awareness to greater community confidence and inter-agency collaboration.

With reach exceeding one million, engagement rates five times industry standards, and resources now adopted regionally as best practice, this campaign showed how public sector social media can drive meaningful social good.

4. The Northern Ireland Social Media Awards Shortlist

Correspondence, circulated, had been received confirming that the Council had been shortlisted as one of the finalists in the Best Campaign Public Sector category for its ‘It Starts With You’ EVAWG campaign. There was a total of 842 submissions to the awards in 2025 and the Council was one of 8 finalists in this category.

5. The Northern Ireland Social Media Awards Ceremony

Members were advised that the awards ceremony would take place from 6pm on Saturday 18 October at the Europa Hotel, Belfast.

It was proposed that the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Chair of the Community Development Committee (or their nominees), the Director of Community Development and up to 3 officers attend the 2025 Northern Ireland Social Awards.

6. Financial Position/Implication

Members were advised that the cost of attendance at the awards ceremony was £135 per person, therefore £945 in total, provision for which exists within the Community Development Directorate budget.

7. Summary

The Councils 'It Starts With You' social media campaign delivered as part of the EVAWG initiative had been shortlisted as a finalist in the 2025 Northern Ireland Social Media Awards. It was proposed that the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Chair of the Community Development Committee (or their nominees), Director of Community Development and up to 3 officers attend the awards ceremony in the Europa Hotel on Saturday 18 October 2025 at a cost of £945.

Moved by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Councillor Foster and

RESOLVED - that the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Chair of the Community Development Committee (or their nominees), Director of Community Development and up to 3 officers attend the Northern Ireland Social Media Awards ceremony on Saturday 18 October 2025 at the Europa Hotel Belfast, at a cost of £945.

ACTION BY: Jeanette McIntyre, Head of Marketing Communications and PR

13.4 ED/ED/298 NI ECONOMIC CONFERENCE 2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for attendance at the Northern Ireland Economic Conference 2025 for Members of the Economic Development Committee and relevant Council Officers.

2. Introduction/Background

Members would recall that Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council was the principal sponsor for the 2022 and 2023 Agenda NI Northern Ireland Economic Conferences that took place at the Kingfisher Hotel. The 2024 Northern Ireland Economic Conference was hosted in the Titanic Hotel in Belfast with a theme of "Creating good jobs, promoting regional balance, raising productivity and achieving net zero by 2050".

The Northern Ireland Economic Conference is Northern Ireland's premier economic analysis event and is unique in being the only forum which takes a high-level look at the performance of and prospects for the local economy.

3. Previous Decision of Council

It was agreed at Economic Development Committee in September 2024 that Members of the Committee and relevant Council Officers attend the Northern Ireland Economic Conference, the cost of which would be met through the existing Economic Development Budget.

4. Overview

The 2025 Northern Ireland Economic Conference was being hosted in the Titanic Hotel in Belfast on Wednesday 19th November. The theme of this year's conference was:

"Creating good jobs, promoting regional balance, raising productivity and reducing carbon emissions"

Key issues to be addressed at the conference included:

- Global and UK economic outlook;
- Medium term economic outlook for NI;
- A comparative analysis of economies, North and South;
- Narrowing the productivity gap;
- Creating good jobs and tackling economic inactivity;
- Assessing the impact of trade tariffs;
- Addressing regional balance; and
- Achieving net zero by 2050.

The programme was still being finalised but would include keynote addresses from:

- Minister for the Economy – Caoimhe Archibald MLA
- Financial Times Commentator – Chris Giles
- Professor of Applied Economics – Mary O'Mahony
- Utilities Regulator - Rosamund Blomfield-Smith
- Innovation Commissioner – Adrian Johnston

5. Financial Implications

Tickets for the event were £195+VAT each, which was a special discounted rate for local government. It was proposed that Members of the Committee and relevant Officers attend the event.

The total anticipated cost could be met from existing Economic Development budgets.

6. Equality and/or Rural Screening Requirements

None.

Moved by Councillor Bennington
Seconded by Alderman Smyth and

RESOLVED - that Members of the Economic Development Committee and relevant Council Officers attend the Northern Ireland Economic Conference 2025, the cost of which will be met through the existing Economic Development Budget.

ACTION BY: Jill Murray, Executive Officer, Economic Development

14 ITEMS FOR NOTING

14.1 G/MSMO/14 NILGA – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF AUGUST 2025 NILGA EXECUTIVE MEETING

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was for Members to note the Executive Summary of the NILGA Executive meeting held in August.

2. Key Points

Members were advised that the summary (circulated) provided an overview of the matters discussed at the meeting in August.

Members were encouraged to review the summary for further insight into NILGA's current focus and direction.

Moved by Councillor McLaughlin
Seconded by Councillor Bennington and

RESOLVED - that the Executive Summary of the NILGA Executive meeting held in August 2025 be noted.

NO ACTION

Councillor O'Lone left the Chamber at this point.

MOTION TO PROCEED 'IN COMMITTEE'

Moved by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Councillor Dunlop and

RESOLVED - that the Council proceeds to conduct the following business 'In Committee'.

Members were advised that the live stream and audio recording would cease at this point.

Alderman Magill left the Chamber at Item 15.1.

15 ITEMS IN COMMITTEE

15.1 **IN CONFIDENCE** PBS/PS/001 ON-STREET RESIDENTIAL CHARGE POINT SCHEME (ORCS) UPDATE

1. Purpose

This report sought Members' approval of the Concession Agreement (CA) and site licences (Appendices 1 & 2) between Derry City and Strabane District Council (lead Council of the NI EV Consortium) and WEEV.ie Ltd for the supply, installation, and maintenance of EV charge points.

1. Background

Council was one of nine participating Councils in the NI Electric Vehicle Consortium, which, following a tender process, appointed WEEV.ie Ltd as Charge Point Operator for residential EV charge points.

Funding of £[REDACTED] had been secured from the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) under the On-Street Residential Charge Point Scheme (ORCS), with 25% match funding from the Department for Infrastructure (DfI). WEEV.ie Ltd would also contribute at least 10% private investment.

The scheme aimed to increase on-street charging in areas without off-street parking, enabling broader access to EV ownership.

Proposed Antrim & Newtownabbey locations (subject to NIE Networks connections and planning approval) had previously been shared with Members and were listed as follows:

1	24 Parkmount Road, Mallusk	BT36 4QQ	On Street
2	25 Thyme Park, Antrim	BT41 4PE	On Street
3	388 Firmount Drive, Antrim	BT41 1JJ	On Street
4	24 Cashel Drive, Monkstown	BT37 0EZ	On Street
5	7 Carn Way, Newtownabbey	BT36 5YN	On Street
6	11 Queens Avenue, Glengormley	BT36 5HU	On Street
7	12 Queens Avenue, Glengormley 2nd EVCP	BT36 5HU	On Street
8	Toome Playpark, McCorley Road	BT41 3NH	Car Park
9	Toome Playpark, McCorley Road 2nd EVCP	BT41 3NH	Car Park
10	Wallace Park	BT39 0AG	Car Park
11	The Diamond, N'abbey (NIHE)	BT37 9DQ	Car Park
12	Harrier Way	BT39 9BB	Car Park
13	Harrier Way 2nd EVCP	BT39 9BB	Car Park
14	Six Mile Leisure Centre	BT39 9YU	Car Park
15	Six Mile Leisure Centre 2nd EVCP	BT39 9YU	Car Park

A tender procurement exercise was completed in respect of these services in full compliance with Councils procurement processes, with Weev.ie Ltd being approved as the successful tenderer at March 2025 Council.

2. Key Issues

A draft Concession Agreement (CA) was issued with the tender documentation. Following extensive negotiations between DCSDC and Weev.ie Ltd, agreement had now been reached on the enclosed CA.

The consortium and Weev.ie Ltd would also enter into site licences (sample at Appendix 2, Schedule 8 of the CA). The nine councils would grant Weev.ie Ltd a concession to install, operate and maintain EV charge points in residential car parks and on-street locations. As concessionaire, Weev.ie Ltd would manage the full network, including payment systems, maintenance and customer support. Councils would receive a share of revenue generated, and once demand and financial sustainability were established, a fixed annual concession fee per charge point.

The tariff margin cap (covering provider costs beyond electricity) ensures fair pricing for users and transparency pending market maturity. The most advantageous tariff had been secured and would be confirmed before charge points go live, once provider electricity costs were evidenced. The CA term was 15 years, extendable by 5 years by mutual agreement. The project would be delivered at no cost to councils.

Weev.ie Ltd's performance would be monitored against defined KPIs throughout the contract. Council would sign its own CA with Weev.ie Ltd, who would liaise directly with each Council on local installations and operations. No onerous obligations were expected for Councils.

DfI had also advised of a forthcoming rolling trial of cross-pavement charging solutions in areas without off-street parking:

- Six-month trial of temporary cable covers
- Side Wall Link (SWL) permanent cable channel solution

These trials would focus on safety, liability and monitoring.

Weev.ie Ltd was ready to commence, secure NIE connections, and utilise pre-negotiated hardware pricing.

3. Financial Implications

The financial implications for Council under the NI EV Consortium Concession Agreement were minimal, with all installation and operational costs funded through the OZEV (75%) and the DfI (25%). Council would not be required to contribute capital but would benefit from a fixed annual concession fee of £■■■ per 22kW charging unit and a 3% share of net revenues generated from charging. Tariffs for users were capped to ensure fair pricing, and any provider margins above the agreed cap are repayable to Council. The provider bears

responsibility for electricity, maintenance, and insurance costs, while Council retain ownership of groundworks and may assume ownership of charging units at no cost at the end of the contract term, ensuring both financial protection and a modest income stream.

Moved by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor Cosgrove and

RESOLVED - that Members approve the Concession Agreement and associated site licences between Derry City and Strabane District Council, as lead Council of the NI Electric Vehicle Consortium, and WEEV.ie Ltd for the supply, installation and maintenance of EV charge points.

ACTION BY: David Blair, Head of Estate Services

Councillor O'Lone returned to the Chamber.

15.2 IN CONFIDENCE FI/PRO/TEN/581 FRAMEWORK FOR THE SERVICING AND MAINTENANCE OF AUTOMATIC DOORS

CONTRACT PERIOD 3 OCTOBER 2025 – 30 SEPTEMBER 2027 WITH THE OPTION TO EXTEND FOR UP TO A FURTHER 24 MONTHS (SUBJECT TO PERFORMANCE AND REVIEW)

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to obtain approval for the appointment of suitably qualified and experienced organisations to a framework to undertake maintenance and works on the Council's automatic and revolving doors for the contract period.

2. Introduction/Background

Across the Council's properties, and at the direction of Estates Services, the contractors appointed to the framework would be responsible for the reactive, emergency and planned maintenance visits as well as capital works for automatic doors and revolving doors in accordance with the relevant legislation. The annual spend for this contract was approximately £[REDACTED].

The top five highest scoring tenderers would be appointed to the framework. The primary contractor, ranked first, would undertake the planned preventative maintenance and repairs and provide an emergency response service. Where there are other works packages, Officers can call-off the framework directly at the tendered rates or undertake a further competition. Where the costs of any further competition exceed the relevant threshold, a report would be brought to Council to inform Members.

3. Procurement Process

This tender was procured in line with good practice laid out in the Procurement Act 2023. This opportunity was made available on eSourcingNI on 11 August 2025.

Four tender responses were opened via the eSourcingNI Portal on 2 September 2025 and referred to the evaluation panel for assessment. The tenders were evaluated on a two-stage basis as follows:

STAGE 1 – SELECTION STAGE

The tender was evaluated on a pass/fail basis for:

- tenderer's professional conduct
- economic and financial standing
- management systems and practices
- previous relevant experience
- technical capacity and capability
- membership in a relevant controlling society
- declarations and form of tender

One tender failed to meet the requirements of this stage and did not proceed further in the evaluation. The remaining tenders met the requirements of Stage 1 of the evaluation process and proceeded to Stage 2.

STAGE 2 – AWARD STAGE

Sub-Stage 1 – Technical Assessment

The tenders were evaluated on a pass/fail basis for

- compliance with the specification

All tenders met the requirements of this stage and proceeded to the next stage of evaluation.

Sub-Stage 2 – Quality & Commercial Assessment

The tenders were evaluated on the basis of

- implementation plan (10%),
- capacity and capability to deliver (10%),
- contract management and performance monitoring (10%),
- cost (70%)

One tenderer failed to meet the quality threshold and did not proceed further in the evaluation. The remaining two tenders achieved quality scores which exceeded the threshold for the qualitative criteria and Officers were content that the tenderer could deliver a high-quality contract in accordance with all aspects of the specification. Full details of the evaluation methodology were circulated.

The recommendation was as follows:

Rank	Supplier	Quality Assessment (out of 30%)	Cost Assessment (out of 70%)	Total % Score	Estimated Total Cost per Annum (£) (excl. VAT)
1	H&J Martin Ltd	████	████	████	████
2	KCC Group	████	████	████	████

4. Social Value

Social Value in procurement was implemented by the Executive in June 2022 and incorporates all aspects of sustainable procurement including ethical and sustainable supply chains, community benefits and wealth building, job and skills creation and efforts to decarbonise. It was a mandatory requirement for the above threshold contracts. This procurement exercise did not meet the threshold for social value criteria to be applied.

Moved by Alderman Boyle
Seconded by Alderman Smyth and

RESOLVED - that, having achieved the scores detailed above, the tenderers be appointed to the framework in ranked order for the period of 3 October 2025 – 30 September 2027, with an option to extend for up to a further 24 months at the tendered rates.

ACTION BY: Melissa Kenning, Procurement Manager

15.3 ED/ED/171 **IN CONFIDENCE** BELFAST REGION CITY DEAL ANNUAL REPORT 2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek approval from Members of the Belfast Region City Deal Annual Report 2025 (circulated).

2. Introduction/Background

On 29th October 2018, the Chancellor announced a commitment of £350m from the UK Government, leveraging at least £350 million from NI regional government, £100m from the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) Councils and £50m from the two Universities to deliver the City Deal proposition.

The Deal includes 22 projects across the investment pillars of Digital / Innovation, Infrastructure and Tourism led Regeneration underpinned by a significant Employability and Skills programme, which would provide inclusive job opportunities and significantly enhance the region's economy.

The production of an Annual Report was part of the agreed reporting arrangements for City and Growth Deals which was used to inform a meeting with the NI Delivery Board referred to as the 'Annual Conversation'. As was the case last year the Department of Finance (DoF) would in due course also produce an annual milestone report to summarise progress at a programme

level in dashboard format to supplement the higher-level information contained in the Annual Report.

3. Previous Decision of Council

At the Council Meeting of 27th August 2019, the Council approved nomination of 4 Elected Members via d'Hondt, and 4 deputies, to participate in the Joint Council Forum (Council Panel).

4. Key Issues

This version of the annual report was approved by the BRCD Executive Board in July at which it was also agreed that partners would bring it through their own approvals processes once this version was ready. A request had been made that all partner organisations now review and provide approval to the BRCD Programme Management Office. **This report is under embargo until all partners have completed this stage.**

5. Governance

Belfast City Council submitted the report to the August meeting of its Strategic Policy and Resource Committee and would be submitting it for full Council approval in September. The report would also be presented to the September meeting of the BRCD Council Panel.

Moved by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor Cosgrove and

RESOLVED - that Members approve the Belfast Region City Deal Annual Report 2025.

ACTION BY: Jill Murray, Executive Officer, Economic Development

MOTION TO PROCEED 'OUT OF COMMITTEE'

Moved by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Councillor McGrann and

RESOLVED - that the Council proceeds to conduct any remaining business 'In Public'.

Members were advised that the audio recording would restart at this point.

The Mayor thanked everyone for attending and the meeting concluded at 8.25pm.

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.