30 September 2026

Committee Chair: Councillor E McLaughlin

Committee Vice-Chair: Alderman L Clarke

Committee Members: Aldermen – P Bradley and J Smyth

Councillors – M Cooper, S Flanagan, R Foster, J Gilmour, N Kelly, L Kirkpatrick, AM Logue, A McAuley, V McWilliam, L O'Hagan and S Ward

Dear Members

MEETING OF THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Operations Committee will be held in the **Round Tower Chamber, Antrim Civic Centre on Monday 5 October 2026 at 6.30 pm.**

You are requested to attend.

Yours sincerely



Richard Baker, GM MSc
Chief Executive, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council

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

For any queries, please contact Member Services:
Tel: 028 9448 1301
memberservices@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk

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REPORT ON BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING ON MONDAY 5 OCTOBER 2026

4 ITEMS FOR DECISION

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

1. Purpose

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

2. Background

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

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

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

Evidence indicates that:

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

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

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

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

Full details of the consultation are available via below link:

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

3. Key Issues

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

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

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

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

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

A draft response (enclosed) to the consultation has been prepared by officers in conjunction with the Northern Ireland councils regional working group.

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

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

Businesses covered by the proposals:

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

Food Affordability and Food Poverty

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

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

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

Enforcement

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

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

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

Summary of Councils draft response is below;

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

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

- consideration be given to Northern Ireland Trading Standards having the role as the enforcing body given its existing responsibilities for marketing, pricing and advertising;
- if councils are required to enforce the regulations, additional ring-fenced funding, staffing and training would be essential;
- the Nutrient Profiling Model and proposed requirements around store size, employee numbers, product classification and store layouts are considered complex and potentially difficult to enforce;

- concerns that small independent retailers operating under franchise or symbol group arrangements, which may fall within scope despite being small businesses individually. These businesses may have fewer resources to understand and implement the requirements;
- the proposed 12-month lead-in period may be insufficient, particularly if new legislation, recruitment, training and technical guidance are required;
- a central Nutrient Profile Model calculator/database and comprehensive national guidance would help businesses and enforcement officers apply the regulations consistently;
- Council recognises the public health rationale for the proposals but considers that restrictions should be complemented by measures to increase the affordability and accessibility of healthier food choices;
- Council has concerns about potential increased costs for businesses and consumers, including reduced promotional offers and costs associated with changing store layouts.

4. Financial Implication

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

5. Summary

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

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

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

6. Recommendation

It is recommended that the draft consultation response be approved.

Prepared by: Christina McErlean, Deputy Head of Environment Health (Commercial)

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

Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Environment Services and Sustainability

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

1. Purpose

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

2. Background

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

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

3. Key Issues

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

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

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

Officers have reviewed the 2025 Model Licence Conditions against the arrangements and standards currently in place at Castlewood Holiday Park. The site is considered to be operating in accordance with the relevant requirements of the updated conditions and, as a result, their introduction is not expected to require significant operational changes or additional works by the site operator.

Adopting the Model Licence Conditions 2025 will ensure that the Council's licensing framework reflects current DfI guidance and provides a consistent approach to the consideration of caravan site licences.

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

A copy of the new Model Licence Conditions is (enclosed).

4. Financial implications

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

5. Summary

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

6. Recommendation

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

Prepared by: Sonya Gordon, Environmental Health Manager

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

Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Environmental Services and Sustainability

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

1. Purpose

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

2. Background

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

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

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

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

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

3. Key Issues

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

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

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

These goals are supported by five Strategic Objectives:

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

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

A copy of the draft response is attached for Members information (enclosed).

Key points from Council's draft consultation response include:

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

4. Financial Implication

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

5. Summary

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

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

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

6. Recommendation

It is recommended that the draft consultation response be approved.

Prepared by: Mark Sloan, Deputy Head of Environmental Health

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

Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Environment Services and Sustainability

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

1. Purpose

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

2. Introduction/Background

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

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

3. Previous Decision of Council

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

4. Financial Implication

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

5. Recommendation

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

Prepared by: Nadine Campbell, Parks Development Manager

Agreed by: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

Approved by: John News, Director of Estates and Recreation

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

1. Purpose

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

2. Summary

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

3. Recommendation

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

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

Approved by: John News, Director of Estates and Recreation

5 ITEMS FOR NOTING

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

1. Purpose

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

2. Introduction

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

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

3. Key issues

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

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

The events will take place as follows:

Hazelbank Park
Wednesday 7 October 2026
11.00am – 3.00pm

Crumlin Glen
Thursday 8 October 2026
11.00am – 3.00pm

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

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

- Dog licensing and microchipping;
- Responsible behaviour when exercising dogs in public places;
- Dog fouling and the requirement to clean up after dogs;

- Keeping dogs under proper control;
- Dog Control Orders;
- Dog attacks and livestock worrying;
- Responsible ownership and welfare; and
- Other relevant dog control and animal welfare matters.

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

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

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

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

4. Financial implications

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

5. Summary

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

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

6. Recommendation

It is recommended that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Sonya Gordon, Environmental Health Manager

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

Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Environment Services and Sustainability

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

1. Purpose

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

2. Background

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

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

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

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

3. Key issues

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

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

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

The court fined the company £4,000 in total, comprising £1,000 for the unsafe food offence and £750 for each of the three remaining offences. The company was also ordered to pay £500 in legal costs and £250 in disposal costs.

Following the successful conclusion of the prosecution, the Council received correspondence from the FSA (enclosed) acknowledging the work undertaken by Council.

The FSA highlighted Council's Environmental Health and Legal teams for their diligent and persistent work throughout the case, from the initial inspection in January 2025, through the follow-up inspections, issuing of the summons and subsequent court proceedings, to the successful prosecution.

The FSA further highlighted this case as an important example of the vital role played by Environmental Health Officers in protecting public health and safeguarding the interests of consumers in relation to food.

4. Summary

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

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

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

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Christina McErlean, Deputy Head of Environmental Health (Commercial)

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

Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Environment Services and Sustainability

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

1. Purpose

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

2. Background

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

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

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

3. Key Issues

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

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

The event sessions will take place as follows:

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

The event will be open to all however particular encouragement will be given to younger males aged 16 and over to attend. It is anticipated that 200 people will attend both sessions.

The morning session will be mainly for individuals from local schools and Council with the evening session targeting community groups and the wider general public.

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

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

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

4. Financial Position

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

5. Equality and Rural Needs Screening Requirements

An Equality and Rural Needs Screening exercise has been completed in accordance with Council policy. No adverse equality or rural impacts have been identified.

The event is open to all persons aged 16 and over, with efforts made to encourage participation from young men, in keeping with the focus of International Men's Day and the objectives of the event.

6. Summary

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

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

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

7. Recommendation

It is recommended that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Alison Briggs, Deputy Head of Environmental Health (Health & Wellbeing)

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

Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Environment Services and Sustainability

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

1. Purpose

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

2. Background

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

3. Findings

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

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

Performance Data for January to June 2026

Dry Recyclables

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Domestic Residual

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4. Summary

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

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

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

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Claire Evans, Climate, Waste & Sustainability Officer and Leanne Smits, Manager of Waste Strategy and Sustainability

Agreed by: Lynsey Daly, Head of Waste Strategy and Sustainability

Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Environment Services & Sustainability

5.5 PT/CI/058 APSE AWARDS 2026

1. Purpose

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

2. Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The recognition of Waste Operations Street Cleansing as a finalist is a notable achievement and reflects the service's continued commitment to maintaining high standards of street cleanliness and environmental quality across the Borough. The Leisure Services team was also shortlisted for the Best Health and Well-being Initiative, recognising its contribution to promoting

health, wellbeing and positive social outcomes through accessible opportunities for residents of all ages and backgrounds. In addition, Council was nominated for Council of the Year, providing broader recognition of its approach to service delivery, organisational performance and continuous improvement. Collectively, these nominations demonstrate the breadth of work being undertaken across Council and the professionalism and commitment of employees in delivering high-quality services to residents and communities.

3. Recommendation

It is recommended that the report be noted.

Prepared and Agreed by: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations and Deaglan O'Hagan, Head of Leisure Services

Approved by: John News, Director of Estates and Recreation

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

1. Purpose

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

2. Background

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

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

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

3. Key Considerations for the Project

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

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

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

The Biodiversity Report provides a baseline assessment of existing habitats, species presence and ecological considerations, which will help inform future

management decisions and biodiversity improvements within and around the Sovereign Centre site.

4. Financial Implications for Council

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

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Nadine Campbell, Parks Development Manager

Agreed by: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

Approved by: John News Director of Estates and Recreation

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

1. Purpose

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

2. Introduction/Background

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

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

3. Valley Leisure Centre 50th Anniversary Proposal

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

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

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

4. Financial Implications

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

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that Members note the proposals outlined within this report and provide any suggestions for consideration.

Prepared by: Conor McCallion Leisure Development Manager

Agreed by: Deaglan O'Hagan Head of Leisure Operations

Approved by: John News, Director of Estates and Recreation

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, planned projects and future 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. Council has previously approved annual and ongoing investment, through its Energy Fund, to support energy efficiency initiatives, complementing standalone capital-funded projects.

3. Completed Projects

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

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

4. Results

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

emissions, underscore the importance of continued energy efficiency and sustainability across the Council estate.

5. Pending Projects 2026–2027

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

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

6. Future Development

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

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

7. Recommendation

It is recommended that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Peter Elliott, Lead Estates Services Officer

Agreed and Approved by: John News, Director of Estates and Recreation

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

1. Purpose

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

2. Background

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

Council agreed to write to the Minister for Communities seeking:

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

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

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

3. Key Issues

A response has now been received from the Minister for Communities, a copy of which is included for Members information (enclosed).

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

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

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

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

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

The Minister also advises that a two year vacant property pilot is being developed with Derry and Strabane, Lisburn and Castlereagh, and Mid Ulster councils. The pilot will seek to improve understanding of the scale and distribution of vacant properties and engage with owners, where possible, to encourage properties back into use. The pilot is not intended to provide funding for refurbishment or acquisition and is expected to commence before the end of 2026, subject to budget approval.

The Department has indicated that it will continue to engage with councils and other housing stakeholders as these initiatives develop.

4. Summary

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

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

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

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that the report be noted.

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

Agreed and Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Environment Services and Sustainability

6 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

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