



**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE ROUND TOWER CHAMBER, ANTRIM CIVIC CENTRE
ON MONDAY 8 JUNE 2026 AT 6.30 PM**

In the Chair	:	Councillor - E McLaughlin
Committee Members (In person)	:	Aldermen – P Bradley, L Clarke and J Smyth Councillors – M Cooper, R Foster, J Gilmour, N Kelly, AM Logue, A McAuley, L O'Hagan and S Ward
Committee Members (Remote)	:	Councillors - S Flanagan and L Kirkpatrick
Non-Committee Members (In person)	:	Councillors - M Stewart, B Webb and S Wilson
Non Committee Members: (Remote)	:	Alderman - S Ross Councillors - M Brady, H Magill and M Ní Chonghaile
Officers Present	:	Chief Executive – R Baker Director of Environment Services & Sustainability - M Lavery Borough Lawyer (Legal, Land, Governance & Policy) - Paul Casey Head of Estates Services – D Blair Head of Parks Operations - P Mawhinney Head of Leisure Operations – D O'Hagan ICT Systems Support Officer – C Bell Member Services Officer – E Skillen

CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

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

1 APOLOGIES

Councillor V McWilliam

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Items 3.1 and 3.11 – Alderman Smyth
Item 3.17 – Councillor B Webb

3 ITEMS FOR DECISION

Having declared an interest in Item 3.1 Alderman Smyth left the Chamber.

3.1 EH/EHS/018 FOOD SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN 2026-27

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members on the Food Service Delivery Plan 2026-2027.

2. Key Issues

The Council was required to produce an annual plan showing how it intended to fulfil its statutory duties and deliver Food Control services, a copy was circulated for Members information. A review of the Food Service Delivery Plan for 2025-2026 had been undertaken and was circulated for Members information.

The Plan set out how Environmental Health would address both Council's statutory obligations.

3. Summary

Environmental Health had a key role in securing the safety of food processed, manufactured etc. in the Borough. The plan's key focus was to demonstrate how the Council would meet its statutory obligations and duties related to food safety for the year 2026-2027.

The Food Safety Service Delivery Plan outlined key objectives for the Food Safety section including:

1. the implementation of a thorough inspection regime;
2. strategies for education and enforcement;
3. a detailed approach to achieving these objectives within the current resource levels.

4. Financial Implications

The 2026/27 budget included financial provision to deliver the Food Service Delivery Plan.

Proposed by Councillor Kelly

Seconded by Councillor McAuley and agreed that

the Food Service Delivery Plan 2026-2027 be approved.

ACTION BY: Christina McErlean, Deputy Head of Environmental Health

Alderman Smyth returned to the Chamber.

3.2 **EH/EHS/011 HEALTH AND SAFETY SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN 2026-27**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members on the Health and Safety Delivery Plan 2026-2027.

2. Key Issues

Members were reminded that under Article 20 of the Health and Safety at Work Northern Ireland Order 1978 Council had to set out a planned Health and Safety activity programme on an annual basis.

A copy of the Health and Safety Service Delivery Plan 2026-2027 was circulated for Members information and the Review of the Health and Safety Service Delivery Plan for 2025-2026 was also circulated.

3. Summary

Environmental Health played a crucial role in ensuring the safety of employees and the public in business workplaces for which Council has statutory responsibility. The primary aim of the plan was to outline how Council would meet its statutory obligations and duties related to Health and Safety at work for the year 2026/2027.

The Health and Safety Service Plan detailed key objectives for the Health and Safety section including:

- the implementation of a comprehensive inspection regime;
- strategies for education and enforcement;
- a detailed approach to achieving these objectives within the current resource levels.

4. Financial Implications

The 2026/2027 budget included financial provision to deliver the Health and Safety Service Delivery Plan.

Proposed by: Councillor Kelly
Seconded by: Councillor Logue and

that the Health and Safety Service Delivery Plan 2026-2027 be approved.

ACTION BY: Christina McErlean, Deputy Head of Environmental Health

3.3 EH/EHS/CP/002 PRODUCT REGULATION: NEW PRODUCT SAFETY, MARKET SURVEILLANCE AND ENFORCEMENT CONSULTATIONS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for a Council response on two linked consultations:

- **Product Regulation: The UK's new product safety framework consultation**
- **Product Regulation: Market surveillance and enforcement framework consultation**

2. Background

The UK Government began a Product Safety Review in 2019, with outcomes reflected in the Product Regulation and Metrology Act 2025, which received Royal Assent in July 2025.

The current product safety framework was complex and highly technical, comprising around 150 pieces of legislation. It was largely based on the Consumer Protection Act 1987 and the General Product Safety Regulations 2005, which in Northern Ireland had been updated through Regulation (EU) 2023/988 on General Product Safety.

However, the regulatory system had not kept pace with significant changes in technology and consumer purchasing behaviour, particularly the rapid growth of online retail. In March 2024, online sales accounted for 25% of all UK retail sales, compared to 10% a decade ago. This shift presented increasing challenges for enforcement authorities in identifying and removing unsafe products from the market, particularly where goods were sold cross-border or via international online platforms.

3. Key Issues

The UK Government had launched two linked consultations proposing significant reform of the product safety, market surveillance and enforcement framework. The existing system was widely recognised as complex, fragmented, and increasingly difficult to apply consistently across different product types and enforcement regimes.

To address these issues, the UK government had launched two consultations:

- a) Product Regulation: The UK's new product safety framework

Details of the consultation could be found at;
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/product-regulation-the-uks-new-product-safety-framework/the-uks-new-product-safety-framework>

This consultation set out proposals for a reformed product safety framework under the following main themes:

- Getting the basics right
- Accountability throughout the supply chain
- A new approach to product information
- Supporting enforcement activity
- Building on the new foundations: Introducing additional tools to address higher-risk products and enabling further reform of sector-specific regulations where required.

Officers supported the overall direction of these proposals, particularly the focus on strengthening supply chain accountability, clarifying responsibilities, and improving cooperation in enforcement activity.

However, the consultation responses, highlighted that careful consideration was required in relation to Northern Ireland's unique regulatory position, where EU product safety legislation (including Regulation (EU) 2023/988) continued to apply. There was a risk that divergence in definitions or enforcement expectations could create practical difficulties for both businesses and enforcement authorities.

b) Product regulation: market surveillance and enforcement framework

Details of the consultation could be found at;
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/product-regulation-market-surveillance-and-enforcement-framework>

This consultation sought to modernise enforcement arrangements by:

- Simplifying and consolidating enforcement powers to create a comprehensive, more consistent, and effective regulatory framework.
- Expanding civil sanction options by Introducing monetary penalties to provide alternatives to criminal prosecution.
- Addressing enforcement challenges posed by online and international supply chains.
- Exploring whether cost recovery should form part of the enforcement toolkit and if so, for what types of activities.
- Allowing enhanced information sharing between relevant authorities, establishing clear statutory powers to facilitate the secure and effective exchange of data for the purposes of product regulation, safety, and compliance.

Officers commended the principle of consolidating enforcement powers into a single coherent framework. The current regime was fragmented, with multiple legislative instruments leading to inconsistency, complexity and operational uncertainty.

A single enforcement toolkit would:

- Improve consistency and transparency
- reduce administrative burden on enforcement officers
- increase confidence in enforcement decision-making
- support more proportionate and effective enforcement outcomes

However, it was noted that any consolidated framework must operate effectively within Northern Ireland's dual regulatory environment and must not weaken existing enforcement capability.

There were also current differences between enforcement powers under the Consumer Rights Act 2015 and the Market Surveillance (Northern Ireland) Regulations and aligning or consolidating these powers would improve clarity and operational effectiveness.

Drafted responses (circulated) were included for Members approval.

4. Summary

The UK Government had launched two consultations to reform the product safety, market surveillance and enforcement framework, which was widely recognised as complex and in need of modernisation.

The proposed reform aimed to simplify and consolidate legislation, strengthen enforcement powers, and improve the ability to address unsafe products, particularly in relation to online and cross-border trade.

The draft responses supported the principle of reform and the development of a more consistent and coherent regulatory framework. However, it was essential that any new arrangements properly reflected the distinct legal position of Northern Ireland and did not reduce existing enforcement effectiveness.

The importance of maintaining alignment with Great Britain where possible, while avoiding unnecessary regulatory divergence that could create uncertainty for businesses and enforcement bodies, had also been highlighted.

A Member raised concerns regarding wording in the report that they considered inappropriate. The Director of Environment Services and Sustainability agreed to review the wording for future reports.

Proposed by Councillor O'Hagan
Seconded by Councillor McAuley and agreed that

the draft consultation responses be approved.

ACTION BY: Gareth Thompson, Environmental Health Manager (Health and Safety and Consumer Protection)

3.4 EH/EHS/CP/002 CONSULTATION ON THE FIRE SAFETY OF DOMESTIC UPHOLSTERED FURNITURE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for a Council response on a Fire and Furnishing Consultation.

2. Background

The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 were introduced following a significant rise in fatal domestic fires involving upholstered furniture during the 1960s–1980s, when smoking materials were a major ignition source.

The Regulations introduced mandatory ignition resistance testing, including open-flame testing, alongside labelling requirements. These measures were widely recognised as having significantly reduced fire-related deaths.

The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS), within the Department for Business and Trade, had launched a consultation on reforming the Regulations. The aim was to modernise fire safety requirements to reflect current domestic risks, modern furniture design, and update scientific evidence, particularly around chemical flame retardants, while maintaining a high level of consumer protection.

The consultation builds on the “Smarter Regulation” review and a Government policy paper published on 22 January 2025. Details of the consultation could be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/product-regulation-fire-safety-of-domestic-upholstered-furniture/the-fire-safety-of-domestic-upholstered-furniture>

3. Key Issues

While the 1988 Regulations had been effective in improving fire safety outcomes, Council recognised that elements of the framework were now outdated in the context of modern manufacturing practices, product design, and current domestic fire risks.

The consultation noted that most domestic fires involving upholstered furniture were more likely to start from slow, smouldering ignition sources (such as cigarettes) rather than large open flames. On this basis, it proposed focusing regulation more on how products perform in realistic fire conditions, rather than relying on prescriptive open-flame test methods.

Council supported this shift towards an outcome-based approach, where the emphasis was on real-world fire performance rather than compliance with specific test procedures.

Council's key views within the consultation response were as follows:

- Support the proposed shift away from open-flame testing due to concerns over chemical flame retardants, including potential human health and environmental impacts;
- Support maintaining robust fire safety standards while reducing unnecessary use of chemical flame retardants where safe and appropriate;
- Highlight the importance of clear, detailed guidance to ensure consistent enforcement, regulatory certainty, and a level playing field;
- Support the use of the General Product Safety Regulations for re-upholstered, repaired, and second-hand furniture, provided clear definitions and guidance are issued;
- Support simplified labelling and documentation requirements where these reduce burden without compromising safety.

A draft response was circulated for Members' approval.

4. Summary

The consultation proposed reform of the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 to modernise fire safety requirements for domestic upholstered furniture.

It was recognised that the overall direction of reform, particularly the move towards smoulder-based testing and an outcome-based regulatory approach.

Officers supported the continued use of the General Product Safety Regulations for second-hand, repaired, and re-upholstered furniture, provided that clear guidance was issued to ensure consistent application and enforcement.

Overall, Officers considered the proposals to be a proportionate and modernised approach to fire safety regulation, provided that clarity, consistency, and effective enforcement were maintained.

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor Logue and agreed that

the draft consultation response be approved.

ACTION BY: Gareth Thompson, Environmental Health Manager (Health and Safety and Consumer Protection)

3.5 EH/EHS/002 DEPARTMENT FOR AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL AFFAIRS (DAERA) CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED ANIMAL WELFARE POLICY REFORMS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to inform Members of a consultation by the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) on proposed

Animal Welfare Reforms in Northern Ireland.

2. Background

The Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) had launched a consultation seeking views on proposed changes to animal welfare policy across Northern Ireland. The consultation was aimed at stakeholders with an interest in animal welfare, including councils who hold statutory responsibilities for enforcement of dog control and companion animal welfare legislation.

Councils currently had statutory responsibilities under the Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 in relation to non-farmed animals and under the Dogs (Northern Ireland) Order 1983. However, Councils had no current statutory role in relation to the regulation of rescue and rehoming organisations, pet shops, boarding kennels, home boarding, or cat ownership and microchipping.

The proposal outlined measures aimed at strengthening animal welfare protections for companion animals across four key policy areas:

- The regulation of rescue and rehoming organisations;
- An inflationary increase in dog licence fees;
- A ban on specific aversive training devices; and
- Strengthened microchipping requirements for dogs.

In addition, the consultation also included a call for evidence to inform future decisions around the mandatory microchipping of pet cats.

The consultation is part of DAERA's wider Animal Welfare Pathway (May 2025), which set out a programme of legislative reform across companion animal welfare, including dog breeding, rescue and rehoming regulation, and responsible ownership measures.

Full details of the consultation, including all supporting documentation could be found at the following link;

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-proposed-animal-welfare-policy-reforms-northern-ireland>

3. Previous Decision of Council

DAERA had undertaken ongoing engagement with Councils through a range of stakeholder forums, including the Northern Ireland Dogs Advisory Group (NIDAG), recognising Councils' role as the primary enforcement authorities for dog control and non-farmed animal welfare legislation.

This engagement had consistently identified the need to modernise existing legislative frameworks to reflect current best practice, improve animal welfare outcomes, and respond effectively to emerging issues. At the same time, Councils had highlighted concerns regarding the financial and operational pressures associated with increasing enforcement responsibilities, as well as the

adequacy of existing funding arrangements.

The proposals form part of DAERA's wider "Animal Welfare Pathway" published in May 2025, <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/animal-welfare-pathway-advancing-animal-welfare-northern-ireland-2025-27>

A copy of the draft consultation response was circulated for Members information.

4. Key Issues

Regulation of Rescue and Rehoming Organisations

Rescue and rehoming organisations provided an important service in animal welfare and rehoming. However, the sector currently operated without consistent statutory regulation or minimum standards.

While DAERA was responsible for the inspection and licensing of riding establishments, pet shops, animal boarding establishments, catteries and day care facilities, rescue and rehoming centres currently fall outside the scope of any licensing and inspection regime and therefore remained unregulated.

DAERA proposed introducing a licensing regime to improve welfare standards, transparency, and accountability, aligned with other regulated animal establishments.

Key proposals included:

- Licensing requirement for organisations rehoming more than 5 animals annually, or caring for 8+ animals (or 5+ dogs)
- Compliance with minimum welfare standards based on Association of Dogs and Cats Homes (ADCH) guidance
- Inclusion on a public register

Council supported the principle of licensing but raised concerns regarding:

- The appropriateness of proposed thresholds
- Impact on small, volunteer-led and foster-based organisations
- Lack of clarity around foster arrangements, informal rescuers, and premises-based requirements
- Potential overlap with council kennel arrangements and contracted services

Council also considered that a proportionate, tiered approach was required to avoid unintended impacts on smaller organisations and to ensure enforceability.

Dog licence fees

Dog licensing had been in place in Northern Ireland since 1983 and was a key mechanism for promoting responsible dog ownership, supporting public safety,

and enabling effective dog control services. Anyone who keeps a dog is required to hold a valid licence issued by Council.

The current fee structure was last reviewed in 2011 and had remained largely unchanged since then. Fees had not kept pace with inflation or the rising costs of service delivery. As a result, Councils continued to subsidise dog control services through general rates, as income from licence fees did not cover the full cost of provision.

Current fees (unchanged since 2011)

- Single dog licence: £12.50
- Block licence: £32.00
- Concessionary licence: £5.00
- Over 65s: free licence for first/only dog
- Reduced concession may apply for those on income-related benefits or where a dog has been neutered

Proposed revised fees (DAERA inflationary increase)

- Single dog licence: £18.50
- Block licence: £47.50
- Concessionary licence: £7.50
- Over 65s: free licence for first/only dog retained

Council supported the principle of an inflationary increase to licence fees, recognising the need to ensure charges remained proportionate and reflective of the costs associated with enforcement and administration of the service. Council noted that current dog licence fees did not achieve full cost recovery for the delivery of dog control services, and a proportion of service costs continued to be met through the district rate.

Information gathered through the Northern Ireland Dog Advisory Group (NIDAG) indicated that the estimated cost of delivering dog control services across the 11 Councils was approximately £5.46 million per annum. After accounting for income generated through dog licence fees, fixed penalty notices, kennelling fees and other service-related income, Councils continued to incur a significant net cost in delivering the service.

The NIDAG analysis considered the potential impact of a £25 single dog licence fee. Based on 2024/25 licensing figures, such a fee would generate an estimated £3.31 million in income across Northern Ireland. While this would represent a substantial increase in income and move councils closer towards recovering the costs associated with service delivery, it would not, based on current expenditure levels, achieve full cost recovery across the sector.

However, Council further noted the following:

- Current fees remained below full cost recovery, with Councils continuing to subsidise the service
- A significant proportion of licences (approximately 70%) were issued on a

- concessionary basis
- Consideration should be given to introducing a small administrative fee for all licences, including those currently issued free to over 65s (e.g. £2)
- Demand on dog control services continued to increase, alongside rising statutory and enforcement pressures, including those relating to XL Bully legislation
- Any uplift in income from the proposed increases would provide only a marginal improvement relative to overall service costs

While Council was broadly supportive of the proposed inflationary increases, it remained of the view that further consideration was required to ensure a more sustainable and equitable cost recovery model going forward.

Ban on specified aversive training devices

The consultation proposed banning the use of specific aversive training devices, including electric shock collars, choke collars and prong collars, on both dogs and cats. These devices were designed to deter unwanted behaviour through the use of discomfort or pain and were widely regarded as causing unnecessary suffering when misused.

Council fully supported the principle of prohibiting such devices on animal welfare grounds. However, the draft response highlighted that enforcement of any ban would require appropriate supporting powers. In particular, consideration should be given to the introduction of Fixed Penalty Notices and seizure powers to ensure that enforcement could be carried out effectively and proportionately.

Council also noted that while the proposals focused on use, consideration should also be given to restrictions on the sale and supply of such devices in order to support the effectiveness of the legislation.

Council agreed with the Department's proposal that electronic containment fences and spray collars would not be banned and acknowledged that these presented a lower risk of deliberate misuse or direct harm than e-collars, choke collars and prong collars.

Strengthening microchipping requirements for dogs

Microchipping was introduced under the Dogs (Licensing and Identification) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 to improve identification of dogs and owners, support enforcement, and help reunite lost dogs with their keepers. A valid dog licence required the dog to be microchipped and registered on an approved database containing both owner and animal details.

Currently, puppies kept with their mother must be microchipped by six months of age, while those under breeding or block licences must be chipped by eight weeks. Dogs must also be microchipped before sale, transfer, or the issue of a licence. Microchipping can be carried out by a vet or trained individual, including Council or kennel staff, and must be reported to the database within seven days. Owners were also required to keep their details up to date.

The Department proposed to:

- Make it an offence for dog owners not to update ownership details on microchip databases within a specified timeframe (i.e. 14 days);
- Require owners/keepers to declare breeder status to enable recording of breeder information; and
- Require all dogs to be microchipped by eight weeks of age.

While Council supported the intention of these changes, it raised a number of concerns. In particular, it noted that without Fixed Penalty Notices, enforcement would rely on prosecution, which was costly and disproportionate for minor breaches. It therefore suggested that Fixed Penalty options should be made available. It also considered the proposed 14 day timeframe for updating records to be too strict and suggested 28 days would be more reasonable.

Council further highlighted the need for better regulation and consolidation of microchip databases into a more centralised and easily searchable system. It also noted potential welfare concerns with the proposed eight-week microchipping requirement, especially for very small breeds where early implantation may not be appropriate due to veterinary risks. It recommended that any changes should be based on veterinary advice and developed in consultation with the Northern Ireland Veterinary Association.

Call for evidence on microchipping of pet cats

The consultation sought views on whether mandatory microchipping of pet cats should be introduced in Northern Ireland. While cats are not currently required to be microchipped, DAERA was exploring whether such a requirement would improve welfare outcomes, particularly in relation to lost or stray animals.

Council recognised that mandatory microchipping could improve traceability and reunification rates. However, significant challenges were identified in relation to enforcement, given the free-roaming nature of cats and the practical difficulty in demonstrating non-compliance. There were also concerns regarding cost to owners, veterinary access, and the absence of a centralised database system.

The draft response also noted that Councils may not be best placed to lead enforcement in this area and suggested that alternative delivery models could be considered.

5. Financial Implication

The implementation of the proposals was expected to have significant financial and resource implications for Councils. These included increased staffing requirements, training costs, inspection activity, enforcement workload, and potential costs associated with animal seizure, kennelling, and veterinary care.

Additional pressures may also arise from the need for IT system development, maintenance of public registers, and increased administrative workload associated with licensing and compliance monitoring.

In the absence of additional and sustainable funding from DAERA, it was unlikely that Councils would have sufficient capacity to fully implement and enforce the proposed changes. The Regulatory Impact Assessments provided by the Department were considered in detail within the draft consultation response.

6. Summary

Council recognised the need to modernise animal welfare legislation in Northern Ireland and broadly supported the policy intent of the proposals set out in the consultation. The reforms had the potential to improve welfare standards, strengthen responsible ownership, and enhance public confidence.

However, significant concerns remained regarding the practical and financial implications for Councils, particularly in relation to the expansion of enforcement responsibilities without corresponding funding or resources. There was also a need for greater clarity around definitions, enforcement mechanisms, and proportionality in application.

Council therefore supported the principle of reform but emphasised that any new statutory duties must be accompanied by realistic implementation arrangements and appropriate financial support.

In response to a Member's query, the Director of Environment Services and Sustainability agreed to take forward concerns regarding financial support with the Department and provide an update to a future Committee.

Proposed by Councillor Kelly
Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed that

the draft consultation response be approved.

ACTION BY: Mark Sloan, Deputy Head of Environmental Health

3.6 **EH/PHWB/004 HOME ACCIDENT PREVENTION – OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek approval for the Service Level Agreement (SLA) between Council's Home Accident Prevention Service and the Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT) Occupational Therapy Service.

2. Background

Since 2019, Council's Home Accident Prevention Service had been leading a unique initiative in partnership with the NHSCT Occupational Therapy Service.

This programme, the only one of its kind delivered by a Council in Northern Ireland, aimed to improve efficiency in providing minor adaptations to clients' homes.

3. Key Issues

As part of the Home Safety Check, Council's Home Safety Officer assessed whether minor adaptations, such as handrails, grab rails, or stair rails, were required. The Officer selected appropriate adaptations from an approved list and referred them directly to the NHSCT Estates Team for installation, eliminating the need for an Occupational Therapy assessment in suitable cases.

Since the initiative began:

- 192 clients were eligible for referral to Occupational Therapy.
- 102 clients (53%) were referred directly to the NHSCT Estates Service for minor adaptations.
- The remaining 90 clients required interventions beyond the scope of the initiative and were referred for a full Occupational Therapy assessment.

A service user evaluation undertaken by the NHSCT Occupational Therapy Service found that 80% of handrails were fitted within three weeks of the Home Safety Check, which was a significant reduction in installation time compared to the traditional referrals that took up to six months. In addition, 100% of clients reported satisfaction with the service and indicated they would recommend it to others. The Trust had expressed its satisfaction with the positive feedback and the efforts of Council in delivering the initiative.

Although the initiative had been successful since 2019, it had operated informally. A Service Level Agreement was now needed to formalise roles, clarify responsibilities, streamline referrals to ensure the long-term sustainability and accountability of the service.

The proposed Service Level Agreement (circulated) formalised this initiative, with the overall aim of reducing waiting times and streamlining services for clients requiring minor adaptations.

The agreement also continued to allow the NHSCT Occupational Therapy Service to refer suitable clients to the Home Accident Prevention Officer for a Home Safety Check. The proposed SLA would be reviewed every three years.

The proposed Service Level Agreement had been reviewed and approved by the Council's Governance and Legal Services to ensure compliance with statutory requirements.

4. Financial Implication

There were no additional costs to Council associated with delivery of the minor adaptation's initiative.

5. Summary

Due to the ongoing success of Council's Home Safety Officer providing minor adaptations in residents' homes, a Service Level Agreement was proposed to formalise the service.

The minor adaptations initiative had successfully enhanced service efficiency and client satisfaction. By enabling direct referrals for suitable cases, the program had reduced waiting times for home adaptations and streamlined the assessment process. Client feedback had been overwhelmingly positive and Council remained the only authority in Northern Ireland delivering this innovative approach in partnership with the NHSCT Occupational Therapy Service.

In response to a Member's query, the Director of Environment Services and Sustainability agreed to explore the potential for expanding support to children with special caring needs.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Councillor O'Hagan

the Service Level Agreement between the Northern Health and Social Care Trust and Council be approved.

ACTION BY: James O'Kane, Environmental Health Manager

3.7 EH/EHS/LR/001 EL228 APPLICATION FOR THE GRANT OF AN ENTERTAINMENT LICENCE – TWEEDIES INN, 11-13 MAIN STREET, PARKGATE, BT39 0DG

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members approval for an Annual Indoor Entertainment Licence, held by Aidan McAlinden for Tweedies Inn, 11-13 Main Street, Parkgate, BT39 0DG.

2. Introduction

An application had been received for the grant of an Annual Indoor Entertainment Licence for the following location

Licensee	Location of Premises	Type(s)and hours of entertainment	File Number	New Application or Renewal
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Aidan McAlinden	Tweedies Inn, 11-13 Main Street, Parkgate, BT39 0DG	Dancing, Singing, Music, Other entertainment of like kind. Annual Indoor Entertainment Licence Monday – Sunday Midday – 01.00hrs Number of persons – no greater than 120	EL228	New Application
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In line with the Council Protocol for the hearing of Entertainment Licence applications, approved in December 2016, the application must be considered at the Operations Committee meeting.

Council could decide the following:

- a) Grant the licence;
- b) Grant the licence with specific additional terms, conditions and restrictions;
- c) Refuse the licence;
- d) Defer an application for further consideration or to obtain further information.

If Council make a decision against an Officer's recommendation, then Members must state their reasons for doing so. In such circumstances, a recorded vote would be taken.

3. Main Report

An application had been received for the grant of an Annual Indoor Entertainment Licence for the above named location. In accordance with the Entertainment Licence Policy, Members' approval was required before the licence could be granted.

Members were reminded that the premises previously held an entertainment licence until 2020. The licence was not renewed at the time following the restrictions imposed during the Covid pandemic.

This application had now been submitted by a new tenant of the premises, who also owned and managed another licensed premises within the Borough, which currently held an entertainment licence.

4. Summary

An application for an Annual Indoor Entertainment Licence had been received from Aidan McAlinden in relation to the Tweedies Inn, 11-13 Main Street, Parkgate. In accordance with Council protocol for the hearing of

Entertainment Licence applications, a decision by Members was needed on the granting of the licence.

Proposed by Alderman Clarke

Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed that

an Annual Indoor Entertainment Licence be granted to the applicant, Aidan McAlinden for Tweedies Inn, 11-13 Main Street, Parkgate with the following conditions:

- a) that all relevant licensing requirements are met.**
- b) that statutory and public consultees have no objections to the approval.**

ACTION BY: Jen McGrugan, Environmental Health Officer

3.8 WM/WM/040 FROM WASTE TO WORTH – WASTE PREVENTION CONSULTATION RESPONSE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek approval for the draft response to the “From Waste to Worth” Waste Prevention Programme 2026 consultation by Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).

2. Background

Members were reminded that DAERA opened a consultation on the “From Waste to Worth” Waste Prevention Programme 2026 consultation which aimed to reduce the generation of waste at its source, thereby conserving resources, minimising environmental impact, and supporting a transition to a circular economy.

There were 21 Actions set out in the Waste Prevention Programme and they included:

- Implementation of the Deposit Return Scheme from October 2027;
- Support WRAP in conducting an Absorbent Hygiene Products Collection study into the separation of AHP waste;
- Consideration of bans or levies on certain problematic product materials to tackle the problem of littering;
- Develop a waste prevention education programme with councils;
- Provide support for targeted projects focused on food waste prevention;
- Establish an annual Reuse and Repair Week to promote waste prevention across Northern Ireland.

While the publication of the draft Waste Prevention Programme was welcomed, Officers highlighted the concerns that there was a disconnect between the overall Waste Management Strategy for Northern Ireland that was consulted on a few months ago. In addition, Officers would have concerns that the majority of the actions did not have specific timings and they were not quantifiable.

The draft consultation response had been developed in association with arc21 and other Northern Ireland Councils. A copy was circulated for Members information.

Proposed by Alderman Bradley
Seconded by Alderman Smyth and agreed that

the draft response to the “From Waste to Worth” Waste Prevention Programme 2026 consultation be approved.

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

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

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek approval for the most recent Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Group meeting held on 12 May 2026.

2. Summary

At the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Group meeting on 12 May 2026, Members considered a detailed report which provided a range of updates from the Parks section. The minutes of the meeting were circulated for Members' consideration.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Alderman Clarke and agreed that

the minutes of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Group meeting held on 12 May 2026 be approved.

ACTION BY: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

3.10 PK/REG/018, PK/REG/011 APPLICATION FOR THE RENEWAL OF PREMISES FOR CIVIL MARRIAGES/CIVIL PARTNERSHIP CEREMONIES

1. Purpose

This report sought Council approval for the renewal of place approvals for the Dunsilly Hotel and The Rabbit Hotel as venues authorised to host Civil Marriage and Civil Partnership ceremonies.

2. Background

In accordance with the Marriage (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 and the Civil Partnership Act 2004, Council was responsible for approving applications for temporary place approvals for Civil Marriages and Civil Partnerships.

As part of this process, a Notice of Interest must have been displayed in a

prominent location at the proposed venue for a period of three weeks to allow for any public objections to be submitted.

No objections were received during the public notice period. In addition, each of the premises had been formally inspected and deemed suitable to proceed with the approval process.

3. Previous Decision of Council

The venues were previously granted approval by Council in September 2023, following the successful completion of all required statutory procedures and assessments at that time.

Proposed by Councillor Kelly
Seconded by Councillor McAuley and agreed that

the Dunsilly Hotel and The Rabbit Hotel be re-approved as venues to hold Civil Marriages under the terms of the Marriage (Northern Ireland) Order 2003, and for the registration of Civil Partnerships under the Civil Partnership Act 2004.

ACTION BY: Paula Redpath, Registrar

Having declared an Interest in Item 3.11 Alderman Smyth left the Chamber.

3.11 PK/GEN/223 HORTICULTURAL GRANT AID PROGRAMME

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek approval for the 12 grant award recommendations set out within the 1st Call of the Horticultural Grant Aid Programme 2026-27.

2. Background

Members were reminded that Council previously approved the Horticultural Grant Aid Programme that offered grants of up to £1,500, fully funded, to support up to 20 local community groups in delivering horticultural projects on land accessible to the general public within the Borough.

Eligible applicants must be fully constituted community groups, schools, or sporting organisations based in the Borough.

Successful applications would demonstrate increased community involvement in planting activities and/or the purchase of horticultural materials and features.

3. Call 1 Applications 2026-27

A total of 12 applications were received during the first call for the Horticultural Grant Aid Programme, with 12 applications meeting the approved criteria. A

comprehensive table outlining the 12 applications, including key details and corresponding recommendations, was circulated for Members' information and consideration as part of the decision-making process. Members were reminded that funding was subject to satisfactory monitoring and evaluation.

4. Financial Position

The approved budget for the 2026-27 Horticultural Grant Aid Programme was £30,000. Based on the assessment outcomes and subject to Member approval of the recommended successful applicants, a total of £16,702 would be allocated in this round. This would leave a remaining budget of £13,298.

A second call for applications would be issued, with submissions to be assessed and presented for consideration at a future meeting of the Operations Committee.

Proposed by Councillor Logue

Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed that

approval be granted for the Horticultural Grant Aid Programme applications, totalling £16,702 for 2026-27.

ACTION BY: Anna Boyle, Funding Unit Manager and Nadine Campbell, Parks Manager

Alderman Smyth returned to the Chamber.

3.12 **PK/GEN/193, G/LEG/63/1 TRUSTEES OF BALLYNURE ANGLING CLUB – FISHING RIGHTS**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to recommend to Members that the lease to the Trustees of Ballynure Angling Club in respect of the fishing rights along the Sixmilewater River within Sixmilewater Park be renewed for a further 10 year term on the same terms and conditions as previously approved, including an annual rent of £250 payable on 1 March each year (copy circulated).

Council would then contract the Club to manage the fishing rights along Sixmilewater River for a fee of £200 per annum. The residual balance of £50 would be payable to Council on an annual basis.

2. Introduction/Background

The Council had previously granted fishing rights along the Sixmilewater River within Sixmilewater Park to the Trustees of Ballynure Angling Club, and the previous lease approved by Council was for a term of 10 years commencing on 1 March 2016.

A renewal of the lease on the same terms and conditions would provide continuity in the management and use of the fishing rights and would maintain

the existing leasing arrangements previously approved by Council.

3. Previous Decision of Council

At the meeting of the Operations Committee held on 1 February 2016, it was agreed that the Trustees of Ballynure Angling Club be granted a new 10-year lease to commence from 1 March 2016 in the same terms and conditions as previously for an annual rent of £250.00 paid on 1 March each year.

At that same meeting, it was also agreed that the Trustees of Ballynure Angling Club be contracted for an annual fee of £200.00 to manage the fishing rights to the Sixmilewater River on Council owned land on behalf of the Council.

4. Key Issues

The previous lease term commenced on 1 March 2016 for a period of 10 years. Renewal of the lease was now recommended to regularise the continued occupation and management arrangements for the fishing rights.

It was proposed that the renewed lease be granted on the same terms and conditions as previously approved by Council, namely a term of 10 years at an annual rent of £250 payable on 1 March each year.

In addition, Council proposed to contract the Club for an annual fee of £200 in respect of management of the fishing rights on Council owned land. Thus, leaving a balance of £50 payable to Council on an annual basis.

5. Summary

Officers were seeking Member approval to renew the lease for a further 10-year term on the same terms and conditions as the previous lease. The renewal of the lease would maintain continuity of the existing arrangements for the fishing rights at Sixmilewater Park.

Officers proposed that the Club would pay Council an annual rent of £250 and would then be contracted by Council to manage the stretch of river for a fee of £200, leaving a balance of £50 to be paid to Council on an annual basis.

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Alderman Smyth and agreed that

**Members approve the renewal of the lease to the Trustees of Ballynure Angling Club in respect of the fishing rights along the Sixmilewater River within Sixmilewater Park for a further 10-year term on the same terms and conditions as previously approved, including an annual rent of £250 payable on 1 March each year.
Council will then contract the Club to manage the fishing rights along Sixmilewater River for a fee of £200 per annum. The residual balance of £50 will be payable to Council on an annual basis.**

ACTION BY: Deirdre Nelson, Paralegal

3.13 PK/PG/008, G/LEG/69/30 LANDS AT TOOME – LEASE RENEWAL

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to recommend to Members that approval be granted to Officers to commence negotiations with the landlords in relation to the renewal of the lease for lands at Toome, comprising allotments, play area and car parking, for a further term of 20 years on the same terms and conditions as previously. (circulated)

2. Introduction/Background

The Council leased lands at Toome, Co. Antrim. Under the terms of the lease, the land must be used for recreation and associated community use, so on the leased lands are Council allotments, a play area and car parking.

The existing lease was for a term of 20 years from 1 March 2006. Although, the lease had expired, it was currently rolling over pending agreement of a renewal. Officers therefore required authority to engage with the landlords, the Diocese of Down and Connor Trustee, to regularise the Council's continued occupation and use of the lands.

3. Key Issues

Given the Council's ongoing use of the lands for allotments, play area and car parking, Officers considered it appropriate to seek Member approval to commence negotiations with the landlords, the Diocese of Down and Connor Trustee, for the renewal of the lease to regularise the position and to secure continuity of occupation and use.

Officers therefore proposed seeking a further 20-year lease on the same terms and conditions as previously agreed. The current rent for the lands was £5,000 per annum exclusive, however, the lease renewal would be subject to negotiation and to the terms ultimately agreed between the parties.

4. Summary

The Council occupied lands at Toome which was used for allotments, play area and car parking under a lease which was granted for a term of 20 years.

The lease commenced on 1 March 2006 and although it had expired, it was currently rolling over. The current rent was £5,000 per annum exclusive, and Officers considered it appropriate to commence negotiations with the landlords, the Diocese of Down and Connor Trustee, with a view to securing a further 20-year lease on the same terms and conditions as previously.

Proposed by Alderman Clarke

Seconded by Councillor Logue and agreed that

Members approve Officers commencing negotiations with the landlords, the Diocese of Down and Connor Trustee, in relation to the renewal of the lease for

lands at Toome, comprising allotments, play area and car parking, for a further term of 30 years on the same terms and conditions as previously, with all necessary legal documentation to be progressed in due course.

ACTION BY: Deirdre Nelson, Paralegal

Alderman Bradley left and returned to the Chamber during Item 3.14

3.14 PBS/PS/013 PROPOSED CCTV INSTALLATIONS BASED ON SITES EXPERIENCING HIGH LEVELS OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, VANDALISM AND ASSOCIATED REPAIR COSTS.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval to install 'stand-alone' CCTV cameras at various locations within the Borough to reduce high levels of anti-social behaviour, vandalism and associated repair costs.

2. Introduction / Background

Over recent times Council sites had experienced varying degrees of anti-social behaviour, vandalism and associated repair costs. As these costs were covered by Council on an annual basis, Estate Services continued to review available technology to ascertain what cost effective solutions were available to reduce expenditure.

Technology now existed where individual CCTV installations could record locally while also sending data to the cloud which was then accessed by the Mossley Mill CCTV suite. Images could then be viewed by CCTV operatives. There was no longer a need for cameras to be linked to Council's network i.e. connected to buildings.

Such installations could be a single location (pole) with multiple camera heads to cover relevant areas.

3. Previous Decision of the Council

Members were reminded that in April 2026 Council approved the installation of stand-alone CCTV system at Neillsbrook Community Centre MUGA due to high levels of vandalism and associated repair costs.

4. Proposed CCTV Criteria for Installation

At present Estate Services manage the maintenance of the CCTV infrastructure in the Borough and were aware of sites that were experiencing similar ASB related issues and costs on a continual basis.

To ensure that CCTV systems were installed in a structured and robust manner Estate Services proposed that certain criteria must be met before a CCTV solution can be installed at any site.

Criteria

- High Levels of ASB - Site managers and PCSP to provide data

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| • High levels of vandalism | Estate Services to monitor |
| • Continual repair costs | Estate Services to monitor |
| • Annual repair cost comparison | Estate Services to evaluate with CCTV installation costs |

Estate Services would monitor these factors and assess when a CCTV installation would be a more effective use of Council money at Council sites. Estate Services would then install a new stand-alone CCTV solution with the agreement of the site manager.

Please note that Estate Services would also monitor annual vandalism costs at sites which had already stand-alone CCTV installations to evaluate if the CCTV installation had the desired effect i.e. a reduction in annual vandalism related costs. This would inform future decision making.

5. Finance

It was hoped that the reduction in vandalism related repair costs, at sites, would cover the costs of a stand-alone CCTV installation over a 4 year period. Installation costs were currently between £4K - £8K depending on the agreed number of camera heads on the single pole to cover relevant areas.

6. Governance

The Estate Services section had operational responsibility for CCTV, so the Operations Committee was the appropriate Committee to consider relevant CCTV operational matters.

7. Summary

Estate Services were seeking approval to install stand-alone CCTV systems at sites where it would be more cost effective to complete such installations rather to continue to pay for expensive vandalism repair costs.

When any installation had reached this point Estate Services would bring a report to Council for noting so that members were aware of new CCTV installations.

Proposed by Councillor Kirkpatrick
Seconded by Councillor Cooper and agreed that

this item be deferred to full Council to allow additional information to be obtained in order to support informed decision-making in the locating of the CCTV.

ACTION BY: David Blair, Head of Estate Services

Councillor Logue left the Chamber during Item 3.15.

3.15 PT/CI/066 BUSINESS PLAN 2025/26, PERFORMANCE REPORTING TEMPLATE QUARTER 4

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to recommend Members approve the Business Plan 2025/26, Quarter 4 Performance Reporting Template for Estates and Recreation and Environmental Service and Sustainability.

2. Background

Members were reminded that Part 12 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 puts in place a framework to support the continuous improvement of Council services. Specifically, the duties in the Act related to Section 84(1), 85(2) and 85(9) whereby the Council had a statutory duty to make arrangements to:

- Secure continuous improvement
- Secure achievement of its improvement objectives
- Exercise its functions so that any Departmental specified standards are met.

3. Previous Decision of Council

In June 2025 the Council approved a strategic performance framework as part of the Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2025/26.

4. Business Planning

Business planning played a vital role in the Council's performance management and delivery processes. It offered a more efficient and cohesive approach to monitoring and evaluating performance while improving overall visibility.

The purpose of the Directorate Business Plans was to:

- Demonstrate how each of the Directorates were supporting and achieving Council's priorities.
- Provide a clear sense of purpose of the Directorate and the challenges it faced.
- Illustrate how it was aligning its resources to meet the challenges ahead.
- Measure performance and hold ourselves to account to ensure we deliver for the Council and its residents.

Business Plans Quarter 4 Performance Reporting Templates for Estates and Recreation and Environmental Service and Sustainability Directorates 2025/26 were circulated for approval.

5. Financial Position / Implications

As agreed, as part of the Council's rate setting process.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth

Seconded by Councillor Kelly and agreed that

the Business Plan 2025/26 Quarter 4 Performance Reporting Template for Estates and Recreation and Environmental Service and Sustainability be approved.

ACTION BY: Allen Templeton, Performance Improvement Officer

The Chair advised that the following Supplementary Reports, Items 3.16 and 3.17 would be taken at this point.

3.16 EH/EHS/LR/001 – EL229 APPLICATION FOR THE GRANT OF AN ANNUAL INDOOR ENTERTAINMENT LICENCE – TUMBLEDOWN BAR, 2 TAYLORSTOWN ROAD, TOOMEBRIDGE, BT41 3TN

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members approval for an Annual Indoor Entertainment Licence, held by Anne-Marie McCoy for Tumbledown Bar, 2 Taylorstown Road, Toomebridge, BT41 3TN.

2. Introduction

An application had been received for the grant of an Annual Indoor Entertainment Licence for the following location

Licensee	Location of Premises	Type(s)and hours of entertainment	File Number	New Application or Renewal
Anne-Marie McCoy	Tumbledown Bar, 2 Taylorstown Road, Toomebridge, BT41 3TN	Dancing, Singing, Music, Other entertainment of like kind. Annual Indoor Entertainment Licence Monday – Friday 16.00hrs – 22.30hrs Saturday – Sunday 12:00hrs – Midnight	EL229	New Application

		Number of persons – no greater than 160		
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In line with the Council Protocol for the hearing of Entertainment Licence applications, approved in December 2016, the application must be considered at the Operations Committee meeting.

Council could decide the following:

- a) Grant the licence;
- b) Grant the licence with specific additional terms, conditions and restrictions;
- c) Refuse the licence;
- d) Defer an application for further consideration or to obtain further information.

If Council made a decision against an Officer's recommendation, then Members must state their reasons for doing so. In such circumstances, a recorded vote would be taken.

3. Main Report

An application had been received for the grant of an Annual Indoor Entertainment Licence for the above-named location. In accordance with the Entertainment Licence Policy, Members approval was required before the licence could be granted.

Members were asked to note that the premises previously held an Entertainment Licence until 2023. The licence was not renewed at that time. The same applicant had now submitted a new application to permit entertainment at the premises.

4. Summary

An application for an Annual Indoor Entertainment Licence had been received from Anne-Marie McCoy in relation to the Tumbledown Bar, 2 Taylorstown Road, Toomebridge, BT41 3TN. In accordance with Council protocol for the hearing of Entertainment Licence applications, a decision by Members was needed on the granting of the licence.

Proposed by Alderman Clarke

Seconded by Councillor McAuley and agreed that

an Annual Indoor Entertainment Licence be granted to the applicant, Anne Marie McCoy for Tumbledown Bar, 2 Taylorstown Road, Toomebridge, BT41 3TN with the following conditions

- a) that all relevant licensing requirements are met**
- b) that statutory and public consultees have no objections to the approval**

ACTION BY: Katie Kinnear, Environmental Health Officer

Councillor Logue returned to the Chamber at this point.

3.17 PK/GEN/021 ULSTER IN BLOOM 2026

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to advise Members on the entries for the 2026 Ulster in Bloom Competition.

2. Introduction/Background

The Translink Ulster in Bloom competition had been coordinated by the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) since 2006. NILGA was the Council-led representative body for local authorities in Northern Ireland, all 11 Councils in Northern Ireland were members of the Association. Translink had sponsored the competition since 1999.

The Translink Ulster in Bloom competition showcased partnership working between Councils and local community 'In Bloom' Groups and Associations under the headings of Horticulture, Environment and Community. The competition was promoted across all Council areas from February to August each year, and three Translink Ulster in Bloom Council and community engagement events were held annually: the launch (June) results announcement (September), and winners' (March) event.

3. Previous Decision of Council

Previously, entries for the Translink Ulster in Bloom competition were approved through the Parks and Open Spaces Subgroup Committee. In the previous year, Council demonstrated its ongoing commitment to this initiative by submitting 15 entries, thereby recognising and showcasing the significant efforts and achievements of a wide range of local communities and groups across the Borough.

4. Key Issues

Focusing on the three categories of Horticulture, Environment, and Community, officers had identified and proposed the following locations for nomination to the 2026 competition.

Antrim	Ballyclare	Crumlin	Toome
Templepatrick	Ballynure	Parkgate	Killead
Randalstown	Doagh	Burnside	Ballyeaston
Carnmoney	Merville	Whiteabbey	

These nominations reflected a balanced and strategic approach, ensuring representation from both urban and rural communities.

Proposed by Alderman Clarke

Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed that

Members approve the entries for the 2026 Ulster in Bloom Competition.

ACTION BY: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

4 ITEMS FOR NOTING

4.1 EH/EHS/002 DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS ANIMAL WELFARE REPORT 2024

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members on the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Annual Animal Welfare report 2024, published on 2 April 2026 and to highlight the key findings relating to animal welfare enforcement activity across Northern Ireland.

2. Background

Members were reminded that in Northern Ireland, animal welfare was governed by the Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. Under this legislation, Councils were responsible for the investigation and enforcement of welfare concerns relating to non-farmed animals, including domestic pets, horses and donkeys.

Following a review of the implementation of the legislation by Councils in 2016, it was recommended that an annual animal welfare report be produced to monitor enforcement activity and provide consistency of reporting across all statutory agencies.

Since that time, nine annual reports had been published by Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA). The most recent report provided an overview of animal welfare enforcement activity undertaken during the reporting period 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024.

The report highlighted continued collaborative working between all NI Councils, the Police Service of Northern Ireland and DAERA in protecting animal welfare across Northern Ireland.

The Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 placed a legal duty on any person responsible for an animal, whether permanently or temporarily, to ensure its welfare needs were met.

Enforcement responsibilities were divided between three statutory agencies:

- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs – farmed animals;
- Police Service of Northern Ireland – animal fighting, wild animals and animals on roads; and
- Councils – non-farmed animals, including domestic pets and equines.

A copy of the full report, including further detailed information about cases investigated by both DAERA and PSNI, could be found at the following link:

3. Key Issues

The report highlighted the significant level of enforcement activity undertaken by Northern Ireland Councils Animal Welfare Officers during 2024 through the regional collaborative delivery model.

Key messages from the 2024 DAERA report included:

- 5,929 complaints were received across the 11 Councils;
- 9,612 visits were carried out by Animal Welfare Officers;
- Only 57 complaints were determined to be malicious or unfounded;
- 237 animals were voluntarily signed over to Councils;
- 200 Improvement Notices were issued, representing an increase on previous years;
- 116 seizure operations were undertaken;
- 189 animals were seized and taken into Northern Ireland Councils care.

The data demonstrated sustained enforcement activity, with an increase in visits, improvement notices and seizure operations compared to previous reporting periods.

In particular, the increase in Improvement Notices (from 173 in 2023 to 200 in 2024) and seizure operations (from 47 in 2023 to 116 in 2024) indicated a proactive and robust enforcement response by Councils.

The report also highlighted significant enforcement outcomes through the courts.

During 2024:

- 65 prosecutions were initiated across all enforcement bodies;
- 44 prosecutions resulted in convictions;
- 21 prosecutions were taken by Northern Ireland Councils, with all resulting in convictions;
- Four Crown Court convictions resulted in prison sentences;
- Nine Magistrates' Court cases resulted in immediate imprisonment;
- 26 convictions resulted in disqualification or deprivation orders.

A particularly significant finding is the 100% conviction rate in Council led prosecutions, demonstrating the effectiveness of Council investigations and the evidential standards applied in enforcement cases.

This reflects the continued rigorous approach taken by Council Animal Welfare Officers in addressing serious welfare breaches.

4. Summary

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Annual Animal Welfare Report 2024 highlighted strong enforcement activity across Northern Ireland, including 5,929 complaints investigated, 9,612 visits undertaken and

increased formal enforcement action by Councils. The report demonstrated the continued effectiveness of Council Animal Welfare Officers in protecting non-farmed animals and reflected the success of the regional collaborative approach to animal welfare enforcement.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Councillor Kelly and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

4.2 WM/WM/037/VOL3 FOOD WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE UPDATE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members on the progress of the Food Waste Collection Service Trial.

2. Background

Members were reminded that as part of the funding received from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) for the harmonisation project, a food waste collection service trial was to be implemented. Officers were actively progressing the implementation of this trial in collaboration with key stakeholders, including third party waste companies, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and dedicated consultants.

3. Key Information

The introduction of a harmonised, source-separated weekly kerbside collection service enabled Council to trial the separate food waste collection. The purpose of the trial was to monitor the yield of food waste collected separately in comparison to co-mingled green and food waste collections. Similar separate food waste collection services were mandatory for Councils in England.

The trial would be implemented within a defined area of Newtownabbey comprising of approximately 1,000 households. The scale of rollout had been selected to allow for effective monitoring and evaluation to provide data on participation levels, capture rates and operational impacts. This would give Council the ability to monitor and review overall capture rates and look at the feasibility to extend to other areas of the Borough.

An area encompassing Blackrock/Aylesbury/Dermont had been identified for the trial and a map of the area was included for Members' information. This area had been selected based on key criteria including demographics, participation rates, and operational considerations such as route and crew management. The trial was scheduled to commence in mid-September 2026 and would operate for an initial 12-month period.

Households participating in the trial would be provided with the below to facilitate effective food waste separation, including:

- 23-litre outdoor food caddies;
- Kitchen (indoor) food caddies;
- Compostable caddy liners.

Officers continued to work closely with communications consultants, funded through DAERA, to ensure that a targeted and effective engagement campaign was delivered to participating households. It was anticipated that communications would include:

- An introductory leaflet and covering letter issued via direct mail to participating residents;
- An internal communications plan for operational and administrative staff, including frequently asked questions (FAQs) to support customer contact handling;
- A resident survey to gather feedback and inform ongoing evaluation of the trial.

4. Summary

The food waste collection trial would commence in September 2026 with approximately 1,000 households receiving a weekly food only kerbside collection alongside their wheelie box service. An extensive communication programme would advise residents receiving the service and Elected Members would receive copies of the information provided to residents with individual briefings for Airport DEA Members on request.

During discussion, Members raised queries regarding the trial that were addressed by the Director of Environment Services and Sustainability.

Proposed by Alderman Bradley

Seconded by Councillor McAuley and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

4.3 CP/PP/012 PEACEPLUS PROGRAMME - 8 JUNE 2026

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to provide Members with a progress update on the delivery of Programme 5, 'Our Active Borough'.

2. Introduction/Background

Members were reminded that PEACEPLUS was a cross-border funding programme designed to support peace and prosperity across Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland. As part of the Council's PEACEPLUS Local Community Action Plan, Programme 5, 'Our Active Borough', was being

delivered by the Estates and Recreation Directorate. This report provided a progress update on delivery.

3. Previous Decision of Council

At its meeting in June 2025, Committee noted the position in respect of Programme 5: 'Our Active Borough' and approved delegated authority for Officers to enter into a Service Level Agreement with the PEACEPLUS Partnership. Members also noted the outcome of the Section 75 Equality Screening and Rural Needs Screening processes.

4. Programme 5 Performance Update

Current delivery activity under Programme 5, 'Our Active Borough', was summarised across five project areas:

a) Mainstream Sport

- Club Engagement Workshops:
In February 2026, Council delivered an Autism in Sport workshop for local sports clubs at Mossley Mill. More than 60 coaches attended, with contributions from the IFA, Ulster GAA, Ulster Rugby and Autism NI. Planning was also under way for a further PEACEPLUS engagement workshop, provisionally scheduled for July 2026 at the Northern Ireland Centenary Stadium, with a focus on speed development and mechanics.

b) Alternative Sport

- Skate Activation Events:
Officers were progressing proposals for PEACEPLUS Skate Activation Events at V36 and Antrim Skate Park, subject to the new facility becoming operational. Procurement was under way for the delivery of eight events to 2028, with delivery expected to commence in August 2026. Each event was expected to attract more than 100 participants.

c) Recreational Activities

- Healthy Kids

In March 2026, Council invited all primary schools across the Borough to participate in the Healthy Kids Programme. The 11-week health and wellbeing initiative was supported through PEACEPLUS, with 20 schools participating and approximately 700 children involved.

- Learn to Swim Programme

Following the successful free school swimming lessons pilot in 2025, a Phase 2 programme had been developed for the current academic year and offered to schools where 25% or more pupils were entitled to free school meals.

Twelve schools had been offered an eight-week programme of free swimming lessons, including transport, with 11 schools currently participating across Valley Leisure Centre, Sixmile Leisure Centre and Antrim Forum. Approximately 300 pupils were currently participating in the programme.

d) Environmental Activities

Planning was under way for the development of an 'I Can Grow' programme. Aimed at beginner and more experienced gardeners, the initiative would support households to develop the skills and confidence to grow healthy food at home. The programme would also build on the Council's *Muddy Boots* food initiative, supporting a more joined-up Council approach.

e) Intergenerational Forest School

Since August 2025, 120 participants had taken part in five *Embrace the Wild* family bushcraft sessions delivered across the Borough. Following the positive uptake, Officers were now planning an expanded summer programme.

Officers were also working with the Age Friendly Team to support delivery of the Over 50s Summer Scheme, which would include horticultural workshops to promote wellbeing, social connection and lifelong learning.

A Forest Schools initiative for primary schools was also planned for the autumn, providing outdoor learning opportunities that supported children's confidence, skills development and engagement with nature.

5. Financial Implications

Delivery of Programme 5, 'Our Active Borough', was being supported through PEACEPLUS funding and was being managed within the approved programme resources. There were no additional financial implications to Council arising from this progress update.

6. Summary

Programme 5, 'Our Active Borough', continued to progress across the agreed PEACEPLUS activity areas, with delivery activity scheduled through 2026 and no additional financial implications at this stage.

Proposed by Councillor McAuley

Seconded by Councillor Ward and agreed that

the progress update on Programme 5: 'Our Active Borough' be noted.

NO ACTION

4.4 PK/BIO/044 CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,

ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL AFFAIRS – ADVISORY LETTER FOR REAS WOOD

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to advise Members that the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) had recommended against bathing at Reas Wood for the forthcoming season. A copy of the correspondence was circulated.

2. Background

Members were advised that Rea's Wood at Lough Neagh was previously nominated by Council as a potential identified bathing water site as part of DAERA Bathing Waters Review for the 2022/2023 period.

This review formed part of DAERA's ongoing statutory responsibility to assess and designate bathing waters across Northern Ireland in line with regulatory standards and public health considerations. Following submission, the site was subjected to an initial screening process against DAERA's established criteria, including factors such as public usage, accessibility, and environmental suitability. Rea's Wood met these preliminary requirements and was therefore progressed to the monitoring stage.

Consequently, a programme of routine water quality monitoring was implemented, with samples collected and analysed throughout the subsequent bathing seasons to assess compliance with bathing water standards.

Members were asked to note that, as Rea's Wood bathing water was only formally identified in 2025, the classification of the site remained at an early stage. Under the Bathing Water Regulations, classifications were based on statistical analysis of data compiled over a rolling four-year assessment period.

As monitoring at Rea's Wood commenced in 2023, a complete dataset sufficient to support a robust and reliable classification would not be available until the end of the 2026 bathing season.

Upon completion of this four-year monitoring cycle, DAERA would be in a position to assign a formal bathing water quality classification to the site, based on a more comprehensive evidence base. In the interim period, monitoring would continue to inform both DAERA and the Council of ongoing water quality trends and any associated public health considerations.

3. Key Implications for the site

Following completion of the statutory assessment at the end of the 2025 bathing season, Rea's Wood was classified as 'Poor' under the Bathing Water Regulations. This classification was determined based on monitoring results relating to both faecal indicator organisms and the presence of blue-green algae.

In accordance with the provisions of the Regulations, where a bathing water was assigned a 'Poor' classification, DAERA was required to implement appropriate management measures aimed at reducing, and where possible preventing, bathers' exposure to pollution.

These measures were a statutory requirement and were intended to ensure that public health was safeguarded at all designated bathing sites. To fulfil these obligations, and in line with Regulation 14 of the Bathing Water Regulations, DAERA had advised that an "Advice Against Bathing" notice be introduced at Rea's Wood for the duration of the 2026 bathing season.

This position would remain under ongoing review, informed by continued water quality monitoring and assessment. Any future reclassification of the site would be dependent upon demonstrable and sustained improvements in water quality over the prescribed multi-year assessment period, in line with the requirements of the Regulations.

A Member requested that sufficient signage be placed around the slipway and surrounding areas to raise public awareness of potential hazards and the Head of Parks Operations confirmed that this would be done.

Proposed by Councillor Logue

Seconded by Alderman Smyth and agreed that

that the advised against bathing at Reas Wood for the forthcoming season be noted.

ACTION BY: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

Councillor Ward left the Chamber during Item 4.5

4.5 **PBS/PS/016 ENERGY PROJECTS UPDATE**

1. Purpose

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

2. Background

Members were reminded that energy across the Council estate was managed by the Estate Services Section, covering consumption, emissions, costs, monitoring, and billing. To support this, a £300k Energy Fund was available for

energy efficiency initiatives in addition to stand alone capital-funded projects.

3. Completed Projects

Over the last financial year 2025/2026 Estate Services had 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, 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 9 Council EV locations, creating a revenue stream to fund ongoing maintenance and expansion.

4. Results

Comparing 2024/2025 to 2025/2026, energy consumption had fallen by 3.3% (734K kWhrs), costs by 10% (£225K), and CO₂ emissions by 14% (409K KG).

5. Pending Projects 2026–2027

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

- New buffer tank at Antrim Forum. May 2026.
- Replacement SPA dehumidifier at Antrim Forum. May 2026.
- Solar panels at Mossley Mill – August 2026.
- Heating control and BMS upgrades at Valley Leisure Centre, Forum Leisure Centre, and Ballyearl Leisure Centre. July 2026
- LED floodlighting upgrades at Antrim Forum, Valley, Crumlin, Allen Park, and Sixmile Leisure Centres, with automated and remote controls. Capital team progressing this scheme at present. 2026
- Expansion of energy monitoring to top 15 sites, representing 90% of energy usage ongoing.
- Consultant reviewing opportunities for wind turbines, heat pumps, and large-scale solar installations, including car park canopies
- HVAC replacements at Antrim Forum and Crumlin Leisure Centre.

6. Future Development

In addition to the projects above, longer-term opportunities to further

strengthen energy management had been identified. These included:

- Wind turbine and solar panels at the Environmental Services Depot.
- Solar canopies, hydro electrical projects to be evaluated across the estate.
- Expansion of EV charging network, with approximately 21 Council-controlled charge points by December 2026.
- Investigating building fabric thermal improvements (for example Sixmile Leisure Centre, solar film).
- Maximising heat recovery in ventilation systems at major sites.
- Extending automated metering for energy and water to enable benchmarking and performance tracking
- Monitoring and replacing plant and equipment (boilers, coils, generators, pumps) to maintain efficiency levels.
- Implementing a pool cover replacement programme to reduce heating costs across leisure centres.

Proposed by Councillor Foster

Seconded by Councillor McAuley and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

Councillor Ward returned to the Chamber at this point.

5 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

- 5.1** A Member expressed concerns that DFI grass cutting was insufficient, with some areas appearing neglected and overgrown and proposed that DFI be contacted in writing or invited to attend a future Committee meeting to outline their actions.

ACTION BY: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

- 5.2** Members raised concerns that there was still no confirmed timeline for repairs to the John Street playpark. The Head of Estates Services advised that the building owner had obtained repair quotations from two contractors. Concerns were also noted that children continue to access the playground; however, the Head of Estates Services confirmed that access was being monitored and that damaged panels were being repaired to help prevent entry. The Head of Estates Services also agreed to arrange an urgent meeting involving DEA Members and all relevant parties to provide an update.

ACTION BY: David Blair, Head of Estates Services

- 5.3** In response to a Member's query regarding an expected report to this month's committee meeting in relation to pitch provision, the Chief Executive confirmed that this report would be brought to the next Community Development Committee.

ACTION BY: Ursula Faye, Director of Community and Culture

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED 'IN CONFIDENCE

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor Cooper and agreed

that the following Committee business be taken In Confidence and the livestream and audio recording would cease.

6 ITEMS IN CONFIDENCE

6.1 IN CONFIDENCE WM/ARC21/4/VOL arc21 JOINT COMMITTEE REPORT

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members on the May Joint Committee meeting.

2. Introduction

The arc21 Joint Committee met on a monthly basis and each month the papers were reviewed by the Operations Committee.

3. Previous Decisions of Council

All previous papers had been noted.

4. Main Report

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

- 28 May 2026

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

5. Summary

The main issues from the May meeting were:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor McAuley and agreed that

the Chief Executive write to the Chair of arc21 to request that Members receive full disclosure of the Gateway Review.

ACTION BY: Richard Baker, Chief Executive

6.2 IN CONFIDENCE FI/PRO/TEN/559 FRAMEWORK FOR THE PROVISION OF FIRE ALARM MAINTENANCE - FURTHER COMPETITION 1

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to obtain approval for the appointment of a suitably qualified and experienced organisation to install a replacement fire detection and alarm system at the Antrim Forum.

The works had a gross cost of £[REDACTED] (excl. VAT) and would be funded from existing revenue budgets and capital programme as appropriate. The works were deemed affordable in the context of CAPEX and whole life revenue.

2. Introduction/Background

At the Council Meeting in April 2025, Members approved the establishment of a framework for the provision of fire alarm maintenance and services across the Council's estate. In accordance with the operation of the framework, where a distinct works project was required during the contract period, any relevant appointed suppliers would be invited to tender in a Further Competition exercise. Should the costs of any further competition exceed the relevant threshold, a report would be brought to Council to inform Members.

The fire alarm system at the Antrim Forum had been subject to ongoing issues

and maintenance was no longer a viable option to prolong the life of the system due to frequency of issues and availability of parts. Because of this, as part of Estate lifecycle projects, the replacement of the system was approved by Council in June 2025, subject to the final investment decision. The new system would streamline operations and enhance protection throughout the building and would ensure that the system in place at the Stadium communicates wirelessly with the main system in the building.

The Contractor would be responsible for the supply, installation, and commissioning of the new system as well as the provision of maintenance for the first year. The new system would ensure that the Council continued to comply with current and future safety regulations.

3. Procurement Process

Further Competition 1 was procured in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Framework. Suppliers appointed to the Framework were invited to tender via CiAnywhere on 12 January 2026.

Two tender responses were opened via the CiAnywhere Portal on 22 May 2026 and referred to the evaluation panel for assessment. The tender was evaluated as follows:

Commercial Assessment

The tender was evaluated based on cost (100%) and the recommendation was as follows:

Contractor	Cost Assessment (out of 100%)	Tendered Total of the Prices (£) (excl. VAT)	Model Compensation Event Total (£) (excl. VAT)	Tender Assessment Total Price (£) (excl. VAT)
Zest Fire and Security Ltd	100.00	██████	██████	██████

* The model compensation event was included in the evaluation exercise to assess the cost impact of change resulting from future compensation events (variations due to unforeseen items). It included costs for people, materials, and equipment.

The full list of tenderers and evaluation outturn was available in Appendix A (circulated).

4. Social Value

Social Value in procurement was implemented by the Executive in June 2022 and incorporated 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 requirements for social value criteria to be applied.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Councillor Kirkpatrick and agreed that

having achieved a score of 100%, an award be made to Zest Fire and Security Ltd at a tendered cost of up to £[REDACTED] (excl. VAT) for the replacement of the Antrim Forum fire alarm system.

ACTION BY: Melissa Kenning, Procurement Manager

6.3 IN CONFIDENCE G/LEG/14 PLANNING APPLICATION SUBMITTED RELATING TO COUNCIL LAND AT FARMLEY CARPARK, GLENGORMLEY

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Alderman Bradley and agreed that

the matter be considered at a meeting of DEA Members, with no action to be taken at this stage.

Councillor McAuley's objection to the proposal was noted.

ACTION BY: Borough Lawyer (Legal, Land, Governance & Policy)

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED OUT OF 'IN CONFIDENCE'

Proposed by Councillor Kirkpatrick
Seconded by Alderman Smyth and agreed

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

The Chairperson advised that audio-recording would recommence at this point.

There being no further Committee business, the Chairperson thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting concluded at 8.49pm.

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.