



**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
COMMITTEE HELD IN THE CHAMBER, MOSSLEY MILL  
ON 9 MARCH 2026 6.30 PM**

<b>In the Chair</b>	:	Councillor S Wilson
<b>Committee Members (In person)</b>	:	Alderman S Ross  Councillors – M Brady, S Cosgrove, P Dunlop, J Gilmour, H Magill, T McGrann, V McWilliam, M Ní Chonghaile and A O'Lone
<b>Committee Members (Remote)</b>	:	Alderman J McGrath Councillors – J Burbank and M Stewart
<b>Non-Committee Members</b>	:	Alderman L Clarke Councillors – M Cooper and B Webb
<b>Officers Present</b>	:	Director of Community and Culture – U Fay Head of Community Development – R McKenna Head of Arts, Culture, Tourism & Events – S Goldrick Head of Marketing, Communications and PR – J McIntyre ICT Project Officer - C Bell Member Services Officer - S Fisher

**CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

The Chairperson welcomed Members to the March meeting of the Community Development Committee and reminded all present of the audio recording procedures.

**1 APOLOGIES**

Councillor - R Lynch

**2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Item 3.11- Councillors P Dunlop and M Cooper  
Item 3.15 - Councillor M Ní Chonghaile

**REPORT ON BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING ON  
MONDAY 9 MARCH 2026**

**3 ITEMS FOR DECISION**

**3.1 AC/TOU/011 SHARED IRELAND HERITAGE NETWORKS PROJECT**

**1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for Officers to participate in the Heritage Council's Shared Ireland Heritage Networks project.**

**2. Introduction/Background**

The Heritage Council was formed by the Government of Ireland in 1995. It was a statutory body whose mission was to develop a wide understanding of the vital contribution that heritage makes to social, environmental and economic well-being.

The Heritage Council regularly collaborated with organisations outside the Republic of Ireland on mutually beneficial heritage projects. An example of this was the All-Ireland Heritage Skills Programme, a collaboration between The King's Foundation, The Heritage Council, the Department for Communities' Historic Environment Division and Construction Industry Training Board NI, which aimed to elevate individuals within the construction sector to the status of master craftspeople.

**3. Shared Ireland Heritage Networks project**

The circulated letter had been received from The Heritage Council inviting the Council to participate in the newly formed Shared Ireland Heritage Networks project. This five-year programme was intended to support strong professional connections between those with responsibility for heritage within City, Borough and District Councils in Northern Ireland and their counterparts in the Republic of Ireland by creating space for sustained professional connection, shared learning, and the gradual development of collaborative projects.

As an initial opportunity to support early connections under the programme, the Heritage Council was planning a heritage conference on 2 September 2026 in County Monaghan. This would provide an open forum for Officers and Elected Members to meet and exchange experience.

The Shared Ireland Heritage Networks project had the potential to support and enhance existing Council heritage programmes, particularly the PEACEPLUS Our Historic Borough project.

#### 4. Financial Position/Implication

If approved, the cost of attending the heritage conference and any other costs associated with the Council's involvement in the Shared Ireland Heritage Networks project would be covered by existing Tourism budgets.

#### 5. Summary

A letter had been received from The Heritage Council inviting the Council to participate in the newly formed Shared Ireland Heritage Networks project, which was intended to support strong professional connections between those with responsibility for heritage in local government in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. As an initial opportunity to support early connections under the programme, the Heritage Council was planning a heritage conference on 2 September 2026 in County Monaghan for Officers and Elected Members.

Proposed by Councillor Dunlop  
Seconded by Alderman Ross and agreed that

the invitation to participate in the Shared Ireland Heritage Networks project be accepted and that attendance of the Mayor, Chair of the Community Development Committee (or their nominees) and relevant officers be approved.

An Amendment was put to the meeting as follows:

Proposed by Councillor Ní Chonghaile  
Seconded by Councillor McGrann

that the invitation to participate in the Shared Ireland Heritage Networks project be accepted and that attendance of the Mayor, Chair of the Community Development Committee (or their nominees) and relevant officers be approved and that the Director of Community and Culture writes out to invite a representative from each of the parties and an Independent Member to attend the conference.

On the Amendment being put to the meeting, Members voted as follows:  
6 Members voted in favour, 8 Members voted against and 0 abstentions.

the Amendment was declared not carried.

The substantive proposal was then put to the meeting.

Proposed by Councillor Dunlop  
Seconded by Alderman Ross

that the invitation to participate in the Shared Ireland Heritage Networks project be accepted and that attendance of the Mayor, Chair of the Community Development Committee (or their nominees) and relevant officers be approved.

On the substantive proposal being put to the meeting, Members voted as follows:

14 Members voted in favour, 0 Members voted against and 0 abstentions.

It was therefore agreed that

**the invitation to participate in the Shared Ireland Heritage Networks project be accepted and that attendance of the Mayor, Chair of the Community Development Committee (or their nominees) and relevant Officers be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Simon Goldrick, Head of Arts, Culture, Tourism and Events*

### **3.2 ACTE/ED/TOU/062 TOURISM EVENT FUND GRANT AID**

#### **1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for six Tourism Event grant funding awards for 2026/27.**

#### **2. Background**

Historically, the Council had supported the delivery of large-scale tourism events in the Borough by external organisations through a Corporate Events Sponsorship Scheme. As part of the work associated with the establishment of the Council's Grant Funding Hub, this support would be delivered through an annual Tourism Event grant fund.

The Tourism Event fund provided grants of up to £15,000 to organisations who would be able to clearly demonstrate economic and reputational benefits to the Council area by attracting large numbers of visitors to their event. These benefits would typically include bed nights/accommodation spend, ancillary spend such as hospitality, local retail and visitor attractions, and positive media/social media coverage that increased the attractiveness of the Council area as a visitor destination.

#### **3. Previous Decision of Council**

The Tourism Event Grant Funding Programme was approved at the November 2025 Committee. The programme opened on 5 January 2026 for applications with a closing date of 13 February 2026.

#### **4. 2026/27 Tourism Event Grant Fund Proposals**

In total, six funding applications for 2026/27 were received and scored by officers, with all six applications totalling £90,000 achieving the required pass threshold. Application details were circulated for the six events, which were:

- Shane's Castle May Day Steam Rally 2026
- Antrim and Newtownabbey Pipe Band and Drum Majors Championship

- 2026
- Whiteabbey Village Fair 2026
- Toome Fair 2026
- Halloween in Antrim 2026
- FarmFLiX #onThePull26

#### 5. Financial Position

A budget of £75,280 was included in the 2026/27 Arts and Culture budgets for Tourism Event grant funding, and if all six applications were approved this budget would be overspent by £12,547.

The Community Festivals Fund Grant Aid Budget currently had an underspend of £86,940 after the first call. It was recommended therefore that £12,547 was moved from this budget into the Tourism Event grant budget to allow the six applications to be approved in full.

#### 6. Summary

In total, six applications were received for Tourism Event grant funding for 2026/27 and assessed by a panel of Officers. All six applications, totalling £90,000, had achieved the required threshold for funding. A budget of £75,280 was included in the 2026/27 estimates for this grant, and it was recommended that £12,547 be moved from the Community Festivals Fund budget to cover the additional spend.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour

Seconded by Councillor Cosgrove and agreed that

**(a) the six successful Tourism Event grant applications for funding totalling £90,000 be approved; and**

**(b) £12,547 be moved from the Community Festivals Fund budget to the Tourism Event grant budget to ensure that the budget was not overspent.**

*ACTION BY: Anna Boyle, Funding Unit Manager*

### 3.3 **AC/EV/025 BALLYCLARE MAY FAIR**

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the minutes of the Ballyclare May Fair Working Group meeting of 11 February 2026 as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.**

#### 2. Background

The role of the Ballyclare May Fair Working Group was to promote, develop and organise the annual Ballyclare May Fair. The specific role of the May Fair Working Group was set out as follows:

- To advise the Council on the programme for the May Fair
- To organise delivery of the May Fair
- To promote participation in the May Fair by the Ballyclare community and wider Borough community
- To explore opportunities for sponsorship and additional funding for the May Fair
- To provide advocacy for the May Fair and achieve collaboration of a range of stakeholders into the design and delivery of the May Fair
- To contribute expertise, skills and knowledge from a range of sectors to the benefit and continuous improvement of this annual event so that Ballyclare DEA achieved maximum benefit from its delivery.

The Working Group met monthly from September to June each year and reported to the Community Development Committee. Membership consisted of all Ballyclare DEA Elected Members, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, and up to five non-elected voluntary members who were actively involved in the local community.

### 3. Previous Decision of the Council

The revised Working Group Terms of Reference were approved at the December 2023 Community Planning Committee. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved at the February 2026 Community Development Committee meeting.

### 4. Working Group Meeting

The Ballyclare May Fair Working Group met on 11 February 2026 in Ballyclare Town Hall. The minutes of the meeting were circulated.

Proposed by Councillor Stewart  
Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

**the minutes of the Ballyclare May Fair Working Group meeting of 11 February 2026 be approved as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.**

*ACTION BY: Joanne Hamilton-Whyte, PA to Director of Community and Culture*

## 3.4 **AC/GEN/008 FREE USE OF THE THEATRE AT THE MILL**

### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the free use of the Theatre at the Mill by the Royal British Legion (RBL) for their Northern Ireland District Conference on 16 January 2027.**

### 2. Introduction/Background

The Northern Ireland District Conference was the principal annual meeting of the Royal British Legion in Northern Ireland. It brought together Branch delegates, senior RBL leadership, the Veterans' Commissioner and

representatives from the Armed Forces community to review the past year's work, set priorities for the year ahead and formally conduct District business.

The programme included ceremonial proceedings, keynote briefings, governance updates, elections, awards presentations and opportunities for Branches to share good practice.

It was a significant civic event that strengthened the work of RBL Branches across the Borough and enhanced the support provided to veterans and their families.

### 3. Previous Decision of Council

Approval was given at the June 2025 Committee for a revision to the Community Development Pricing Policy, which now required all free use requests be brought to the Committee for decision. This was the first time that the Royal British Legion had requested the free use of the Theatre at the Mill.

### 4. Request for Free Use

The Royal British Legion had requested the free use of the Theatre at the Mill on 16 January 2027 for their annual Northern Ireland District Conference. It was proposed that free use be given on the basis that the event contributes to the People, Prosperity and Performance corporate objectives by strengthening the capacity, skills and effectiveness of volunteers who support the Armed Forces across Northern Ireland; by bringing economic and tourism benefits from attendees who travel to Northern Ireland for the conference; and by visibly role-modelling excellence.

### 5. Financial Position/Implication

The direct staffing costs to the Council for facilitating this booking would be £540, and the potential lost income from a commercial hire would be £1,035.

### 6. Summary

The Royal British Legion had requested the free use of the Theatre at the Mill for their annual Northern Ireland District Conference on 16 January 2027.

Proposed by Councillor Dunlop  
Seconded by Alderman Ross and agreed that

**the request from the Royal British Legion for the free use of the Theatre at the Mill on 16 January 2027 for their Northern Ireland District Conference be approved at a cost of £540.**

*ACTION BY: Katherine Gardiner, Arts and Theatres Manager*

*Councillor Gilmour left and returned to the Chamber during Item 3.5.*

### 3.5 AC/GEN/008 FREE USE OF THE COURTYARD THEATRE

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval to reject a free use application for the Courtyard Theatre from Louder Than Words for their production of Delicate: A New Musical.**

#### 2. Introduction/Background

Louder Than Words was a theatrical production company based in Newtownabbey who were hoping to bring their new show Delicate: A New Musical to the stage for the first time later this year. Based around the songs of Taylor Swift, Delicate: A New Musical was an original piece of theatre exploring themes of mental health and grief.

#### 3. Previous Decision of Council

Approval was given at the June 2025 Committee for a revision to the Community Development Pricing Policy, which now required all free use requests be brought to the Committee for decision.

#### 4. Request for Free Use

Louder Than Words had requested the free use of the Courtyard Theatre on 3 – 5 September 2026 to rehearse and perform Delicate: A New Musical. Although the production would not be for profit, Louder Than Words intend to charge an admission fee. Prior to the policy update referred to above where the Head of Service could consider requests for free use of theatres however the following clause applied:

Hire of a theatre for routine performing arts purposes not related to a specific fund raising or other 'special one off' occasion cannot be considered under this policy and normal community hire rates would apply to all such bookings.

Given this it was proposed not to approve this request given that it was for three days of use for a performing arts purpose and an admission charge would be applied.

#### 5. Financial Position/Implication

The direct staffing costs to the Council for facilitating this booking would be £720, and the potential lost income from a commercial hire would be £1,130, however, it was proposed to offer this company the community rate of £734 for hire of The Courtyard Theatre, which would cover staff costs of facilitating this booking.

## 6. Summary

Louder Than Words productions had requested the free use of the Courtyard Theatre on 3 - 5 September 2026 to rehearse and perform *Delicate: A New Musical*. It was proposed to offer Louder Than Words the community rate for hire of The Courtyard Theatre which would cover staff costs of facilitating this booking.

Proposed by Councillor Dunlop  
Seconded by Councillor Gilmour

that the request for Louder Than Words to have free use of the Courtyard Theatre to rehearse and perform *Delicate: A New Musical* on 3 - 5 September 2026 be rejected on the basis that this was a theatrical performance with an admission fee, and that the hire of the venue at the community rate be approved.

An Amendment was put to the meeting as follows:

Proposed by Councillor O'Lone  
Seconded by Councillor McGrann

that the Louder than Words Group would be able to avail of one free night with a charge applied to the other two nights to rehearse and perform *Delicate: A New Musical* on 3 - 5 September 2026.

On the Amendment being put to the meeting, the Members voted as follows: 7 Members voted in favour, 7 Members voted against and 0 abstentions.

The Chair then used his casting vote against the proposal.

the Amendment was declared not carried.

The substantive proposal was then put to the meeting.

Proposed by Councillor Dunlop  
Seconded by Councillor Gilmour

that the request for Louder Than Words to have free use of the Courtyard Theatre to rehearse and perform *Delicate: A New Musical* on 3 - 5 September 2026 be rejected on the basis that this was a theatrical performance with an admission fee, and that the hire of the venue at the community rate be approved.

On the substantive being put to the meeting, Members voted as follows: 8 Members voted in favour, 5 Members voted against and 0 abstentions.

It was therefore agreed that

**the request for Louder Than Words to have free use of the Courtyard Theatre to rehearse and perform *Delicate: A New Musical* on 3 - 5 September 2026 be**

**rejected on the basis that this was a theatrical performance with an admission fee, and that the hire of the venue at the community rate be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Katherine Gardiner, Arts and Theatres Manager*

### **3.6 CP/GR/193 SOMME VISIT 2026**

#### **1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report was to provide the minutes of the meeting of the Task and Finish Working Group held on 24 February 2026 as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.**

#### **2. Introduction/Background**

A delegation from the Council once again participated in a visit to the Somme Region from 30 June–2 July 2025, to mark the 1 July anniversary of the Battle of the Somme.

The visit to France included educational visits to key sites where local regiments fought, and individuals from the Borough lost their lives.

The Elected Members in attendance were The Mayor Cllr Kirkpatrick, The Deputy Mayor Cllr Gilmour, Alderman Smyth, Cllr Cushinan, Cllr McWilliam, Cllr Ward and Cllr Webb. The visit was facilitated by experienced historian and former Elected Member Fraser Agnew, supported by two Officers.

#### **3. Previous Decisions of Council**

It was agreed at Community Planning Committee in September 2023 that the Somme Visit be delivered annually as part of the Council's Good Relations Programme.

It was also agreed that the Council delegation to the Somme visit in future years would operate as follows:

The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and one Elected Member from each of the Political Parties and one Independent Elected Member would attend the Somme accompanied by appropriate Officers.

Any other Elected Member who wished to attend could do so at their own expense.

A proposed itinerary for the Somme visit in 2025 and 2026 was reported to the October 2024 Community Development Committee with arrangements for 2025 approved.

In response to Members' feedback a meeting with Members was held in November 2025 to consider the arrangements for 2026. It was then agreed at the Community Development Committee in December 2025 to establish a Task and Finish Working Group to develop arrangements for the 2026 visit to the Somme.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved at the February 2026 Community Development Committee meeting.

#### 4. Somme Visit 2026

2026 marks the 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Battle of the Somme so the visit in summer of 2026 had added significance.

Following a review of the 2025 visit, it was proposed to establish an Elected Member task and finish working group with those who planned to attend in 2026 with a focus on agreeing the proposed itinerary and other practical arrangements. It was also proposed that any Member with interest and/or experience of this annual visit could attend the task and finish working group.

The second meeting of the Task and Finish Working Group was held on Tuesday 24 February 2026 and the minutes of this meeting were circulated for Members' information.

#### 5. Financial Position/Implication

An allocation of up to £15,000 was included in the Community Development budget estimates for 2026/27.

#### 6. Summary

A Task and Finish Working Group was established in early 2026 to plan the itinerary and arrangements for the 2026 visit to the Somme.

Proposed by Councillor Brady  
Seconded by Alderman Ross and agreed that

**the minutes of the Task and Finish Working Group held on 24 February 2026 as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Joanne Hamilton-Whyte, PA to Director of Community and Culture*

### 3.7 **CP/CD/444 ANTRIM AND NEWTOWNABBEY SENIORS' FORUM**

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the provision of £15,000 financial assistance for the 2026/27 Service Level Agreement between the Council and the Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors' Forum and the Quarter 3 performance report.**

#### 2. Introduction/Background

Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors' Forum aimed to relieve poverty, advance education and promote the preservation and protection of health among seniors (50+) in the Borough and its environs. They provided facilities and programmes in the interests of social welfare for the education, recreation and leisure time for senior citizens. Officers had continued to work with the Forum

and Community Planning partners (NIHE, PHA, NHSCT) to manage the service level agreement.

### 3. Previous Decision of Council

It was agreed at the March 2025 Community Development Committee to provide funding of £15,000 through a service level agreement for the 2025/26 financial year to Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors' Forum. Officers had continued to work with the Forum and Community Planning partners (NIHE, PHA and NHSCT) to manage the service level agreement and performance of this Group.

It was agreed at the July 2022 Council Meeting that a quarterly performance report be provided to the Community Planning Committee, from September 2022 onwards.

### 4. Financial Position/Implication

Provision of £15,000 of financial support for the Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors' Forum had been provided for in the 2026/27 Community Development budget. Other Community Planning partners had also indicated their financial commitment to continue to support this group as outlined below:

<b>Community Planning Partner</b>	<b>Financial contribution to Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors' Forum 2026/27</b>
Northern Health & Social Care Trust	£15,000
Public Health Agency	£15,000
Northern Ireland Housing Executive	£15,000

A draft Service Level Agreement between Council and Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors' Forum for 2026/27 had been developed and was circulated for Members' approval.

The Quarter 3 report was also circulated for Members' information and was based upon performance measures in the 2025/26 Service Level Agreement. The Quarter 3 targets had been met.

### 5. Governance

Officers continued to work with the Forum and Community Planning partners to manage the Service Level Agreement and performance of this Group. A quarterly performance report would be provided to Officers for the purposes of performance management. Quarterly Performance reports would be provided to the Community Development Committee,

## 6. Summary

A revised Service Level Agreement between the Council and the Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors' Forum for 2026/27 had been developed with the provision of £15,000 financial assistance.

Other Community Planning partners had also confirmed their financial commitment to continue to support this group.

Proposed by Councillor McGrann  
Seconded by Councillor Cosgrove and agreed that

**the provision of £15,000 financial assistance for the 2026/27 Service Level Agreement between the Council and the Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors' Forum be approved and the Quarter 3 performance report be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Conor Cunning, DEA Engagement Manager*

## 3.8 CP/CP/113 BARNARDO'S - THE THRIVE PROJECT

### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the provision of £28,000 financial assistance for the 2026/27 Service Level Agreement between the Council and the Education Authority (EA) on behalf of the THRiVE Project.**

### 2. Introduction

The THRiVE Project was a collaboration of local parents, schools, community and voluntary organisations and statutory agencies working together to help children and young people in Macedon and Threemilewater DEA's to achieve their full potential and have the best start in life.

### 3. Previous Decision of Council

It was agreed at the March 2025 Community Development Committee, to provide £25,000 financial assistance for the 2025/26 Service Level Agreement between the Council and the Education Authority on behalf of the THRiVE Project with a quarterly performance report brought to future meetings of the Committee.

The provision of an additional £3,000 financial assistance for the 2025/26 Service Level Agreement between the Council and the Education Authority on behalf of the THRiVE Project and the 2025/26 Quarter 1 Performance Report, based upon performance measures in the Service Level Agreement, were approved at the September 2025 Community Development Committee.

It was approved at the June 2025 Community Development Committee that the Head of Community Development replace the Elected Members nominated to serve on the THRiVE Project Board from both the Macedon DEA and the Threemilewater DEA with immediate effect.

#### 4. Financial Position/Implication

Members were advised that provision of £28,000 had been made in the 2026/27 Community Development budgets in order to continue to provide support for the THRiVE project.

Other Community Planning partners had indicated their financial commitment, however contributions had not been confirmed, though they were likely to be similar to their 25-26 contributions which were outlined below:

<b>FUNDER</b>	<b>2025/2026</b>	<b>2026/2027 predicted</b>
DE/DOJ	£114,000	£114,000
EA	£32,622	£32,000
ANBC (Proposed)	£28,000	£28,000
NHSCT	£29,000	£30,160
PHA	£56,000	£53,200
TEO	£30,000	£30,000
Barnardo's	£25,000	£25,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£314, 622</b>	<b>£312, 360</b>

A draft Service Level Agreement between Council and Education Authority (THRiVE Project) for 2026/27 had been developed and was circulated for Members' approval.

#### 5. Governance

In June 2025 the Head of Community Development replaced the Elected Members nominated to serve on the THRiVE Project Board from both the Macedon DEA and the Threemilewater DEA.

Officers continued to work with the THRiVE Project and Community Planning partners to manage the performance of the Project. Quarterly performance reports would continue to be reported to the Community Development Committee.

#### 6. Summary

Members were advised that a revised Service Level Agreement between the Council and the EA for the THRiVE Project for 2026/27 had been developed for Members' approval.

Provision of £28,000 had been made in the 2026/27 Community Development budgets in order to continue to provide support for the THRiVE project.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour  
Seconded by Councillor Cosgrove and agreed that

**the provision of £28,000 financial assistance for the 2026/27 Service Level Agreement between the Council and the Education Authority on behalf of the THRiVE Project be approved with a quarterly performance report to be brought to future meetings of the Committee.**

ACTION BY: Will McDowell, DEA Engagement Coordinator

### 3.9 CP/CD/481 THE KING'S AWARD FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICE 2025

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the provision of assistance to Community Group representatives to attend a Royal Garden Party in either Buckingham Palace on 6, 8 or 12 May 2026 or the Palace of Holyroodhouse on 30 June 2026.**

#### 2. Background

Members were reminded of the three local groups; Community Relations Forum, Mallusk Community Action Group and Sensory Kids who were awarded the Kings Award for Voluntary Service in November 2025.

In February 2026 a Presentation and Celebration Event for Mallusk Community Action Group was hosted by the Council, with the remaining two events planned to take place on 26 and 27 March 2026.

There was an established precedent that recipients of this award were then invited to attend a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace or The Palace of Holyroodhouse.

#### 3. Previous Council decision

The provision of financial assistance, for two representatives from each of the five groups awarded the Kings Award for Voluntary Service in 2024, of up to £225 per person to attend a Royal Garden Party was approved at the March 2025 Community Development Committee.

#### 4. Request for Funding

All three groups had informed Officers that they have been invited to send two representatives to a Royal Garden Party in either Buckingham Palace on 6, 8 or 12 May 2026 or the Palace of Holyroodhouse on 30 June 2026.

#### 5. Financial Implication

The total approximate cost per person for flights, transfers and accommodation for one night was £300 per person and it was proposed that Council contributed up to a maximum of £225 per person, similar to last year to support groups to attend.

Provision for the total cost of £1,350 had been included in the 2026/27 Community Development budget.

#### 6. Summary

Two representatives from each of the three groups who were awarded the Kings Award for Voluntary Service in 2025 had been invited to attend a Royal Garden Party in either Buckingham Palace on 6, 8 or 12 May 2026 or the Palace of Holyroodhouse on 30 June 2026.

The total cost per person was approximately £300 and it was proposed that Council provided financial assistance of up to a maximum of £225 per person similar to last year.

In response to questions from Members, the Director of Community and Culture provided details around the inclusion of the third group to receive the award in 2025/26.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour  
Seconded by Councillor Cosgrove and agreed that

**financial assistance up to a maximum of £1,350 for the three groups awarded the Kings Award for Voluntary Service in 2025 to attend a Royal Garden Party in Buckingham Palace in May or the Palace of Holyroodhouse in June 2026 be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Jonathan Henderson, Community Services Co-ordinator*

### **3.10 CP/CD/476 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANT AID PROGRAMME - SMALL GRANTS FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS 2025/26**

#### **1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval in relation to the Community Development Small Grants Funding Programme awards being recommended.**

#### **2. Background**

The Small Grants Programme provided financial assistance to groups within the Borough of up to £1,000 towards seeding costs, public and employer's liability insurance, small items of equipment or an activity.

#### **3. Previous Decision of Council**

The Small Grants Programme, was approved by the Council in October 2014 as part of the Council's Community Development Grant Aid Programme.

Groups who applied for a small grant were not permitted to apply for any other funding available under the wider Community Development Grant Aid Programme during the course of the 2026/27 financial year.

In December 2019 Members agreed that from 1 April 2020 all Small Grants be assessed on the basis of Pass/Fail against eligibility criteria and not subjected to a scored assessment process. All proposed awards would be subject to a signed disclosure from the group confirming that all appropriate supporting

documentation were in place and could be provided on request or the offer of funding would be withdrawn.

#### 4. Financial Implication

The total budget for the 2026/27 Community Development Small Grant Aid Programme was £20,000.

During the month of February, 4 applications were received and assessed by Officers, with all 4 applications totalling £3,999.71 recommended for approval, details of which were circulated for Members' information.

#### 5. Summary

It was proposed to award 4 Small Grants to the successful applicants as outlined. The Community Development Small Grants would remain open as a rolling programme with applications being reported to the Community Development Committee on a quarterly basis.

Proposed by Councillor McWilliam  
Seconded by Councillor McGrann and agreed that

**the 4 Small Grant applications requesting a total of £3,999.71 be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Jonathan Henderson, Community Services Co-ordinator*

*Having declared an interest in Item 3.11, Councillors Dunlop and Cooper left the Chamber.*

### **3.11 CD/TD/107 ELEVATE - COMMUNITY RENEWAL AND RESILIENCE FUND**

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval in relation to the Elevate Community Renewal and Resilience Funding Programme awards being recommended for 2026-28.**

#### 2. Background

The Elevate Community Renewal and Resilience Fund was available to financially support areas identified as the most deprived Super Output Areas (SOA's) of the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measures (NIMDM), excluding Neighbourhood Renewal Areas in the Borough.

The programme was partially funded by the Department for Communities (DfC) as part of existing Areas at Risk (AAR) arrangements for Carnmoney, Mossley and Monkstown areas only.

Neighbourhood Renewal areas which were already in receipt of monies through the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme were not eligible for this funding.

### 3. Previous Decision of Council

It was approved at the September 2025 Community Development Committee that the Elevate Community Renewal and Resilience Fund be launched as a competitive open grant call for multiyear funding for 2026-28 for organisations working within identified areas of deprivation, excluding Neighbourhood Renewal areas which were already in receipt of monies through the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme.

The Grant guidance notes were approved at the November 2025 Committee.

### 4. 2026-2028 Elevate – Community Renewal and Resilience Fund Proposals

A call for the Elevate Community Renewal and Resilience Fund Proposals for 2026-27 and 2027-28 opened on 1 December 2025 and closed on 23 January 2026.

A total of 15 two-year funding applications for 2026-28 were received, with 11 applications, totalling £377,436.63 achieving the required pass threshold, details of which were circulated for Members' information.

### 5. Financial Position

The contribution committed by the Council in 2025-26 to the Newtownabbey AAR Projects was £60,170, a similar allocation was included in the 2026-27 Community Development budget.

The contribution committed by the Council in 2025-26 for Antrim AAR was £111,210, a similar allocation was included in the 2026-27 Community Development budget.

A Letter of Offer from DfC to confirm their 2026/27 contribution to the project was anticipated to be for the same amount of £76,395.38

The 11 grant applications recommended for approval total £186,994.50 for 2026-27 and £190,442.13 for the 2027-28 financial year. If the 11 applications were approved, there would be a remaining budget of £60,780.88 for 2026-27 and £57,333.25 for 2027-28.

### 6. Summary

Following a call for applications in December 2025, 15 applications were received for the Elevate Community Renewal and Resilience Fund 2026-28 and assessed by a panel of Officers.

The required threshold for funding was achieved by 11 applicants seeking a total of £186,994.50 for 2026-27 and £190,442.13 for 2027-28 with a remaining budget of £60,780 for 2026-27 and £57,333.25 for 2027-28.

Following questions from Members, the Director of Community and Culture clarified details around the eligible groups and agreed to recirculate the

updated list. The Head of Community Development advised that reports on the activities being delivered would be reported to the Community Development Committee on a bi-annual basis.

Proposed by Councillor Cosgrove  
Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

- (a) the 11 successful Elevate – Community Renewal and Resilience Fund applications, totalling £186,994.50 for 2026-27 and £190,442.13 for 2027-28 be approved;**
- (b) a second call for applications be opened on 3 April 2026 and closed on 15 May 2026.**

*ACTION BY: Anna Boyle, Funding Unit Manager*

*Councillors Dunlop and Cooper returned to the Chamber.*

### **3.12 CP/GR/205 GOOD RELATIONS ACTION PLAN 2026/27**

#### **1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the Good Relations Action Plan 2026/27.**

#### **2. Introduction/Background**

Since 1998, all Northern Ireland public bodies had a legal duty to promote good relations between people from different community, religious and racial backgrounds. In 2013, the Northern Ireland Executive furthered their commitment to good relations with the release of Together Building A United Community (T-BUC) strategy to improve community relations and continue the journey towards a more united and shared society.

The Council's Good Relations Programme aimed to improve day to day relationships by reducing all forms of prejudice, promoting equality and encouraging a society in which different cultures and traditions were understood, respected and accepted.

The Good Relations Action Plan reflected the aims and objectives of the central T-BUC strategy. It outlined how government, stakeholders, community and individuals would work together to achieve change against the following key priorities:

1. Our Children and Young People;
2. Our Shared Community;
3. Our Safe Community; and
4. Our Cultural Expression.

Annually The Executive Office (TEO) invites Local Councils to submit an application for funding through the development of a Good Relations Action Plan.

### 3. Good Relations Action Plan 2026/27

TEO had invited Councils to submit a Good Relations Action Plan for 2026/27. A copy of the draft plan was circulated for Members' approval.

The draft plan reflected the priorities identified within the Together Building a United Community Strategy, and the Council's Good Relations Audit and Strategy 2026-31.

### 4. Financial Position/Implication

TEO required match funding of a minimum of 25% from local Councils towards the overall Good Relations budget. The total amount required to enable implementation of the Good Relations Action Plan in 2026/27 was £171,000. An amount of £128,250, equating to 75% of the Good Relations Action Plan budget would be requested from TEO. Provision of the remaining 25% (£42,750) had been included in the 2026/27 Community Development budgets for the delivery of the plan.

### 5. Summary

The Executive Office had invited the Council to submit an annual Good Relations Action Plan for 2026/27 through the District Council Good Relations programme. The total amount required to enable implementation of the Good Relations Action Plan in 2026/27 was £171,000. Officers had requested 75% from TEO and 25% included in the 2026/27 Community Development budgets.

Proposed by Councillor McWilliam  
Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

**the Good Relations Action Plan 2026/27 be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Jen Cole, Good Relations Coordinator*

## **3.13 CP/CP/243 ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS (EVAWG) – CHANGE FUND 2026-2028**

### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval in relation to proposed financial awards under the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) Change Fund 2026-28.**

### 2. Background

Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) was one of the Programme for Government priorities and The Executive Office (TEO) had been mandated to coordinate a cross sectoral response that was intersectional and delivered across the whole of government and society in Northern Ireland.

The EVAWG Strategic Framework was developed by TEO with a public consultation exercise on the Strategic Framework and Action Plan carried out between July and October 2023.

On 5 September 2024, the Executive agreed its draft Programme for Government (PfG) for 2024 to 2027 with Ending Violence Against Women and Girls one of the nine priorities of the PfG.

The EVAWG Strategic Framework 2024 – 2031 was then launched by the First Minister and Deputy First Minister on 16 September following a Ministerial Statement to the Assembly.

TEO would provide the Council £320,000 for 2026-28 to deliver the EVAWG Action Plan of which £86,000 per annum had been allocated to a local Change Fund Community Grant Programme. This Change Fund would support groups and organisations in the Borough to deliver projects which support EVAWG, focused on outcomes of the EVAWG Strategy:

The Change Fund community grant funding programme offered funding in tiers as follows:

- Tier 1 – Grants up to £1,000 and £5,000
- Tier 2 – Grants up to £5,001 and £15,000
- Tier 3 – Grants up to £15,001 and £25,000

Applications were accepted from community and voluntary sector organisations who were not for profit organisations and supported a wide range of social, environmental and economic outcomes. Organisations could be registered charities and eligible organisations could include, not only community groups but also sports, youth, arts and faith organisations as examples.

Projects had to be delivered in the financial year 2026-28.

### 3. Previous Decision of Council

Members were reminded that it was agreed at the November 2024 Community Development Committee that the request from TEO to work in partnership in relation to the delivery of the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Framework and Action Plan be approved.

This included the acceptance of Momentum Funding of £50,000 from TEO to provide awareness raising activities from January 2025 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 and the launch of the Change Fund in January 2025 with successful projects commencing from 1 April 2025.

At the December 2024 Committee it was agreed that outline proposals for the EVAWG Momentum Funding be approved for delivery by the end of March 2025. At this meeting it was also agreed to deliver an EVAWG Community Change Fund community grant programme to support delivery of projects in 2025/26.

At the Committee in February 2025 7 successful applications to the Change Fund with a total combined value of £109,486.10 were approved for delivery in 2025/26.

At the December 2025 Committee the delivery of a second EVAWG Change Fund Community Grant Programme from April 2026 to March 2028 was approved, with a call for applications to be made in late January 2026, the outcome of which to be reported back to the March 2026 Committee Meeting.

#### 4. Call for Applications 2026-28

A call for applications under the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls – Change Fund for the period 1 April 2026 – 31 March 2028 opened on Monday 23 January 2026 and closed on 23 February 2026.

To support applications to this programme, Officers delivered grant workshops and offered one-to-one support to all groups upon request.

In total 18 applications were received and assessed by a panel of Officers with 5 successful applications totalling £84,682 in year 1 and £81,682 in year 2 achieving the required 60% pass threshold, details of which were circulated for Members' information.

#### 5. Financial Implication

The total budget for the 2026-28 Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Change Fund was £86,000 per annum as provided for in the 2026/27 estimates.

The total amount requested from the 5 applications that successfully achieved the 60% pass threshold was £84,682 in year 1 and £81,682 in year 2. It was proposed to reprofile the underspend of £1,318 in year 1 and £4,318 in year 2 to cover costs towards EVAWG awareness sessions within the Momentum Funding element of the action plan.

Members were reminded that funding was subject to satisfactory annual monitoring and evaluation.

#### 6. Summary

In total 18 applications to the EVAWG Change Fund Community Grant Programme 2026-2028 were received and assessed by a panel of Officers with 5 applications totalling £84,682 in year 1 and £81,682 in year 2 achieving the required 60% pass threshold.

There was a budget allocation of £86,000 (per annum) designated for this grant call. It was proposed to fund all successful applications.

Proposed by Councillor O'Lone  
Seconded by Councillor McWilliam and agreed that

- (a) the 5 successful applications to the EVAWG Change Fund Community Grant Programme totalling £84,682 in year 1 and £81,682 in year 2 for the delivery of projects in 2026-28, be approved;**
- (b) the underspend of £1,318 in year 1 and £4,318 in year 2 be reprofiled to cover costs towards EVAWG awareness sessions within the Momentum Funding element of the Action Plan.**

*ACTION BY: Anna Boyle, Funding Unit Manager & Stefanie Buchanan, Community Development Manager*

### **3.14 CP/GR/206 GOOD RELATIONS AUDIT AND STRATEGY 2026-2031**

#### **1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval of the Good Relations Audit and Strategy 2026–2031 and the accompanying Rural Needs Impact Assessment and Section 75 screening.**

#### **2. Introduction/Background**

The Executive Office had invited the Council to submit a new Good Relations Audit and Strategy 2026–2031 through the District Council Good Relations programme.

The Audit and Strategy was developed through a process of engagement and aimed to reflect the Government's commitment to improving community relations and continuing the journey towards a more united and shared society. It outlined how the Government, community and individuals would work together to build a united community and achieve change against the following key priorities:

- Our children and young people
- Our shared community
- Our safe community
- Our cultural expression

The Council's Good Relations Programme aimed to improve day to day relationships by reducing all forms of prejudice, promoting equality and encouraging a society in which different cultures and traditions were understood, respected and accepted.

#### **3. Previous Decision of Council**

Members were reminded that the Good Relations Audit and Strategy 2020–2025 was approved at the March 2021 Community Planning Committee.

#### **4. Good Relations Audit and Strategy 2026-2031**

Lara Goodall Consulting was appointed through a procurement process and delivered the commission utilising the following engagement process:

- Desktop research
- Online surveys
- Facilitated focus groups and workshops
- Engagement with Elected Members
- Engagement with Council Officers and key stakeholders
- Engagement with individuals and groups across each of the Borough's DEAs

The findings from the Audit had informed the development of a strategic framework for the period 2026–2031. The Strategy 2026–2031 was structured around the following thematic priorities:

- Our Children and Young People
- Our Shared Community
- Our Safe Community
- Our Cultural Expression

Each theme was supported by high-level objectives and outcomes, with an associated Action Plan identifying priority actions, delivery partners and indicative timescales. The draft Audit & Strategy 2026-31 was circulated for Members' approval.

#### 5. Financial Position

Members were advised that the Good Relations Action Plan 2025/26 included a budget of £10,000 to commission the delivery of the Good Relations Audit & Strategy 2026-2031.

#### 6. Governance

Subject to Members' approval, the Good Relations Audit and Strategy 2026–2031 and associated Action Plan would provide the strategic framework for the Council's Good Relations programme for the next five years.

Progress against the annual Action Plan would be monitored through existing governance arrangements and reported to Members as appropriate.

#### 7. Equality and Screening

As part of the Council's responsibilities to identify and address potential Section 75 implications and promote equality of opportunity and good relations as required by the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Audit and Strategy had been subject to Section 75 Equality Screening and had been screened out for the need of an Equality Impact Assessment. A copy of the Section 75 Equality Screening Form was circulated for Members' information

In addition, the Rural Needs Act placed a duty on public authorities and local Councils to have due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans and when designing and delivering public services. A Rural Needs screening exercise was completed and was circulated for Members' information.

## 8. Summary

The Executive Office had invited the Council to submit a new Good Relations Audit and Strategy 2026–2031 through the District Council Good Relations programme.

The Strategy had been developed following engagement with Members, Officers, stakeholders and local communities. The Strategy provided a framework to guide the Council's Good Relations work and support the development of a more cohesive, inclusive and shared society.

Proposed by Councillor Burbank  
Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

**the Good Relations Audit and Strategy 2026–2031 and the accompanying Rural Needs Impact Assessment and Section 75 screening be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Conor Cuning, DEA Engagement Manager*

### 3.15 **AC/GEN/008 FREE USE OF THE COURTYARD THEATRE**

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the free use of the Courtyard Theatre by Gaelscoil Éanna for their annual Talent Show on 4 June 2026.**

#### 2. Introduction/Background

Gaelscoil Éanna was an Irish Medium Primary School in Glengormley with more than 230 pupils. The school was established in 2007 and was focused on the development of children through an education which nurtured self-confidence and identity, and which was based on the Irish language and culture, music, sport and drama.

#### 3. Previous Decision of Council

Approval was given at the June 2025 Committee for a revision to the Community Development Pricing Policy, which now required all free use requests to be brought to the Committee for decision. Previously, the Head of Service had delegated authority to approve one-off requests for free or discounted use that met certain criteria and contributed to the Council's Community Plan; under this policy, Gaelscoil Éanna was granted a 75% discount on the use of the Courtyard Theatre in May 2025.

#### 4. Request for Free Use

Gaelscoil Éanna had requested the free use of the Courtyard Theatre on 4 June 2026 for their annual Talent Show.

Through this Talent Show, the school intended to promote performance skills and showcase the variety of talents their students possess. This would be a private event aimed at parents and family members of the students. The school intended to charge a small entry fee to cover the cost of the production.

#### 5. Financial Position/Implication

The direct staffing costs to the Council for facilitating this booking would be £540, and the potential lost income would be £518.

#### 6. Summary

Gaelscoil Éanna, a Glengormley-based Irish Medium Primary School, had requested the free use of the Courtyard Theatre for their talent show on 4 June 2026.

In response to a request from a Member, the Director of Community and Culture agreed to provide the timings for the event.

Proposed by Councillor McGrann  
Seconded by Councillor O'Lone and agreed that

**the request from Gaelscoil Éanna to have free use of the Courtyard Theatre on 4 June 2026 for their annual talent show be approved at a cost of £540.**

*ACTION BY: Katherine Gardiner, Arts and Theatres Manager*

### 3.16 **COMD/CD/005 CAPITAL PREMISES AND EQUIPMENT GRANT FUND PROGRAMME 2026**

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval in relation to proposed financial awards under the Capital Premises and Equipment Grant Programme.**

#### 2. Background

The Capital Premises and Equipment Grant Programme provided financial assistance to support groups within the Borough that have been established for at least 10 years to update, enhance and improve their community facilities or equipment, provided they could clearly evidence need, particularly where financial need was limited from other funding sources.

A pass threshold of 60% applied to applications to the Programme and groups would not be required to demonstrate match funding. Members were also asked to note that proposed awards were subject to the receipt of all relevant supporting documentation, or the offer of funding would be withdrawn.

### 3. Previous Decision of Council

The Capital Premises and Equipment Grant Fund was approved by Council in October 2023 with a further update including the outcome of the Section 75 Equality Screening and Rural Proofing exercises approved at the March 2024 Community Planning Committee.

At the November 2025 Community Development Committee delivery of the 2026/27 Capital Premises and Equipment Grant Fund Programme was approved.

### 4. 2026/27 Capital Premises and Equipment Grant Programme

The first call for applications to the 2026/27 Capital Premises and Equipment Grant Fund opened on Monday 5 January 2026 and closed on Friday 13 February 2026. To support applications to this programme, Officers delivered an online grant workshop and offered one-to-one support to all groups upon request. The opportunity was promoted on the Council's social media channels.

A total of 15 applications were received and assessed by a panel of Officers with 5 applications (2 Capital Premises and 3 Equipment) totalling £38,127.92 achieving the required 60% pass threshold, details of which were circulated for Members' information.

### 5. Financial Implication

The total budget available for the Capital Premises and Equipment Grant Fund for 2026/27 was £120,000 with an indicative allocation of £45,000 for premises and £75,000 for equipment.

### 6. Summary

The Capital Premises and Equipment Grant Programme approved by the Community Development Committee in November 2025 opened for applications on 5 January 2026 and closed on the 13 February 2026.

It was proposed to award 5 Grant awards, at a total cost of £38,127.92 and open a second call for applications on 3 April 2026 which would close on 15 May 2026.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour  
Seconded by Councillor McWilliam and agreed that

**(a) the 5 successful applications for funding under the Capital Premises and Equipment Grant Fund totalling £38,127.92 be approved;**

**(b) a second call for applications be opened on 3 April 2026 and closed on 15 May 2026.**

*ACTION BY: Kerry Brady, Grants and Funding Support Officer*

### 3.17 AC/GEN/008 FREE USE OF THE COURTYARD THEATRE

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the free use of the Courtyard Theatre by the Carnmoney Colts for an awards celebration on 20 June 2026.**

#### 2. Introduction/Background

The Carnmoney Colts were a local cross community grass roots football team based in Newtownabbey, with many young players drawn from disadvantaged backgrounds. Their aim was to develop players, promote teamwork, increase young people's health, contribute to social cohesion and build friendships.

#### 3. Previous Decision of Council

Approval was given at the June 2025 Committee for a revision to the Community Development Pricing Policy, which now required all free use requests to be brought to the Committee for decision. This was the first time the Carnmoney Colts had requested the free use of a culture facility.

#### 4. Request for Free Use

The Carnmoney Colts had requested the free use of the Courtyard Theatre on the afternoon of 20 June 2026 for their inaugural awards celebration. The event would take place from 2pm – 5pm and would be free of charge for invitees (coaching staff, players and their parents).

The club was in a poor financial state and would not be able to afford to hire the theatre at the community rate. The Colts do not own their own pitch, and spend most of their income on hiring pitches to play on.

#### 5. Financial Position/Implication

If this request was approved, the potential lost income from a commercial booking would be £408. As the event takes place during office hours, there would be no additional direct costs to the Council for facilitating it.

#### 6. Summary

The Carnmoney Colts football club had requested the free use of the Courtyard Theatre for an awards celebration on the afternoon of 20 June 2026.

Proposed by Councillor Dunlop  
Seconded by Councillor McGrann and agreed that

**the request from the Carnmoney Colts to have free use of the Courtyard Theatre for an awards celebration on 20 June 2026 be approved.**

ACTION BY: Katherine Gardiner, Arts and Theatres Manager

### 3.18 CP/CD/486 BONFIRE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME 2026

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to update Members and seek approval for the delivery of the Bonfire Management Programme in 2026.**

#### 2. Background

The Council operated a Bonfire Management Programme which sought to achieve the following key objectives in relation to bonfire sites and family fun events:

- To work with and support local communities to bring about improvements in bonfire management, particularly in terms of inclusivity, safety and increased family atmosphere.
- To further reduce the adverse health and environmental impacts of bonfires including the illegal disposal of waste.

The Programme, in the longer term, aimed to:

- Reduce the use of flags, images and effigies.
- Promote wider cultural links throughout the Borough.
- Tackle sectarianism, racism, homophobia and other forms of prejudice.

There were 26 recognised bonfire sites included within the Bonfire Management Programme, with 4 sites on Council owned land namely:

- Rathcoole – Rathmullan Drive
- Doagh – Anderson Park
- Rathfern
- Randalstown - Neillsbrook

The full details of all 26 sites were circulated for Members' information, with two sites highlighted in green, indicating they were unlikely to participate in this year's program.

In 2025 the Council supported the delivery of 23 family fun events associated with bonfire sites with funding of £3,500 per event used by Officers to organise the various events in partnership with local groups. Attendance at each of the events ranged from 100 to 300.

#### 3. Previous Decision of Council

At the Community Planning and Regeneration Committee in May 2018 the Equality Screening for the Bonfire Management Programme 2018 was approved. As the programme had not changed significantly since this time this outcome remains valid.

The 2025 Bonfire Management Programme including aspects of governance and funding conditions and an estimated budget of £171,000 was approved at the February 2025 Community Development Committee.

At the September 2025 Council meeting it was approved that due to the final inspection being carried out, no sanction be applied in relation to the four sites where flag burning incidents occurred in 2025 and no sanctions be applied in 2026 to the Neillsbrook bonfire site given the presence of asbestos. It was also approved that the current programme remained in place.

The Bonfire Management Programme was first approved by the Community Planning and Regeneration Committee in February 2016 and had been reviewed on an annual basis since this time.

#### 4. Bonfire Management Programme 2026

Officers deliver the Bonfire Management Programme in partnership with the PSNI, NIFRS and NIHE and meet with representatives as part of the ongoing review of the programme. There was a consensus from these agencies that the programme had achieved significant progress, this included:

- A reduction in the number of bonfires taking place.
- Seven bonfires have moved from a traditional bonfire to use of a beacon.
- Tangible environmental improvements in the management of bonfire sites in terms of environmental issues and waste have been achieved.
- The NIFRS have reported a reduction in the number of bonfire related call outs from the inception of the programme.
- The PSNI have reported a reduction in the number of bonfire related incidents they have dealt with since the inception of the programme
- There had been a significant reduction in any issues of fly-tipping relating to bonfire sites and delivery of prompt post event clean ups had significantly improved.

Officers also met with bonfire group representatives in September 2025 as well as Elected Members, to discuss the delivery of the programme in 2026.

It was generally agreed, that the Bonfire Management Programme had achieved progress and remained fit for purpose in the absence of any legislative framework or guidance being developed by Executive Departments.

#### 5. Proposed Dates for the 2026 Bonfire Management Programme

In preparation for the delivery of the 2026 Bonfire Management Programme, a copy was circulated for Members' information, Officers were preparing online registration packs for completion by all potential participating sites. Applications would open online on Thursday 2 April 2026 and close on Monday 13 April 2026.

Sign up events had been scheduled to take place in Mossley Mill and Antrim Civic Centre on Wednesday 22 April and Thursday 23 April 2026 respectively. The collection date had been proposed as Friday 15 May 2026.

Interagency site inspections, which would be carried out by Officers and Statutory Partners, were proposed as follows:

Pre-Collection Inspection – Thursday 14 May 2026 (Council Officer Only)  
First Inspection – Friday 29 May 2026  
Second Inspection – Friday 19 June 2026  
Final Inspection – Friday 10 July 2026  
Family Fun Event Visits – Saturday 11 July 2026

Early indications suggested that 24 sites would sign up to participate in this year's programme. This would be an increase from 23 sites in 2025 with Stiles anticipated to join the Bonfire Management Programme in 2026.

## 6. Financial Position

Members were advised that £84,000 for the family fun events and £87,000 for the provision of beacons including maintenance and repair had been included in the Community Development Estimates for 2026/27 for the delivery of the programme.

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) had indicated that they may be in a position to provide £50,000 of funding, similar to that awarded in 2024 and 2025 towards the cost of the programme, which would reduce the cost to the Council to £121,000. A formal letter of offer had yet to be received.

## 7. Governance

To be eligible for the Council's funding support to deliver family fun events bonfire groups must meet the following criteria in full:

- a) Be properly constituted and include a decision-making process and aims and objectives and activities that were acceptable to the Council.
- b) Must ensure that appropriate insurance cover where required was taken out and maintained for the duration of the Event. It was the responsibility of the Group to seek advice on any insurance liabilities relating to the event/activity. Evidence of this should be presented to the Council if requested.
- c) Produce an annual statement showing the Group's financial position for the relevant period.
- d) Agree to the Council's monitoring, evaluation and training requirements as appropriate.
- e) Be one of the Bonfire Sites recognised by the Council (List of recognised groups/sites Bonfire Management Programme 2026 was circulated). No new sites would be included, as agreed when the Programme was initially approved.

The programme also contained funding guidance and terms and conditions as well as clauses in relation to any non-compliance and potential impact upon funding.

Officers were aware that at some sites there were still issues relating to the burning of flags on bonfires. Officers had raised this with groups on an ongoing basis, who had expressed their frustration that despite their best efforts they had been unable to eliminate this entirely.

#### 8. Equality Screening

As part of the Council's responsibilities to identify and address potential implications and promote equality of opportunity and good relations, as required by the Northern Ireland Act 1988, the Bonfire Management Programme had been subject to Section 75 Equality Screening and had been screened out for the need of an EQIA. At the Community Planning and Regeneration Committee in May 2018 the Equality Screening for the Bonfire Management Programme 2018 was approved. As the programme had not changed significantly since this time this outcome remains valid.

#### 9. Summary

The Council had been delivering the Bonfire Management Programme since 2016 and the programme had achieved significant progress to date with officers and group representatives committed to achieving further improvements.

The Bonfire Management Programme, including significant dates and activities was proposed for delivery in 2026 including aspects of governance and an estimated programme budget of £171,000. The budget of £171,000 had been included in the 2026/2027 Community Development budgets for the delivery of this programme. An estimated £50,000 in financial assistance from the NIHE was anticipated in the coming months which if secured would reduce the Council's contribution to £121,000.

In response to a Member's query regarding any unused funding, the Director of Community and Culture advised that a further report is scheduled to be brought back to a future committee and that the suggestion to allocate any surplus budget towards summer diversionary activities was noted.

The Director also responded to queries regarding the management of the Bonfire Management programme, groups eligible to apply, responsible engagement and working with Council's statutory partners. She advised that a report on the outworking of the programme would be brought to the September Community Development Committee.

Proposed by Councillor Dunlop  
Seconded by Councillor Brady

that Members approve the proposed 2026 Bonfire Management Programme, including the aspects of governance, funding conditions and the estimated budget of £171,000.

An Amendment was put to the meeting as follows:

Proposed by Councillor Burbank  
Seconded by Councillor McGrann

that Item two in the non-compliance section of the Bonfire Management programme enclosure be changed as follows:

Failure to comply with the Terms and Conditions **will** result in a reduction in funding applied either within the current year or the following year as appropriate. The level of reduction will be determined by the Council on a case-by-case basis.

On the Amendment being put to the meeting, Members voted as follows:  
7 Members voted in favour, 7 Members voted against and 0 abstentions.

The Chair then used his casting vote against the proposal.

the Amendment was declared not carried.

The substantive proposal was then put to the meeting.

Proposed by Councillor Dunlop  
Seconded by Councillor Brady that

Members approve the proposed 2026 Bonfire Management Programme, including the aspects of governance, funding conditions and the estimated budget of £171,000.

On the substantive proposal being put to the meeting, Members voted as follows:  
10 Members voted in favour, 0 Members voted against and 4 abstentions.

It was therefore agreed that

**Members approve the proposed 2026 Bonfire Management Programme, including the aspects of governance, funding conditions and the estimated budget of £171,000.**

*ACTION BY: Jonathan Henderson, Community Services Co-ordinator*

#### **4 ITEMS FOR NOTING**

##### **4.1 CP/GEN/019 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SECTION - PARTNERSHIP MINUTES**

###### **1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report was to update Members on the various minutes of the Partnership Meetings led by the Community Development Section which had been held in recent months.**

###### **2. Introduction/Background**

The quarterly update Partnership Minutes as listed below could be viewed in the electronic folder called “**Partnership Minutes for Members’ Information**” on I pads.

<b>Community Development</b>		
<b>File Ref</b>	<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Name of Partnership</b>
D/Gen/91	-	Community Advice Antrim and Newtownabbey
D/DP/67	04.11.2025	Rathcoole Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership
D/CSP/48	-	Antrim and Newtownabbey Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP)
D/DP/67	30/10/2025	Grange Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership
CP/GR/43	31.01.2025 30.04.2025 16.06.2025 03.09.2025 03.10.2025	Traveller Issues Local Government Partnership

Proposed by Councillor Brady  
 Seconded by Councillor Cosgrove and agreed that

**the update on Partnership Minutes be noted.**

*NO ACTION*

#### **4.2 AC/GEN/068 THE JOYCE TORPEDO RETRIEVAL BOAT**

##### **1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report was to update Members on the development of a partnership between the Council and a local veterans’ group in relation to the Joyce Torpedo Boat which was located at The Gateway Visitor Centre, Antrim Loughshore Park.**

##### **2. Introduction/Background**

The Joyce was a torpedo retrieval boat that operated on Lough Neagh during the Second World War. The Council acquired the boat from its private owner in 2021 and it was on display on land adjacent to The Gateway Visitor Centre, Antrim Loughshore Park.

##### **3. Previous Decision of Council**

A proposal was approved at the November 2025 Committee to establish an Officer Working Group with local veterans in relation to the Joyce, with the

terms of reference for the group and a partnership agreement to be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee.

#### 4. Partnership Agreement with Veterans' Group

Following discussions between Officers and the veterans' group, the following proposals had been agreed:

- Members of the veterans' group would attend the Joyce from 12pm – 3pm daily each weekend in June, July and August in a heritage residency to engage with visitors and provide information on the history of the Joyce and Royal Navy activity on Lough Neagh
- Members of the veterans' group would participate in educational tours and talks at the Gateway and Lough Neagh arranged by Officers and Park Rangers
- Members of the veterans' group would work with Officers to identify and remedy any maintenance issues that arise with the Joyce
- Members of the veterans' group would work with Officers on the wider PEACEPLUS Our Historic Borough programme, particularly in relation to the heritage trail exploring Antrim and Newtownabbey during the two world wars

#### 5. Financial Position/Implication

The veterans' group would provide their time and knowledge on a voluntary basis with no cost to the Council.

#### 6. Summary

Following discussions with a local veterans' group, Officers have developed a plan for volunteers to share their knowledge of the Joyce Torpedo Retrieval Boat and the wider history of the Royal Navy on Lough Neagh with the public.

Proposed by Councillor Brady

Seconded by Councillor Cosgrove and agreed that

**the report be noted.**

*NO ACTION*

### **4.3 CP/GR/200 DISTRICT COUNCIL GOOD RELATIONS PROGRAMME 2025-2026**

#### **1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report was to update Members on the Letter of Variance that had been received from The Executive Office (TEO) in relation to the 2025/26 District Council Good Relations Programme.**

#### **2. Introduction/Background**

Since 1998, all Northern Ireland public bodies had a legal duty to promote good relations between people from different community, religious and racial backgrounds. In 2013, the Northern Ireland Executive furthered their commitment to good relations with the release of Together Building A United Community (T-BUC) strategy to improve community relations and continue the journey towards a more united and shared society.

The Council's Good Relations Programme aimed to improve day to day relationships by reducing all forms of prejudice, promoting equality and encouraging a society in which different cultures and traditions were understood, respected and accepted.

The Good Relations Action Plan reflected the aims and objectives of the central T-BUC strategy. It outlined how government, stakeholders, community and individuals would work together to achieve change against the following key priorities:

- (a) Our Children and Young People;
- (b) Our Shared Community;
- (c) Our Safe Community; and
- (d) Our Cultural Expression.

### 3. Previous Decision of Council

The Executive Office (TEO) District Council Good Relations Programme funding 2025/26 of £108,562.50 and the Good Relations Action Plan 2025/26 were approved at the May 2025 Community Development Committee.

A letter of variance totalling £128,562,50 was received from The Executive Office (TEO) in relation to the 2025/26 District Council Good Relations Programme. This was noted at the September 2025 Community Development Committee.

A further letter of variance totalling £158,562.50 was received from The Executive Office (TEO) in relation to the 2025/26 District Council Good Relations Programme. This was noted at the November 2025 Community Development Committee.

A further letter of variance totalling £171,262.50 was received from The Executive Office (TEO) in relation to the 2025/26 District Council Good Relations Programme. This was noted at the January 2026 Community Development Committee.

### 4. Key Issues

Members were advised that correspondence, circulated, had been received from TEO offering financial assistance totalling £205,262.50 towards The District Council Good Relations Programme for the period 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026.

The additional £34,000 on the original funding offer was designated to support activities which were aligned with the Good Relations Action Plan and T: BUC Priorities. No additional match funding was required from the Council.

Members were advised that this offer of funding had been accepted by TEO's deadline of 9 March 2026.

#### 5. Financial Implication

The Executive Office required match funding of a minimum of 25% from local Councils towards the overall Good Relations budget. The Council's contribution of £36,187.50 towards the overall Good Relations budget was included within the approved 2025/26 Council estimates for the delivery of the plan.

The additional funding allocation of £34,000 did not require any additional match funding from Council resources.

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

The 2025/26 Good Relations Action Plan had been subject to Section 75 Equality Screening and had been screened out for the need of an Equality Impact Assessment.

In addition, a Rural Needs screening exercise had been completed.

#### 7. Summary

The Council had received a revised offer for funding of £205,262.50 from TEO for the costs associated with the District Council Good Relations Programme for 2025/26. No additional match funding was required.

The additional £34,000 was designated to support activities which were aligned with the Good Relations Action Plan and T: BUC Priorities.

Proposed by Councillor Brady  
Seconded by Councillor Cosgrove and agreed that

**the offer of District Council Good Relations Programme funding from the Executive Office of £205,262.50 be noted.**

*NO ACTION*

### 4.4 **ACTE/ED/TOU/062 SUPERCUP NI**

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to provide an update to Members about SuperCup NI.**

#### 2. Introduction/Background

SuperCup NI was an international youth football tournament that had been running for more than 40 years, and which had received financial support from the Council since 2022. It was one of the most prestigious youth football tournaments in the world, and had been an important milestone in the early development of world-famous footballers including David Beckham, Wayne Rooney, Sergio Busquets and Gerard Pique.

### 3. Previous Decision of Council

In January 2025 the Committee approved a proposal to award SuperCup NI £50,000 per annum to support the tournament in 2025, 2026 and 2027. This funding was made through the Tourism Flagship Event Grant Funding Programme.

### 4. SuperCup NI 2025

Officers recently met the organisers of the 2025 competition to review results.

The 2025 SuperCup NI was one of the most successful in the tournament's 42-year history, as record-breaking crowds were attracted to a spectacular week of elite youth football. From Sunday 27 July to Friday 1 August 2025, the tournament brought together 62 elite boys' and girls' teams from across the world, with more than 66,000 fans attending over 150 matches contested by more than 1,200 of the brightest young players across five age groups.

Hosted at 17 venues across Causeway Coast and Glens, Antrim and Newtownabbey and Mid and East Antrim, the tournament was opened by Gareth McAuley MBE and drew global attention with appearances from football legends including Wayne Rooney, Michael Carrick, Stuart Dallas, Corry Evans, Steve Lomas and Keith Gillespie. Five venues in Antrim and Newtownabbey hosted the Girls' Premier and Junior Sections of SuperCup NI 2025.

The tournament overall was estimated to have delivered a direct economic benefit to the region of £4.6 million, with media / social media coverage reaching 852 million people globally.

In Antrim and Newtownabbey specifically, the tournament delivered strong sporting, economic, and community benefits for the Borough, showcasing high-quality facilities across multiple venues and generating positive visitor spend. Strong local attendance and engagement reinforced the Borough's reputation as an attractive and capable host destination for major sporting events. In terms of accommodation 1,500 bed nights were generated by teams alone for five providers in the Borough, with an estimated £1.2m in direct visitor spend. In addition, 279 media pieces were generated about the competition's partnership with the Council with an estimated media reach of 67.3 million.

The SuperCup NI 2026 tournament would take place from 26-31 July, and the draw for both the boys and girls competitions, for the first time, would take place at Theatre at the Mill (on a date to be confirmed). The organisers had

indicated that the draw would rotate to the other Council areas involved with SuperCup NI annually.

## 5. Financial Position/Implication

The Council was providing £50,000 in support for SuperCup NI 2026 from the Tourism Flagship Event Grant Funding Programme.

## 6. Summary

The 2025 SuperCup NI was one of the most successful ever, attracting more than 66,000 visitors and delivering an overall direct economic benefit of £4.6 million including an estimated £1.2 million in direct visitor spend in Antrim and Newtownabbey.

Proposed by Councillor Brady

Seconded by Councillor Cosgrove and agreed that

**the report be noted.**

*NO ACTION*

*Alderman McGrath left the meeting.*

## **5 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS**

- 5.1 A Member raised the issue of persistent vandalism and anti-social behaviour at Neillsbrook Community Centre and surrounding area. Having met with other Members, Officers and Statutory Partners he requested a report be brought to a future Community Development Committee meeting regarding the costs for installing CCTV cameras.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson

Seconded by Councillor Cosgrove

*ACTION BY: Ronan McKenna, Head of Community Development*

- 5.2 A Member requested that the stained-glass window from Legacy Newtownabbey Borough Council, which had previously been in reception be located and placed on display.

*ACTION BY: Ursula Fay, Director of Community and Culture*

## **PROPOSAL TO PROCEED 'IN CONFIDENCE'**

Proposed by Councillor Brady

Seconded by Councillor McGrann and agreed that

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

*Councillor Burbank left the meeting.*

## 6 ITEMS IN CONFIDENCE

### 6.1 **IN CONFIDENCE** CP/CD/289 & CP/CF/009 COMMUNITY FACILITIES – TENANCY RENEWALS

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval on tenancy agreement renewals at the Dunanney Centre and Lilians Bland Pavilion.**

#### 2. Introduction/Background

There were 8 Community Facilities managed by the Community Development Section as follows:

- Greystone Community Centre
- Muckamore Community Centre
- Parkhall Community Centre
- Rathenraw Community Centre
- Stiles Community Centre
- Neillsbrook Community Centre
- Dunanney Centre
- Lilian Bland Pavillion

Community Facilities were available for hire by individuals, groups and organisations for a diverse range of activities such childcare, birthday parties, meetings, sport and social activities.

There were a number of rentable offices in the Community Facility Buildings.

#### 3. Previous Decision of Council

The Schedule of Charges for hiring Community facilities and tenancy agreements was approved at the January 2025 Community Development Committee. An average inflationary increase to the schedule of charges was approved and a rental rate of £■■■■ per square metre per annum was applied to all Community Facility Tenancy agreements from 1 April 2025.

It was approved at the June 2025 Policy and Governance Committee that an annual inflationary uplift, based on appropriate indices, would be automatically applied. Inflationary increases would be based on the change in Consumer Price Index (CPI) from the previous calendar year.

#### 4. Financial Position/Implication

An inflationary uplift of 3.5%, based on the change in Consumer Price Index (CPI) from the previous calendar year had been applied to Community Facilities schedule of charges from 1 April 2026.

The tenancy agreements for the organisations below were due for renewal and have requested that these were renewed as follows:

Organisation	Rooms Requested for Rental Renewal	Tenancy Start Date and Term	Rental Income £■■■■sqm (p/a) from 1 April 2026
Barnardo's	Dunanney Centre Ground Floor Crèche, Rooms 24 & 26	From 1st April 2026 for 1 year	■■■■
Community Advice Antrim and Newtownabbey	Dunanney Centre Ground floor offices and First Floor office	1st April 2026 for 2 years	■■■■
Queen's Park Women's Group	Lilian Bland Pavilion Multipurpose Hall	From 1st April 2026 for 1 year	■■■■

A sample tenancy agreement was circulated for Members' information.

## 5. Summary

There were a number of rentable offices in the Community Facility Buildings which were leased to various organisations under tenancy agreements. All tenancy agreements included rental costs, service charges and utilities.

Renewal of these tenancy agreements at the Dunanney Centre and Lilian Bland Pavilion would achieve annual rental income of £■■■■ per annum.

Proposed by Councillor Brady

Seconded by Councillor Cosgrove and agreed that

- (a) the renewal of the tenancy agreement with Barnardo's, including keyholder option, for Dunanney Centre from 1st April 2026 for 1 year at an annual cost of £■■■■ be approved.**
- (b) the renewal of the tenancy agreement with Community Advice Antrim and Newtownabbey, including keyholder option, for Dunanney Centre from 1st April 2026 for 2 years at an annual cost of £■■■■ (with an inflationary uplift applied from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2027) be approved.**
- (c) the renewal of the tenancy agreement with Queen's Park Women's Group, including keyholder option, for Lilian Bland Pavilion from 1st April 2026 for 1 year at an annual cost of £■■■■ be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Paul Townsend, Community Facilities Coordinator*

## 6.2 **IN CONFIDENCE** AC/HE/037 STEEPLE HOUSE AND PARKLAND CAPITAL PROJECT

### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the Outline Business Case for the Steeple House and Parkland Project including the preferred option, and to seek Members' approval for the project to progress to Stage 2 of the Council's Capital Programme.**

## 2. Introduction/Background

Steeple Park was a listed historic Garden Demesne located one mile North of Antrim town centre, and extending to approximately 30 acres alongside Antrim Civic Centre. The park, which was extensively used by the local community, contains a Grade 1 listed 10<sup>th</sup> century monastic steeple round tower in the care of the Department for Communities' Historic Environment Division, as well as the ruins of a Grade B+ listed Victorian / Edwardian mansion house which was the subject of an arson attack in 2019. The park was the site of a monastic settlement which, according to tradition, was founded in AD 495 by St Aedh, and which was also connected to a nearby Holy Well. The site had significant historical connections to the origins of Antrim, the Battle of Antrim, the Skeffington family of the Massereene and Ferrard estate, and many other important figures and events. The parkland and Steeple House were owned by the Council, and the Council had a statutory obligation to maintain the ruins of the house and its outbuildings.

Following the 2019 fire at Steeple House, a number of short-term measures were put in place to protect the ruins from further degradation and to keep the public away from the potentially dangerous site. These measures, which include plastic sheeting to cover the exposed wall heads and fencing around the ruins, remained in place, but further remedial work would be required to prevent further deterioration of the building.

## 3. Previous Decision of Council

The development of the Steeple site had been under consideration for a number of years and had been included at initiation stage within the Council's capital projects programme.

At the Community Planning Committee in June 2022 Members were advised that the development of the parkland element of the project was estimated at £[REDACTED], and it was agreed to appoint an architect to progress the project specification and to submit an application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF).

It was reported to the Policy and Governance Committee in November 2022 that the Steeple Complex capital project was at initiation stage with the project scope to be developed and NHLF funding for the Parkland element to be explored.

An update on the Steeple Complex Project was reported to the February 2023 Council meeting when Members were advised that the project scope included three distinct elements with indicative costs outlined as follows:

- Parkland: £[REDACTED]
- House: £[REDACTED]
- Outbuildings: £[REDACTED]

Subsequently an update on the Parkland element of the project was reported to the February 2024 Council Meeting when Members were advised that, following more detailed design works by the architect, the estimate of this

element of the project had risen to £[REDACTED] and that an application for 70% of this funding had been submitted to the NLHF with an initial offer of £[REDACTED] having been made for a development phase of the Steeple Parkland project.

At this meeting it was agreed to progress the Steeple Parkland Capital Project to the next stage of the Capital Project Management Process at an estimated cost of £[REDACTED].

At the May 2024 Policy and Governance Committee, Members were advised that, based upon the constraints of affordability and requirement for prioritisation, a review of the Capital Programme and Capital Project Management Process had commenced for Members' future consideration. Cogent Management Consultants, working with Consarc Conservation and Outscape Outdoor Recreation were subsequently engaged to develop an Outline Business Case for the development of Steeple House and Parkland.

At the September 2025 Community Development Committee, approval was given to submit a new Expression of Interest to the NLHF for grant funding for a revised project scope to include Steeple House and Parkland. As a result of this, in January 2026 the Council was advised that the Expression of Interest was successful and were invited by the NLHF to submit a full application.

Following this outline plans for the development of the house and parkland were shared with Members at the Capital Projects Corporate Workshop in November 2025.

At the Council meeting in January 2026 an update on the Council's Capital programme was noted.

#### 4. Outline Business Case and Preferred Option

The Outline Business Case (OBC) developed by Cogent Management Consultants with Consarc Conservation and Outscape Outdoor Recreation was circulated for Members' information.

The OBC considers the evidence of need, value for money and the options for the development of the entire Steeple site, along with the associated capital and recurring revenue costs. The OBC also took into consideration the possibility of securing significant NLHF support for the project, and the implications of likely NLHF requirements on the project scope.

The OBC identifies four shortlisted options as follows:

- Option 1 – Steeple House and Parkland - Do nothing
- Option 2 – Steeple House - Carry out the minimum necessary work required to meet the Council's statutory obligations to Steeple House and outbuildings at a cost of £[REDACTED]
- Option 3 – Steeple House - Carry out work to stabilise Steeple House and outbuildings for the longer term at a cost of £[REDACTED]
- Option 4 – Steeple House and Parkland - The Preferred Way Forward: the longer-term stabilisation of Steeple House; creation of a secure shell and usable courtyard with toilets, changing places, storage and hot food

provision space; trail development throughout the park and to the Holywell site; installation of park infrastructure and heritage interpretation; and the creation of vehicular access and parking on site at a cost of £ [REDACTED]

The estimated cost of the preferred option was £ [REDACTED]. If this option was approved, an application would be submitted to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for 70% of the cost, leaving a contribution from the Council of £ [REDACTED]. Should the NLHF application be unsuccessful, Option 3 would become the de facto recommended option at a similar cost to the Council of £ [REDACTED].

#### 5. Financial Position/Implication

The estimated capital cost of the preferred option was £ [REDACTED]. An application for 70% funding toward this cost would be submitted to the NLHF following their approval of the Expression of Interest already submitted. Should this application be successful the Council's contribution to the project would be an estimated £ [REDACTED].

There was currently £ [REDACTED] contained within reserves as a result of the insurance claim following the Steeple House fire. Members may wish to approve use of this funding toward the costs of this project.

#### 6. Governance

Approval of the Stage 1 Outline Business Case for Steeple House and Parkland would progress the project to Stage 2 of the Council's Capital Programme which would include appointment of an Integrated Consultancy Team (ICT) and preparation of a full business case including planning and procurement.

An application for 70% of the funding for the preferred option would be submitted to the NLHF in the coming months and the outcome of this application would inform the full business case. The full business case would be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee seeking the investment decision allowing the appointment of the successful tenderer, contract management and construction.

#### 7. Summary

An Outline Business Case (OBC) for the development of Steeple House and Parkland had been produced by Cogent Management Consultants working with Consarc Conservation and Outscape Outdoor Recreation. This OBC identified a preferred option which would fulfil the Council's statutory duty to maintain the ruins of Steeple House while also improving access to the site, developing the parkland, and increasing understanding about the site's rich heritage. The total cost of this preferred option was estimated to be £ [REDACTED] with an application to the NLHF seeking a 70% contribution toward those costs to be developed for submission.

The annual revenue consequence for this project was estimated to be between £ [REDACTED] and £ [REDACTED] to cover maintenance costs.

Approval was sought from Members to progress the project to Stage 2 of the Council's Capital Programme, to commence and complete the final business case (including detailed design, planning and procurement). The approval includes authorisation for the appointment of an ICT and other associated costs.

In response to queries from Members, the Director of Community and Culture clarified the investment decision would be made at the next stage of the process.

Proposed by Councillor Dunlop  
Seconded by Councillor Cosgrove and agreed that

- (a) the Steeple House and Parkland outline Business Case including the preferred option at a total estimated cost of £[REDACTED] be approved, subject to a successful application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for 70% of the project cost; and**
- (b) progress of the Steeple House and Parkland development project to Stage 2 of the Council's Capital Programme be approved, including completion of a final business case (including detailed design, planning and procurement).**

*ACTION BY: Simon Goldrick, Head of Arts, Culture, Tourism and Events*

### **6.3 IN CONFIDENCE AC/TOU/010 CLOTWORTHY ICE CREAM PARLOUR**

#### **1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the Outline Business Case for the Clotworthy Ice Cream Parlour Project including the preferred option and to seek Members' approval for the project to progress to Stage 2 of the Council's Capital Programme.**

#### **2. Introduction/Background**

The gift shop at Clotworthy House in Antrim Castle Gardens was created as part of the 2011 restoration project, and stocked a wide range of local artisan crafts, home and garden gifts, and souvenirs. The shop formed part of the Clotworthy courtyard along with a café and the Garden Heritage Room and was open all year round. The shop was managed by Council staff.

Over the last two full financial years the cost of operating the shop had been £[REDACTED] in 2024/25 and £[REDACTED] 2023/24. As a result of declining sales and high staffing costs, Officers had been investigating alternative uses of the space which would be more appealing to visitors, and which would also be more financially sustainable.

### 3. Previous Decision of Council

A Project Initiation Document for a proposed Clotworthy Ice Cream Parlour to replace the existing gift shop was approved at the October 2025 Community Development Committee.

### 4. Outline Business Case

The circulated Outline Business Case for the Clotworthy Ice Cream Parlour considered the evidence of need and the options for the development of the site currently occupied by the gift shop.

The Business Case identified the preferred option for the development of the site as the creation of an ice cream parlour would also sell a range of unique branded Antrim Castle Gardens and other tourism merchandise.

For operational reasons it would be essential that the parlour was run by the catering contractor operating the Clotworthy café, with an annual fee and/or percentage of sales paid to the Council. The catering contractor would also sell branded merchandise on behalf of the Council. The contract for the current provider was due to expire in October 2027 with the possibility of a further 24-month contract extension.

### 5. Financial Position/Implication

The estimated cost of the capital works to change the gift shop into an ice cream parlour was £[REDACTED] which would be paid for over a 10-year period. With revenues of approximately £[REDACTED] per annum made up of contractor fees and merchandise sales, and annual running costs of approximately £[REDACTED] including capital loan and interest repayments, maintenance and stock purchase, it was anticipated that the ice cream parlour would make a small surplus of £[REDACTED] over 10 years when adjusted for inflation.

### 6. Governance

Approval of the Stage 1 Outline Business Case for the Clotworthy Ice Cream Parlour would progress the project to Stage 2 of the Council's Capital Programme which would involve the preparation of a full business case including planning and procurement. The full Business Case would be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee seeking the investment decision allowing the appointment of the winning tenderer, contract management and construction.

### 7. Summary

Following completion of the Outline Business Case the preferred option was the creation of an Ice Cream Parlour which would also sell a range of unique branded Antrim Castle Gardens and other tourism merchandise in place of the existing gift shop. The parlour would be run by the catering contractor operating the Clotworthy café, with an annual fee and/or percentage of sales paid to the Council.

The estimated cost of the capital works to change the gift shop into an ice cream parlour was £[REDACTED], which would be paid for over a 10-year period. With revenues of approximately £[REDACTED] per annum made up of contractor fees and merchandise sales, and annual running costs of approximately £[REDACTED] including capital loan and interest repayments, maintenance and stock purchase, it was anticipated that the ice cream parlour would make a small surplus of £[REDACTED] over 10 years when adjusted for inflation.

Approval was sought from Members to progress the project to Stage 2 of the Council's Capital Programme, to commence and complete the final business case (including detailed design, planning and procurement).

In response to a query from a Member, the Director of Community and Culture advised that a report on Hazelbank Park would come before Committee in the next couple of months.

Proposed by Councillor Dunlop

Seconded by Councillor McWilliam and agreed that

- (a) the Outline Business Case preferred option of creating an Ice Cream Parlour on the site of the existing Clotworthy gift shop at an estimated cost of £[REDACTED] be approved; and**
- (b) progress of the Clotworthy Ice Cream Parlour project to Stage 2 of the Council's Capital Programme be approved including completion of a final business case (including detailed design, planning and procurement)**

*ACTION BY: Simon Goldrick, Head of Arts, Culture, Tourism and Events*

#### **6.4 IN CONFIDENCE AC/MU/003 MOSSLEY MILL CIVIC CENTRE CAPITAL PROJECT**

##### **1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the Outline Business Case for Mossley Mill Civic Centre Capital Project including removal of this project from the Council's Capital Programme.**

##### **2. Introduction/Background**

The restoration and development of Mossley Mill over two phases was completed in 2000 and 2010 respectively creating a Civic Centre with arts and heritage facilities in a surrounding parkland. The history and heritage of the Mill dates back to the early 1800's and was part of Northern Ireland's rich industrial heritage, which had been developed across Northern Ireland to create high quality visitor experiences which were drivers for tourism and connect communities with their places. Members were reminded that it was agreed at the Council meeting in June 2021 that a review of the current use of space at Mossley Mill be undertaken.

### 3. Previous Decision of Council

It was agreed at the Council meeting in June 2021 that a review of the current use of space at Mossley Mill be undertaken.

At the April 2023 Council meeting it was agreed that proposals for the ongoing development at Mossley Mill at an estimated capital cost of £[REDACTED] be approved with business plans for each element to be brought in due course.

At the October 2023 Community Planning Committee meeting the business case for the development of Mossley Mill at an estimated cost of £[REDACTED] was approved and it was agreed to include provision for this in the capital programme.

At the May 2024 Policy and Governance Committee Members were advised that based upon inflationary increases to costs, the constraints of affordability and the requirement for prioritisation, a review of the Capital Programme and Capital Project Management Process had commenced for Members' future consideration. As a result of this, the Strategic Investment Board (SIB) were commissioned to review a range of capital project business cases including the Outline Business Case for Mossley Mill.

At the Council meeting in January 2026 an update on the Council's Capital Programme was noted.

### 4. Outline Business Case for Mossley Mill

Having completed a review of the options for the development of Mossley Mill, SIB completed an updated Outline Business Case for this project, which was circulated for Members' information.

The Outline Business Case considered the evidence of need, the options for the development of Mossley Mill and the associated capital and recurring revenue costs. The overall conclusion of the business case was that on the basis that the proposals were unlikely to represent value for money for the Council the strategic case cannot be made. It was recommended that the Council did not proceed with this project and it was removed from the Capital Programme.

Capital investment in the region of £200,000 was made in Mossley Mill. In February 2024 a reconfigured Museum at The Mill was re-opened with the Museum display carried into the main circulation spaces of the Mill including the entrance reception area. This work was further enhanced with investment in new soft furnishings throughout all central circulation spaces including the restaurant and an exterior repurposing of the Museum's spinning frame.

### 5. Finances

The estimated capital cost of this project was just short of £[REDACTED]. A capital investment in the region of £200,000 had been made in the Mill over 2023 and 2024.

There were no additional costs associated with removing this project from the Council's Capital Programme.

## 6. Governance

Given that the Outline Business Case concluded that the strategic case for this project cannot be made it was recommended that the project did not proceed and was removed from the Council's Capital Programme.

## 7. Summary

Following completion of the Outline Business Case for Mossley Mill it was concluded that the project did not represent value for money for the Council and the strategic case could not be made. Approval was sought from Members that the project did not proceed, and it was removed from the Council's Capital Programme.

The Director of Community and Culture advised that she would meet with Members to discuss available legacy materials for possible display purposes.

Proposed by Alderman Ross  
Seconded by Councillor McGrann and agreed that

**the Mossley Mill Capital Project does not proceed and that removal of the project from the Council's Capital Programme be approved.**

*ACTION BY:* Ursula Fay, Director of Community and Culture

### **PROPOSAL TO PROCEED OUT OF 'IN CONFIDENCE'**

Proposed by Councillor Dunlop  
Seconded by Councillor McGrann 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 8.31pm.

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**MAYOR**