



**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
HELD IN ROUND TOWER CHAMBER, ANTRIM CIVIC CENTRE
ON MONDAY 3 MARCH 2025 AT 6.30 PM**

- In the Chair** : Councillor V McWilliam
- Committee Members (In person)** : Aldermen – P Bradley, L Clarke, J McGrath and J Smyth
Councillors – R Foster, J Gilmour, AM Logue, A McAuley, E McLaughlin, M Ní Chonghaile, M Stewart and S Ward
- Non Committee Members (In person)** : Councillors - P Dunlop and B Webb
- Non Committee Members (Remote)** : Councillors – M Brady and R Lynch
- Presenters in Attendance** : Dr Lizzy Pinkerton, Belfast Hills Partnership Manager
Ms Jo Boylan, Woodland Officer, Belfast Hills Partnership
- Officers (Present)** : Director of Parks & Leisure Operations - M McDowell
Director of Sustainability Operations – M Lavery
Borough Lawyer and Head of Legal Services – P Casey
Head of Estate Services – D Blair
Head of Parks Operations - P Mawhinney
Head of Leisure Operations – D O’Hagan
ICT Systems Support Officer – A Cole
Member Services Officer – C McIntyre

CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

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

The Chairperson and Members extended congratulations to both Alderman Clarke and Councillor Magill on the birth of a grandchild into their respective families.

1 APOLOGIES

Councillor H Magill

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Item 4.3 – Alderman Smyth

3 PRESENTATION

3.1 PK/GEN/177 BELFAST HILLS PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this presentation was to provide Members with an update on the work of the Belfast Hills Partnership in response to a request from Dr Pinkerton to address Members following her appointment to the role of Partnership Manager. Councillors McAuley and McLaughlin currently represent Council on the Partnership.

The Chairperson welcomed Dr Lizzy Pinkerton, Partnership Manager and Ms Jo Boylan, Woodland Officer to the meeting who updated Members on the work of the Partnership on this its 20th anniversary.

They responded to Members' concerns in respect of reports of anti-social behaviour, wildlife crime and the effects of farming practices and agreed to continue to work with Council in respect of protecting the Swift population.

The Chairperson and Members thanked Dr Pinkerton and Ms Boylan for their presentation and they left the meeting.

Proposed by Councillor McAuley
Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed that

the presentation be noted.

NO ACTION

4 ITEMS FOR DECISION

4.1 PK/REG/028 APPLICATION FOR TEMPORARY APPROVAL OF PREMISES FOR CIVIL MARRIAGE/CIVIL PARTNERSHIP CEREMONY

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek temporary approval for a venue in which Civil Marriage/Civil Partnership ceremonies could be conducted.

2. Background

Under the terms of the Marriage (NI) Order 2003 and the Civil Partnership Act (2004), the Council had the responsibility to approve appropriate applications for Temporary Place Approvals for Civil Marriages and Civil Partnerships. The process required that a Notice of Interest be displayed for a three-week period in a prominent place at the venue to allow for any public objection.

3. Current Position

An application for a Temporary Place Approval had been received from the owner of 10 Mount Shalgus Lane, Randalstown, with specified areas detailed as the garden at 12 Mount Shalgus Lane, Randalstown.

No public objections had been received with the premises also having been formally inspected and deemed appropriate to proceed.

The Director of Parks and Leisure Operations responded to a Member's query relating to Mossley Mill being a named venue for Civil Marriages.

Proposed by Alderman Clarke
Seconded by Alderman Bradley and agreed that

12 Mount Shalgus Lane, Randalstown be temporarily approved to hold Civil Marriages under the terms of the Marriage (NI) Order 2003 and Civil Partnerships under the Civil Partnership Act (2004).

ACTION BY: Paula Redpath, Registrar

4.2 PK/GEN/022 NORTHERN IRELAND AMENITY COUNCIL – BEST KEPT AWARDS – ANNUAL FUNDING

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek approval to increase the annual affiliation fee to the Northern Ireland Amenity Council (NIAC) for participation in the Best Kept Awards programme.

2. Background

The NIAC had administered the Best Kept Awards for 68 years, encouraging

communities across Northern Ireland to enhance and improve their towns and villages.

3. Affiliation Fees

Council had paid an annual affiliation fee of £2,300 since 2015. However, due to inflationary pressures and the loss of a key sponsor, NIAC had proposed an increase to £3,000. Correspondence from NIAC outlining this request had been circulated for Members' reference.

Proposed by Alderman Clarke
Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed that

an increase the annual affiliation fee to £3,000 for continued participation in the Best Kept Awards be approved.

ACTION BY: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

Having declared an interest in Item 4.3, Alderman Smyth left the Chamber.

4.3 **PK/GEN/217 CELEBRATING THE ANNIVERSARY OF BURNSIDE ORANGE HALL**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek approval for the installation of an anniversary disc at Greystone Roundabout in recognition of Burnside Orange Hall's 150th anniversary in 2025.

2. Introduction/Background

Council had previously approved the placement of celebratory and anniversary discs throughout the Borough in recognition of the significant achievements or milestones of local individuals, clubs, and community organisations. The installation of the disc for Burnside Orange Hall had previously been approved at the junction of Burnside Road, however, the organisation had requested if the alternative location of Greystone Roundabout could be considered for approval.

3. Financial Implication

The installation of the anniversary celebratory discs would cost circa £175.

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Alderman Clarke and agreed that

the installation of an anniversary disc at Greystone Roundabout in recognition of Burnside Orange Hall's 150th anniversary in 2025 be approved.

ACTION BY: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

Alderman Smyth returned to the Chamber following Item 4.3.

4.4 WM/SC/001 DEVELOPMENT OF A POSSIBLE SATELLITE WASTE MANAGEMENT DEPOT

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members on the possible development of a satellite waste management depot in the Newtownabbey area for a small number of small and large sweepers.

2. Background

Street sweeping vehicles were currently located at the Environmental Services Depot (ESD) in Antrim and would travel from this location across the Borough to carry out daily street sweeping operations. This would include locations like Loughshore, Newtownabbey and Toome, both of which were approximately 14 miles from the ESD.

Due to the slower speeds of the small sweeper, it could take the staff over 30 minutes to get to the destination and as a result Officers were asked to see if the service could be made more efficient if a satellite station was established to reduce travel time and increase operating hours on site.

3. Key Issues

The initial assessment had identified a number of locations as possible sites for the satellite depot, including Bruslee and O'Neill Road Recycling Centres and the Council's operational facilities at Ballyearl and V36.

Possible locations for the satellite depot would require some essential infrastructure including a covered garage building, welfare facilities, fuel pumps and waste storage facilities. In addition, the vehicles would need to be covered by early morning start maintenance coverage. While it was estimated that a site with none of the required infrastructure would cost approximately £160,000 to develop, the current proposed sites did have some of these facilities.

There would be benefits to establishing a satellite station and this would include the potential for an additional hour per day of operating time and if 5 vehicles were stationed at O'Neill Road Recycling Centre, this could equate to potentially 1,800 additional operating hours per annum. There would also be savings on fuel costs and while this would be difficult to calculate it was envisaged to be approximately £2,500 per annum for a vehicle.

The establishment of a new satellite depot would have some operational constraints and these included supervisory management control and staff's employment arrangements.

4. Summary

The establishment of a new satellite depot would have a number of financial

and operational benefits but would require a significant capital investment. As a result it was recommended that a full business case would be completed to identify the most appropriate location and whether it was economically advantageous to develop. It was envisaged that the business case would take approximately six months to complete and the results of this would be reported to the Operations Committee when available.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour
Seconded by Alderman Bradley and agreed that

a full business case be developed to identify the most appropriate location and assess the economic feasibility of a new satellite depot.

ACTION BY: Darren Purdy, Head of Waste Operations

4.5 EH/PHWB/018 DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES DRAFT FUEL POVERTY STRATEGY FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

1. Purpose

The Department for Communities (DfC) had launched a consultation on a draft Fuel Poverty Strategy for Northern Ireland. This Strategy set out a pathway to a Northern Ireland where everyone lived in a warm, healthy home.

2. Background

The term fuel poverty referred to the inability to heat or power a home adequately at a reasonable cost. As of 2022, figures indicated that over a quarter of households in Northern Ireland were experiencing fuel poverty. Living in cold, damp conditions significantly impacted health and well-being, particularly for the most vulnerable members of society. The draft Fuel Poverty Strategy aimed to establish a clear plan for ensuring that all households in Northern Ireland had access to warm, healthy living conditions. The plan had been developed within the context of a *Just Transition, the Climate Change Act (NI) 2022, Carbon Budgets, and the Programme for Government ("Our Plan")*. Its vision was to ensure "A warm, healthy home for everyone," with underlying principles focused on long-term sustainable solutions, a needs-based approach, and collaborative, participative efforts.

The draft Strategy aimed to improve energy efficiency for vulnerable households, expand access to trusted advice and support through partnerships, and ensure consumers had access to affordable, sustainable energy.

Addressing fuel poverty was critical to protecting our resident's public health, as exposure to cold and damp homes could have severe consequences, particularly for vulnerable individuals. The consultation outlined draft proposals for the strategy including:

- A range of actions to improve home energy efficiency;
- An increase awareness and capacity;
- To enhance collaboration;

- To protect consumers.

A link to the consultation could be found at;

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-12/dfc-consultation-on-draft-fuel-poverty.pdf>

A draft consultation response (circulated) had been prepared in collaboration with Environmental Health across all of the Councils in Northern Ireland. The response highlighted the following points;

- The Councils' general agreement with the proposed vision of the Strategy.
- Proposed minimum energy efficiency standards in both the private and social housing rental sectors.
- Recommended a review and update of the fitness standard for human habitation.
- Calls for government energy schemes to take the fuel poverty strategy into account.
- Need for a robust, data-driven approach to determine eligibility criteria for energy grant schemes.

The final Fuel Poverty Strategy for Northern Ireland was expected to be published in summer 2025.

3. Summary

The Department for Communities (DfC) had launched a consultation on a draft Fuel Poverty Strategy for Northern Ireland. This Strategy outlined the Department's vision, principles, objectives, expected outcomes, and governance framework. It detailed how DfC planned to collaborate in reducing fuel poverty across Northern Ireland, striving to achieve the vision of a warm, healthy home for all.

Proposed by Councillor Logue

Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

the draft consultation response be approved.

ACTION BY: Alison Briggs, Deputy Head of Environmental Health - Health and Wellbeing

4.6 **PK/BIO/019/VOL3 CORRESPONDENCE FROM DEPARTMENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE – GREENWAY AND ACTIVE TRAVEL DELIVERY PLAN CONSULTATION – COUNCIL RESPONSE**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to request approval for the proposed routes to be added to the Active Travel Delivery Plan consultation response.

2. Background

In January 2025, correspondence had been received from the Department for Infrastructure's (DfI) Active Travel Team regarding feedback on their public consultation document for the Active Travel Delivery Plan, which outlined priority routes over the next 10 years. The primary objective of the delivery plan was to address urban areas with higher population numbers.

For the purpose of the plan, urban areas were defined as having a population of over 5,000 people. The identified areas and priority routes included:

a) Antrim Town – Three priority routes:

Castle Way to Stiles Way/B518 via Fountain Hill.

Greystone Roundabout along Greystone Road (B95) to Fountain Hill.

Hill Street along Railway Street to Stiles Way.

b) Ballyclare – One main priority route:

Ballyclare Western Relief Road/B95 Roundabout to the Square via Doagh Road.

c) Crumlin – One main priority route:

Lurgan Road to Main Street/Ballydonaghy Road.

d) Metropolitan Newtownabbey – Two main priority routes:

Carnmoney Road North/Mossley West to Church Road/Valley Retail Park via Prince Charles Way, Church Road, and Longwood Road.

e) Randalstown – One main priority route:

Randalstown Viaduct to Castle Road via Shanes Street and Station Road.

3. Key Issues

In support of the delivery of Greenway and Active Travel initiatives, Council fully endorsed the five settlement 'Priority Routes' outlined above, as they aligned with the objectives set out in the Local Development Plan, Draft Plan Strategy 2030 Vision and Strategic Objectives.

In addition to the 'Priority Routes,' Council had sought to incorporate connections to Employment Lands within the Borough, specifically targeting Strategic Employment Locations, to include:

Antrim	Rathenraw Industrial Estate Newpark Industrial Estate Antrim Technology Park Steeple Industrial Estate Radox Science Park Enkalon Industrial Estate Kilbegs Road Springfarm Industrial Estate Belfast International Airport
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Ballyclare	Dennison Industrial Estate Avondale Business Park Hillhead Road
Crumlin	Nutts Corner
Metropolitan Newtownabbey	Global Point Monkstown Industrial Estate Church Rad Mallusk South of Antrim Road (Mallusk) North of Antrim Road (Mallusk)

As Council progressed toward adopting its Draft Plan Strategy and conducted preliminary strategic studies related to the Draft Local Policies Plan (DLPP), it had sought clarification from DfI on the relationship between the Active Travel Plan and the Vision and Objectives of the Department's Eastern Travel Plan 2035 iteration for the Borough. Additionally, Council requested a timeline for the delivery of the final versions of both Plans.

Council emphasised that local development plans and transport plans should be closely aligned and implemented within the same timeframe. Furthermore, Council would seek assurances from DfI that this alignment would be appropriately considered and addressed.

Following concerns from Members regarding the road network at Enkalon Industrial Estate, the Director of Parks and Leisure Operations agreed to liaise with Planning Officers and discuss a potential solution.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed that

the proposed routes for the Active Travel Delivery Plan be approved and that Officers submit a response to the Department for Infrastructure's public consultation on Greenways and Active Travel Projects, as outlined above.

ACTION BY: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

4.7 PK/GEN/217 CELEBRATING THE ANNIVERSARY OF BALLYCLARE METHODIST CHURCH GIRLS' BRIGADE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek approval for the installation of a celebratory disc at the junction of Main Street and Ballynure Road in Ballyclare to commemorate the 70th anniversary of Ballyclare Methodist Girls' Brigade in 2025.

2. Introduction/Background

Ballyclare Methodist Girls' Brigade was celebrating a significant milestone anniversary in 2025, with its 70th anniversary.

3. Previous Decision of Council

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

4. Financial Implication

The installation of an anniversary celebratory disc would cost circa £175, with the proposed location for the disc at the junction of Main Street and Ballynure Road in Ballyclare.

Proposed by Alderman Clarke
Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed that

the installation of a celebratory disc at the junction of Main Street and Ballynure Road in Ballyclare to commemorate the 70th anniversary of Ballyclare Methodist Girls' Brigade in 2025 be approved.

ACTION BY: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

Councillor Brady left the meeting remotely.

5 ITEMS FOR NOTING

5.1 L/GEN/080 LEISURE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY 2024-25

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to provide an update on the results of an extensive Customer Satisfaction Survey recently conducted for the Council's Leisure Service.

2. Introduction

The Council's Leisure Service continuously gathered customer feedback through a digital software system that calculated the Net Promoter Score (NPS), which was reported to the Committee on a quarterly basis.

As part of the Operational Performance Indicators for the section, a new customer satisfaction metric had been introduced. For the 2024/25 year, the goal was to establish a baseline against which future performance could be measured. This metric had been derived from an in-depth Customer Satisfaction Survey (CSAT), which would be conducted annually.

While NPS was a valuable tool for assessing customer loyalty and maintaining a continuous feedback loop, CSAT (due to its more detailed questioning) offered deeper customer insights and a wealth of actionable data.

3. Results

The survey received 2,245 responses over a six-week period, making it the largest customer survey undertaken by the Council to date. Responses were collected via member emails, social media, the Council's website, posters, and face-to-face interactions. A detailed breakdown of results for all six leisure centres had been circulated for Members' reference.

Key Findings:

- Overall satisfaction rate: 89.3%
- Top-scoring categories:
 - Staff: 97.3%
 - Value for money: 92.5%
 - Fitness classes: 90.9%

Among the six leisure centres, Ballyearl received the highest satisfaction score at 94.1%, followed by Antrim Forum in second place with 90.5%. The rankings for all six centres were as follows:

Rank	Centre	%
1	Ballyearl	94.1%
2	Antrim Forum	90.5%
3	Valley LC	88.9%
4	Sixmile LC	87.5%
5	Crumlin	81.2%
6	Allen Park	79.8%

The Director of Parks and Leisure Operations and Head of Leisure Operations responded to Members' queries in respect of improving traffic flow at Allen Park and improving the visibility of the entrance from the Randalstown Road.

Proposed by Councillor Foster

Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

the report be noted.

ACTION BY: Deaglan O'Hagan, Head of Leisure Operations

5.2 **PK/PG/005 PLAYPARK REFURBISHMENT UPDATE**

1. **Purpose**

The purpose of this report was to provide an update on the Council's Play Park Refurbishment Project.

2. **Introduction/Background**

In June 2024, Council approved the advancement of the Play Park Refurbishment Project to Stage 2 of the Capital Programme, which covered design and procurement. The refurbishment plan included 35 play parks,

prioritised according to their current condition, with two new play parks recommended for full replacement at the Diamond, Rathcoole and Kings Park, Newtownabbey.

3. Current Status

Maintenance issues identified during the initial play park audit, along with concerns raised in the subsequent Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) reports, were actively being addressed. Additionally, general repairs were being carried out following weekly inspections by the Officers. A new equipment supply contract had been established to ensure the timely completion of these repairs.

Steeple Play Park, Antrim had undergone significant refurbishment following vandalism, including the installation of new play equipment, safety surfacing, and the respraying and relining of the multi-use games area. The total expenditure for this project was £115K.

The procurement process for replacement play park equipment, surfacing, maintenance, and design was currently in progress. The key milestones were as follows:

- Tender Returns: 24th March
- Evaluation: 25th March
- Council Approval: 31st March
- Award: 1st April
- Works to Commence on Site: Mid-May

Estates would prioritise installation based on the agreed list for each site. Efforts would also be made to leverage bulk purchasing opportunities, where possible, to maximise financial savings.

The audit had highlighted the need for full replacement of play parks at The Diamond, Rathcoole, and Kings Park, Newtownabbey. The procurement process for these replacements was live, with the following timeline:

- Evaluation: 7th March
- Council Approval: 31st March
- Award: 1st April
- Works to Commence on Site: Late June 2025

4. New Play Park Developments

A previously approved new play park was currently under construction at the City of Belfast Playing Fields, Mallusk. The estimated cost for this development was £364K (including a developer contribution), with an expected completion date in late March 2025.

In response to a Member's query, the Director of Parks and Leisure Operations provided an update on the ownership of the MUGA pitch at Bawnmore.

The Director of Parks and Leisure Operations agreed to re-circulate the details of the Play Park Refurbishment Project showing how projects would be

prioritised and agreed to bring back an updated programme of works for each.

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Alderman Clarke and agreed that

the report be noted.

ACTION BY: David Blair, Head of Estate Services and Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

5.3 PT/CI/060 PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2024/25 PERFORMANCE PROGRESS REPORT QUARTER 3

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to recommend to Members that the Performance and Improvement Plan 2024/25 Performance Progress Report Quarter 3 Parks, Leisure and Estate Services and Sustainability be noted.

2. Background

Part 12 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 puts in place a framework to support the continuous improvement of Council services.

The Council's Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2024/25 was approved in June 2024. This set out a range of robust performance targets, along with identified improvement objectives and a number of Statutory Performance Targets

3. Previous Decision of Council

As agreed at the August 2023 Council meeting, quarterly performance reports would be presented to the relevant Committee.

4. Key Points

Third Quarter performance progress reports for Parks, Leisure and Estate Services, and Sustainability had been circulated for Members' information.

The Director of Sustainability and Head of Leisure Operations responded to Members' queries in respect to some of the performance indicators.

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor McAuley and agreed that

the Performance and Improvement Plan 2024/25 Performance Progress Report Quarter 3 be noted.

NO ACTION

5.4 EH/EHS/EP/01 TRANSFER OF LANDLORD REGISTRATION SCHEME TO LOCAL COUNCILS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members on the progress of the transfer of the Landlord Registration Scheme from the Department for Communities (DfC) to local Councils as the project neared completion.

2. Background

The Landlord Registration scheme was introduced through 'The Landlord Registration Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014' to establish a central database of landlords who rent within the Private Rented Sector. Currently, the scheme was managed by a Landlord Registrar and a small team that sat within DfC.

In March 2023 it was agreed that Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council would act as the lead Council in the preparation for and transfer of the functions under the Landlord Registration Scheme within Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland Councils had enforcement powers to act against non-compliant landlords. In September 2023, a Programme Board was established to oversee the delivery of the project with representatives from DfC, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and Belfast City Council, to oversee the transfer of these functions from DfC to local Councils by March 2025.

Engagement had been ongoing with both Councils and other stakeholders throughout the lifetime of this project, including various all Councils groups including Environmental Health NI (EHNI), IT officers, Head of Communications and Information Governance groups. Other stakeholders had included landlords, agents, tenants, DfC, PropertyPal and those who had contracts with the current scheme.

This scheme operated on a cost-neutral basis with all services offered by this scheme being funded from the registration fee only.

3. Key Issues

New Website and Registration Portal

Following an open procurement exercise conducted by Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council in March 2024, an IT software company was awarded the contract for the build and management of a new dedicated website and registration portal. Currently, this system was going through the User Acceptance Testing stage which, once finalised, would allow the data stored on the current system to be migrated over.

The transfer of the landlord registration functions to local Councils would occur on Saturday 1st March 2025 with a 'go live' date for the new system on Monday 3rd March 2025. This would see the completion of Phase 1. Phase 2 would commence shortly after that date with all additional functionality

completed by June 2025.

Full training, including user guides for future employees who would access the database, would be provided to all Councils and other users to maximise the benefits of the new system.

Appointment of New Landlord Registration Team

A recruitment exercise for a new landlord registration team had been completed in 2024. Three positions had now been filled, including the appointment of a new Landlord Registrar.

Communications Plan

The DfC had developed an advertising campaign as part of a wider communications plan associated with the transfer of functions. This included radio and social media advertisements that would go live from February 2025.

These advertisements would focus on the need for any landlords within the private rented sector to register with the scheme, with updates being provided by email or letter to those already registered about the changes.

Post-transfer, any campaigns would be led by the Landlord Registrar and shared with all other Councils for their social media channels.

4. Financial Position/Implication

There were no financial implications to any Council. All funding for the project to date had been funded by the DfC. Post transfer of functions, all staffing costs, contracts and future initiatives would be funded through the registration fee. There would be no cost to Council.

5. Governance

The Programme Board would formally agree a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), new operation model and timeline for regulation change being brought forward by DfC. These documents would provide clarity to Council on the governance structures for the scheme post transfer and propose how the Landlord Registration Scheme could become more meaningful to Councils and landlords in the long term.

The transfer of the landlord registration data base from DfC to Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council would have no impact on current working arrangements undertaken by the Council's Environmental Health Officers to enforce the provisions of the landlord registration scheme, however work would continue on proposed improvements to the scheme, post transfer, which would assist with better regulation of the private rented sector with the overall aim of improving housing standards.

6. Summary

Starting on March 1, 2025, DfC would transfer its responsibilities for the Landlord Registration Scheme to a newly established team, led by Lisburn and

Castlereagh City Council. This team had been recently appointed and would provide support for the new system while collaborating with Councils to enhance the system and processes, ensuring landlord registration would become a more effective tool for all Councils. There would be no operational or financial impact on Council.

The Director of Sustainability responded to Members' queries and confirmed that there would be no operational or financial impact on Council.

Proposed by Alderman Bradley
Seconded by Councillor Logue and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.5 PK/GEN/221 NATIONAL LOTTERY HERITAGE FUND – NATURE TOWNS AND CITIES BID 2025

1. Purpose

This report provided an update on the Council's application for funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF).

2. Introduction and Background

The National Lottery Heritage Fund's 'Nature for Towns and Cities' initiative was a £15 million funding programme aimed at improving urban green spaces across the UK. The programme offered grants ranging from £250,000 to £1 million to local authorities and community organisations. It supported projects designed to revitalise public parks, nature sites, and community gardens.

These projects focused on strategic development rather than capital works and were expected to:

- Create comprehensive green space strategies
- Foster strong partnerships
- Develop sustainable management and funding plans
- Integrate nature into everyday urban life

3. Application Process

The first stage of the application process involved submitting an Expression of Interest (EOI). A total of 274 EOIs had been submitted, requesting £170 million in funding. Following this, NLHF had invited 38 applicants to submit full applications, with the expectation that 50% of these would receive funding.

The Council had been invited to submit a full application by 14 April 2025, requesting £485,000 in funding. The proposal focused on green space development, nature recovery, and community empowerment, with plans to:

- Create masterplans for areas with limited green space
- Develop community gardens

- Support environmental initiatives

The application process spanned from February to April 2025, with funding decisions expected by July 2025.

Proposed by Alderman Bradley
 Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.6 L/LEI/004/VOL 2 KID'S SUMMER ACTIVITY PROGRAMME REVIEW 2024

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to provide an update on an annual review of Council's Kid's Summer Activity Programme.

2. Introduction/Background

The Council operated a comprehensive Kid's Summer Activity Programme, which included Summer Schemes and Sports Camps for children aged 6–12 across the Borough during the school summer holidays. These activities took place in both Council and community-owned facilities. A screening process ensured that necessary adjustments would be made for children with additional care needs.

In collaboration with the Mae Murray Foundation, the Council offered a fully inclusive scheme, providing one-to-one support for up to 25 children per day over a 10-day period.

Additionally, the Council supported external children's summer programmes by allocating £34,000 through Community Development grants and £25,000 in Access and Inclusion funding to Special Educational Needs Schools, enabling them to run their own tailored schemes.

3. 2024 Programme Review

In 2024, the programme recorded a total attendance of 2,772 out of a maximum capacity of 2,935, achieving a 94% occupancy rate. A satisfaction survey conducted after the programme yielded an overall satisfaction rating of 93.2%.

The survey had been circulated for Members' reference, along with a summary of key participation data related to the programme detailed below:

Scheme	Capacity	Duration	Attendance	Percentage Occupancy
Community Schemes				
Ballynure	90	10 days	91	101%

Doagh	45	5 days	30	67%
Hydepark	45	5 days	20	44%
Merville	180	20 days	131	73%
Community Total	360	40 days	272	76%
Leisure Schemes				
Ballyearl	420	25 days	401	95%
Crumlin	45	5 days	29	64%
Sixmile	450	25 days	449	100%
Valley	1000	25 days	1000	100%
Lillian Bland	325	25 days	311	96%
Leisure Total	2240	105 days	2190	98%
Sports Camps				
Sports Camp- Antrim Forum	160	6 days	159	99%
Sports Camp- Crumlin	45	3 days	29	64%
Castle Gardens	80	3 days	82	103%
Sport Camp Total	285	12 days	270	95%
Inclusive Camps				
Antrim Forum	25	5 days	20	80%
Crumlin	25	5 days	20	80%
Inclusive Total	50	10 days	40	80%
Overall Scheme Total	2,935	167 days	2,772	94%

4. Financial Review

In addition to the grant funding provided by the Council, the 2024 programme incurred a total expenditure of £190,032 and generated an income of £104,828. This resulted in a net cost to the Council of £85,204, equating to a subsidy of £30.70 per child. A detailed breakdown per location was provided below:

Site	Income	Expenditure	Variance	Subsidy per child
Leisure Schemes				
Valley	£42,527	£62,498	-£19,971	-£14
Crumlin	£810	£1,998	-£928	-£32
Sixmile	£17,619	£30,349	-£10,130	-£23
Ballyearl	£15,676	£26,397	-£8,121	-£20
Lillian Bland	£11,484	£18,494	-£5,650	-£18
Community Schemes				
Hydepark (rural)	£724	£2,944	-£2,220	-£111
Doagh-Kilbride(rural)	£1,045	£3,335	-£2,290	-£73
Merville (rural)	£2,952	£10,943	-£7,991	-£61
Ballynure (rural)	£3,388	£2,933	£455	£5

Sports Camps				
Sports Camp- Antrim Forum	£4,698	£4,062	£636	£4
Sports Camp- Crumlin	£810	£897	-£87	-£3
Castle Gardens	£2,467	£1,811	£656	£8
Inclusive Schemes				
Antrim Forum	£315	£11,687	-£11,372	-£569
Crumlin	£315	£11,687	-£11,372	-£569

5. Programme 2025

Enrolment for the 2025 Kid's Summer Activity Programme (excluding the Inclusive Scheme) would open on 21st May 2025.

In response to Members' queries, the Head of Leisure Operations undertook to investigate how occupancy levels in some schemes could be improved through local marketing.

Proposed by Alderman Bradley
Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

the report be noted.

ACTION BY: Deaglan O'Hagan, Head of Leisure Operations

6. **ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS**

The Chairperson confirmed that she was happy to take any other relevant business at this point and requested that, where possible, Members advise her in advance of the meeting of items they wished to discuss.

- 6.1** In response to Members' concerns regarding lack of consultation on funding and changes to intermediate football criteria for the Irish Football Association (IFA), the Director of Parks and Leisure Operations undertook to write to the IFA requesting that they attend a future Committee to address these concerns.

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Alderman McGrath and agreed that

The Director of Parks and Leisure Operations agreed to write to the IFA, inviting them to attend a future Committee meeting to address concerns regarding the lack of consultation with the Council on the proposed changes to intermediate standard football and the Department for Culture, Media, and Sport Grassroots Funding.

ACTION BY: Matt McDowell, Director of Parks and Leisure Operations

- 6.2** In response to a Member's query, the Director of Sustainability assured that the consultation process with Trade Unions and affected staff had begun following

Council's decision to amend the opening hours at the Household Recycling Centres.

NO ACTION

Alderman Smyth left the Chamber and Councillor Lynch left the meeting remotely.

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED 'IN CONFIDENCE'

Proposed by Alderman McGrath
Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed that

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

7 ITEMS IN CONFIDENCE

7.1 IN CONFIDENCE WM/ARC21/004/VOL11 ARC21 JOINT COMMITTEE PAPERS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members on the January and February arc21 Joint Committee meetings.

2. Introduction

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

3. Previous Decisions of Council

All previous papers had been noted.

4. Main Report

The papers for the arc21 Joint Committee Meeting had been circulated for:

- 30 January 2025
- 27 February 2025

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

5. Summary

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Alderman Bradley and agreed that

the report be noted.

ACTION BY: Michael Laverty, Director of Sustainability

7.2 IN CONFIDENCE PBS/PS/016 ENERGY PROJECTS UPDATE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members on the Council's ongoing energy management projects and to seek approval for the Project Initiation Documents (PIDs) for proposed projects for the 2025/26 financial year.

2. Introduction/Background

The Council's Estates Services section was responsible for overseeing energy use across all projects and assets. This included monitoring consumption, emissions, costs, and billing. By leveraging relevant data, the team worked to continually develop and deliver projects aimed at reducing energy consumption, emissions, and overall costs.

3. 2024/25 Completed Projects

The following energy management projects had been completed during the current financial year:

- Upgrades to heating control and Building Management Systems (BMS) at Mossley Mill, Ballyearl, and Antrim Civic Centre, including modifications to HVAC pipework and the installation of new controllers.
- Replacement of traditional lighting with LED systems at various Council sites.
- Heating/ventilation profiling at the top five energy-consuming sites.
- Replacement of the biomass hopper at Ballyearl Leisure Centre, along with the conversion from chip to pellet fuel.
- Integration of Council-owned electric vehicle (EV) charging points onto a single software platform, enabling user-friendly charging (activation expected by mid-March 2025).
- Pipework lagging at wet-side leisure centres.

These initiatives, coupled with heightened awareness of energy efficiency, had led to a 5% year-on-year reduction in energy consumption.

4. Proposed Works 2025–2026

To maintain the downward trend in energy consumption, emissions, and costs, the following projects had been proposed for the 2025/26 financial year:

- Installation of a new biomass boiler and control system upgrade at Sixmile Leisure Centre, along with the addition of a Combined Heat and Power (CHP) unit.
- Installation of a wind turbine and solar panels at the Environmental Services Depot in Antrim, and solar panel installation at Mossley Mill. These projects would provide power to the buildings and support electric/public fleet charging.
- Feasibility studies for the installation of wind turbines at suitable Council-owned sites.
- Feasibility studies for the installation of air and ground source heat pumps at relevant Council sites.
- Feasibility studies for the further installation of solar arrays across Council assets, including car parks.

PID forms for these projects had been circulated for Members' reference. If approved, these projects would proceed to Stage 1 of the approval process, leading to the development of an Outline Business Case (OBC).

5. Financial Considerations

The Council allocated an annual capital budget of £[REDACTED] for energy management projects. Additionally, external funding through the Shared Prosperity Fund may be available to support projects that promoted sustainability and energy efficiency. Each project would undergo the Council's capital approval process before work commenced.

In response to Members' queries, the Head of Estate Services provide assurance that developing hydro power at the Mossley Mill site is still under consideration as a potential future project.

Following Members' concerns about the minimal level of budget attributed to energy projects, the Director of Parks and Leisure Operations undertook to raise the issue at a forthcoming workshop relating to the Capital Programme.

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

the Project Initiation Documents (PIDs) for proposed projects for the 2025/26 financial year be approved.

ACTION BY: David Blair, Head of Estate Services

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED OUT OF 'IN CONFIDENCE'

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed

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

The Chairperson advised that the 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 8.06pm.

MAYOR

Council Minutes have been redacted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation, and legal advice.