



**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE HELD IN THE CHAMBER, MOSSLEY MILL
ON MONDAY 12 MAY 6.30 PM**

In the Chair	:	Councillor M Brady
Committee Members (In person)	:	Aldermen – L Boyle, J McGrath and S Ross Councillors – M Cooper, P Dunlop, J Gilmour, R Lynch, V McWilliam, S Ward and S Wilson
Committee Members (Remote)	:	Councillors - T McGrann and A O'Lone,
Non-Committee Members	:	Councillors – L O'Hagan and B Webb
Officers Present	:	Director of Community Development – U Fay Head of Community Development – R McKenna Head of Arts, Culture, Tourism & Events – S Goldrick Head of Corporate Affairs – J McIntyre ICT Change Officer – A Cole Member Services Officer – C McGrandle

CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

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

1 APOLOGIES

Councillor M Ní Chonghaile

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Item 4.3 – Councillor J Gilmour

Item 4.8 – Councillor M Cooper

3 PRESENTATION

3.1 CP/CP/243 ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS (EVAWG)

1. Purpose

The Director of Community Development provided a presentation, the purpose of which was to provide Members with an update on the Council's work on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG).

2. Background

Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) was one of the Programme for Government priorities and 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 EVAWG one of the nine priorities of the Programme for Government.

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; a copy of the Strategic Framework had already been provided.

To assist and inform work in this area TEO commissioned a Survey on Experiences and Attitudes of Adults in Northern Ireland to EVAWG and a copy was circulated for Members' information.

3. Previous Decision of Council

It was agreed at the November 2024 Community Development Committee that the Council work in partnership with TEO in relation to the delivery of the EVAWG Strategic Framework and Action Plan.

The Director of Community Development addressed Members' queries in respect of the EVAWG Strategic Framework.

In response to a Member's suggestion that the successful organisations be invited to present to Council in respect of the work carried out through the Change Fund, the Chairperson confirmed that the Director of Community Development would take all feedback on board and follow up.

In response to a Member's query relating to the minimum age requirement for completion of the surveys, the Director of Community Development confirmed that this was an area which Council and TEO were looking into further.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour
Seconded by Councillor Lynch and agreed that

the presentation be noted.

ACTION BY: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Development

4 ITEMS FOR DECISION

4.1 CP/CP/178 DEA MEMBER ENGAGEMENT GROUP MINUTES

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval on the draft minutes of the Ballyclare DEA Member Engagement Group meeting held on 15 April 2025 as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.

2. Introduction/Background

The DEA Member Engagement Groups were an established part of the Community Planning engagement framework with meetings held three times per annum.

3. Previous Council Decision

The updated Terms of Reference for the DEA Engagement Meetings were approved at the March 2023 Community Planning Committee and provide the framework for the meetings. The minutes of the following meetings were approved at Community Development Committee in April 2025.

Date of Meeting	DEA
24 March 2025	Airport DEA Member Engagement Group
13 March 2025	Antrim DEA Member Engagement Group
20 March 2025	Dunsilly DEA Member Engagement Group
20 March 2025	Glengormley DEA Member Engagement Group
24 March 2025	Macedon DEA Member Engagement Group
12 March 2025	Threemilewater DEA Member Engagement Group

4. Key Update

The previously postponed Ballyclare DEA Member Engagement Group meeting took place on 15 April 2025 and draft minutes of this meeting were circulated for Members' information, these would be formally adopted at the next meeting of the DEA groups.

5. Governance

The next round of DEA Member Engagement Meetings were scheduled to take place in June 2025.

Proposed by Councillor McWilliam
Seconded by Councillor Lynch and agreed that

the draft minutes of the Ballyclare DEA Member Engagement Group meeting held on 15 April 2025 be approved as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.

ACTION BY: Conor Cunning DEA Engagement Manager

4.2 **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 16 April 2025 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 achieves maximum benefit from its delivery.

The Working Group meet monthly from September to June each year and reports 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 April 2025 Community Development Committee meeting.

4. Working Group Meeting

The Ballyclare May Fair Working Group met on 16 April 2025 in Ballyclare Town Hall. The minutes of the meeting were circulated.

Proposed by Alderman Boyle

Seconded by Councillor McWilliam and agreed that

the minutes of the Ballyclare May Fair Working Group meeting of 16 April 2025 be approved as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.

ACTION BY: Joanne Hamilton-Whyte, PA to Director of Community Development

4.3 CP/CP/113 BARNARDO'S - THE THRIVE PROJECT

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to provide Members with the THRiVE 2024/2025 Q4 Performance Report.

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 April 2024 Community Development Committee, to provide £25,000 financial assistance for the 2024/25 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 2024/25 Quarter 3 Performance Report was approved at the February 2025 Community Development Committee and was based upon performance measures in the Service Level Agreement.

4. Financial Position

It was agreed at the April 2024 Community Development Committee to provide £25,000 in financial assistance to THRiVE for 2024/25 subject to a quarterly performance report being provided.

5. Governance

Elected Members from both the Macedon DEA and the Threemilewater DEA were nominated to serve on the THRiVE Board at the Annual Council Meeting on 3 June 2024 with Councillor Gilmour and Councillor Mallon nominated for their respective DEA's to serve on the Board.

Officers continue 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.

A presentation on the THRiVE Project was made to the October 2024 Community Development Committee.

6. Summary

The Quarter 4 Report was circulated for Members' information and was based upon performance measures in the Service Level Agreement. Officers had been advised that Quarter 4 targets had been met.

In response to a request from a Member to revisit the governance arrangements in respect of Officer participation together with Macedon and Threemilewater DEA Members, the Head of Community Development confirmed that a report would be brought back to June's committee.

The Chairperson confirmed that a Member's suggestion that the Officers responsible for Areas at Risk and Neighbourhood Renewal be considered for the THRiVE Project Board would be considered by the Director of Community Development.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour
Seconded by Councillor Lynch and agreed that

the THRiVE Project Quarter 4 2024-25 performance report be approved.

ACTION BY: Will McDowell, DEA Engagement Coordinator

4.4 CP/CD/224 CONSULTATION ON A NEW COURT-ORDERED COMMUNITY SENTENCE FOR CHILDREN

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to obtain Members' instructions in relation to the Department of Justice's consultation on a proposed Court-Ordered Community Sentence for Children.

2. Introduction/Background

The Department of Justice had announced the commencement of a public consultation aimed at gathering views on the development of a new community-based sentencing option for children within the justice system. This initiative was part of ongoing efforts to reform the youth justice sector, focusing on more rehabilitative and child-centred approaches to offending behaviour.

Recognising the importance of inclusive participation, the Department had produced a child-friendly version of the consultation document to ensure accessibility for children and young people, who were the primary stakeholders affected by this proposal.

The Department was actively seeking views from a wide range of stakeholders, particularly children and young people, to help shape the future of youth justice policy.

3. Key Issues

- **Appropriateness of Community Sentences:** The consultation seeks to determine whether community-based sentences were a more effective and proportionate response for children involved in offending, as opposed to custodial or traditional punitive measures.
- **Children's Rights and Participation:** A critical focus was ensuring that children's voices were heard and respected in shaping the sentencing framework. The child-friendly consultation aims to address this, but questions remain about how effectively children's views would influence final decisions.
- **Effectiveness and Outcomes:** The proposed sentence must demonstrate positive outcomes in reducing reoffending and supporting the rehabilitation of children. Stakeholders were invited to share evidence, concerns, and suggestions about how this could be achieved.
- **Implementation and Resourcing:** There were likely to be operational challenges, including the need for appropriate support services, training for staff, and funding to ensure the new sentence was implemented effectively and sustainably.
- **Partnership Working:** The success of the new sentence may depend on strong collaboration between justice agencies, social services, education providers, and voluntary/community organisations.

- **Safeguarding and Support:** Ensuring the safety and well-being of children throughout the sentence was vital. The consultation may raise questions about safeguarding practices and the availability of tailored support interventions.
- **Public Perception and Confidence:** Community and stakeholder understanding of, and confidence in, community sentences for children would be an important factor in their acceptance and success.

The consultation opened on 14 April and would close on 4 July 2025. The Department of Justice wishes to hear from a wide range of interested persons and organisations.

The consultation documents and associated survey were available online via [Consultation on Court-Ordered Community Sentences for Children | Department of Justice](#)

Members were advised that they may wish to respond on a corporate, individual or party-political basis.

4. Summary

The Department of Justice had launched a consultation on a new Court-Ordered Community Sentence for Children. Input was welcomed from all interested parties, with a special emphasis on hearing directly from children and young people. A child-friendly version of the consultation document was available to support engagement from younger audiences.

The consultation closes on Friday 4 July 2025. Full details and documentation could be accessed via the Department's website.

Members were advised that they may wish to respond on a corporate, individual or party-political basis.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour
Seconded by Councillor Cooper and agreed that

Members would respond on an individual or party-political basis.

ACTION BY: Conor Cunning DEA Engagement Manager

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED 'IN CONFIDENCE'

Proposed by Councillor Dunlop
Seconded by Councillor Cooper and agreed that

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

4.5 IN CONFIDENCE CP/CD/444 ANTRIM AND NEWTOWNABBEY SENIORS' FORUM

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to recommend to Members provide an update on the Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors Forum Quarter 4 2024-25 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 provide 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

The April 2025 Community Development Committee it was agreed to provide funding of £15,000 through a service level agreement for the 2025/26 financial year to the 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.

The 2024/25 Quarter 3 Performance Report was approved at the February Community Development Committee and was based upon performance measures in the Service Level Agreement

4. Financial Position/Implication

Provision of £15,000 financial support for the Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors Forum had been provided for in the 2025/26 Community Planning budget. Other Community Planning partners also confirmed their financial commitment to continue to support this group as outlined below:

Community Planning Partner	Financial contribution to Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors Forum 2025/26
Northern Health & Social Care Trust	£15,000
Public Health Agency	£15,000
Northern Ireland Housing Executive	£15,000

A Service Level Agreement between Council and Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors' Forum for 2025/26 had been developed.

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 was provided to the Community Development Committee.

6. Summary

The Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors' Forum 2024-25 Quarter 4 Report was circulated for Members' information and was based upon performance measures in the Service Level Agreement. Officers could confirm that Quarter 4 targets had been met.

In response to a request for a detailed breakdown of the expenditure budget, the Head of Community Development agreed to provide this at the next committee meeting in June.

Proposed by Councillor Dunlop
Seconded by Councillor Cooper and agreed that

the Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors' Forum Quarter 4 2024-25 performance report be approved.

ACTION BY: Conor Cunning, DEA Engagement Manager

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED OUT OF 'IN CONFIDENCE'

Proposed by Councillor Cooper
Seconded by Councillor Lynch and agreed that

the remainder of Committee business be taken in Open Session.

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

4.6 ACTE/ED/ED/055 LOUGH NEAGH RESCUE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval to renew the five-year funding agreement with Lough Neagh Rescue for £12,000 per annum, and to approve the continuation of the agreement to lease facilities at the Gateway Centre to Lough Neagh Rescue for a further five years following the mid-contract review.

2. Introduction/Background

Lough Neagh Rescue was a limited company and registered charity that was founded following the drowning of a member of the public on the lough

in 1989. They were funded through private donations and by the Councils that border Lough Neagh and had three Coast Guard / Rescue Stations at the Gateway Centre Antrim, Kinnego Bay Lurgan, and Battery Harbour Cookstown.

Lough Neagh Rescue currently operates six lifeboats and four riverboats and responds to around 40 callouts each year for emergencies including broken down or sinking vessels, missing persons, serious medical emergencies and flooding. In addition, Lough Neagh Rescue provided regular information sessions for schools and for the general public about its work and about water safety.

The Council had provided £12,000 of funding for Lough Neagh Rescue annually since 2013, and this contributed to maintenance costs, insurance premiums for equipment and public liability, annual audit fees, fuel, direct operating expenses for the service, and costs associated with crew training and the purchase of service equipment. This agreement was due for renewal.

The Council also had a ten (10) year agreement in place with Lough Neagh Rescue allowing them to rent storage and launch facilities at the Gateway Centre, Antrim, for a peppercorn rate of £1 per annum. This agreement included a break clause at year five which was due for review.

3. Previous Decision of Council

The previous agreement to provide £12,000 of funding to Lough Neagh Rescue each year was approved at the January 2019 Community Planning and Regeneration Committee.

The current agreement to rent storage and launch facilities at the Gateway Centre for a peppercorn rate of £1 per annum was agreed at the January 2020 Council Meeting.

4. Key Issues

Lough Neagh Rescue relies on the financial support of the Councils bordering Lough Neagh for its existence. Without the renewal of the support agreement, it was unlikely that Lough Neagh Rescue could continue to provide vital services on the Lough.

5. Financial Position/Implication

Provision for the requested funding of £12,000 had been included in the 2025/2026 tourism budget.

6. Governance

Funding to Lough Neagh Rescue was contingent on officers successfully vouching all relevant documentation including financial statements, insurance certificates, and health and safety documentation.

7. Summary

Lough Neagh Rescue provide a vital emergency response service on the Lough, and the agreement to provide £12,000 of annual funding, which had been in place since 2013, was due for renewal. In addition, the separate 10-year agreement to allow Lough Neagh Rescue to rent storage and launch facilities at the Gateway Centre for a peppercorn rate of £1 per annum contains a five-year break clause, which was due for review.

Proposed by Councillor Dunlop

Seconded by Councillor Wilson and agreed that

- a) A new five year funding agreement with Lough Neagh Rescue for £12,000 per annum be approved; subject to an annual review and**
- b) The continuation of the existing 10-year agreement, following a mid-contract review, allowing Lough Neagh Rescue to rent storage and launch facilities at the Gateway Centre for a peppercorn rate of £1 per annum be approved.**

ACTION BY: Samuel Hyndman, Culture and Events Manager

4.7 CP/CC/012 RATHENRAW COMMUNITY CENTRE – SUMMER SCHEME FREE USE REQUEST

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to recommend to Members that Rathenraw Youth Scheme in Antrim was given permission to use Rathenraw Community Centre free of charge for their two-week Summer Scheme from 21 July – 1 August 2025 and were granted keyholder status to facilitate this.

2. Introduction/Background

Rathenraw Youth Scheme made regular bookings at Rathenraw Community Centre on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday evenings.

Rathenraw Youth Scheme also deliver an annual Summer Scheme, established over 25 years ago. This year the scheme was scheduled to take place over two weeks from 21 July to 1 August, delivered Monday to Friday 9am-3:30pm.

The Summer Scheme would accommodate 100 Juniors and 80 Seniors. The Youth Scheme had requested free use of Rathenraw Community Centre, as a keyholder, for the delivery of the two-week Summer Scheme.

3. Previous Decision of Council

Permission for free use of Rathenraw Community Centre for the delivery of

the 2024 Summer Scheme was previously provided to Rathenraw Youth Scheme at the June 2024 Community Development Committee.

Free use requests for one-off bookings would continue to be accommodated under the relevant policy with any requests, which were outside of the policy were brought to the Community Development Committee for approval.

4. Financial Position

The waiver of community hire charges for the two weeks scheme represented potential lost income of £1,199.25. However, provision of keyholder status to the Scheme would alleviate the need for additional staff expenditure during the booking.

5. Summary

Rathenraw Youth Scheme had requested free use and keyholder access to Rathenraw Community Centre for their two-week Summer Scheme, from 21 July – 1 August 2025. Approval of this request including provision of keyholder status would alleviate the need for any expenditure on additional staff costs.

In response to a Member's request that other community groups be extended the same permission to use Council facilities free of charge, the Director of Community Development confirmed that officers were working on a report which would address this for the June Committee.

The Chairperson confirmed that the Director of Community Development would liaise with the Operations Directorate in order to clarify for Members which directorate was responsible for Council facilities including 3G and MUGA pitches throughout the Borough.

Proposed by Councillor Lynch
Seconded by Councillor Dunlop and agreed that

Rathenraw Youth Scheme was given permission to use Rathenraw Community Centre free of charge, as a keyholder, for their two-week Summer Scheme from 21 July-1 August 2025.

ACTION BY: Paul Townsend, Community Facilities Coordinator

Having declared an interest in Item 4.8 Councillor Cooper left the Chamber.

Councillors Ward and Wilson also left the Chamber at Item 4.8.

4.8 CP/CD/201 COMMUNITY FACILITIES – EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR SERVICE MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval to commence an Expression of Interest process to determine interest amongst community groups for a Service Management Agreement for the operation of Council owned Community Facilities.

2. Introduction/Background

There were eight (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
- Lillian Bland Pavilion

Three (3) Community Facilities operated under Service Management Agreements, with community organisations running the facilities in partnership with the Council. Details of the Service Management Agreements were listed for Members' information.

Facility	Community Group	Contract Period
Monkstown Jubilee Centre	Monkstown Community Association	1 April 2025 to 31 March 2028
The Sovereign Complex	Rathfern Community Regeneration Group Ltd	1 April 2025 to 31 March 2028
Northern Ireland Centenary Community Centre Ballyduff	Ballyduff Community Redevelopment Group	1 April 2025 to 31 March 2028

3. Previous Decision of Council

It was agreed at the Council meeting in May 2018 to initiate an Expression of Interest (EOI) process across the Borough to determine interest from Community organisations in Service Management Agreements to operate Community Centres. This process was disrupted by the pandemic in early 2020 and recommenced in 2022.

The Service Management Agreement with Ballyduff Community Redevelopment Group to operate The Northern Ireland Centenary Community Centre Ballyduff for an initial twelve (12) month period, commencing on 1 January 2024, was approved at the December 2023 Community Planning Committee.

The renewal of all three (3) existing Service Management Agreements with community organisations for a further three (3) year period until 31 March 2028, at a total cost of £105,000 per annum, was agreed at the December 2024 Community Development Committee.

4. Key issues

The Service Management Agreement arrangement had been shown to be a more efficient model of community centre operation with operational costs covered by an annual grant that was less than the annual cost of the Council operated facilities. This approach also achieved increased use of the facilities and increased community development outcomes when compared to direct Council operation.

It was proposed to initiate an EOI process to explore further community involvement in managing Council facilities through Service Management Agreements. A further report on the outcome of this process would be brought to a future Committee for Members consideration.

The purpose of this stage in the process was to determine interest before assessing the capacity of organisations through development of robust business plans to potentially operate facilities through a Service Management Agreement.

5. Financial Position

There was no financial cost to commence an Expression of Interest process to determine interest for a Service Management Agreement for the operation of Council owned Community Facilities.

The current operating costs of Community Facilities was in excess of £600,000 per annum.

6. Summary

The Council owned eleven (11) Community Facilities, three of which were operating under Service Management Agreements in partnership with community organisations.

It was proposed to initiate an Expression of Interest process to explore further community involvement in managing Council facilities through Service Management Agreements, aiming to improve efficiency and increase community development outcomes compared to direct Council operation.

Proposed by Councillor Lynch

Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

an Expression of Interest process to determine interest amongst community groups for a Service Management Agreement for the operation of Council owned Community Facilities be progressed.

ACTION BY: Stef Buchanan, Community Development Manager

Councillor Cooper returned to the Chamber at this point.

Councillors Ward and Wilson returned to the Chamber during Item 4.9.

4.9 CP/GR/200 DISTRICT COUNCIL GOOD RELATIONS PROGRAMME 2025-2026

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members on the offer of District Council Good Relations Programme funding from The Executive Office and seek Members' approval in relation to the revised Good Relations Action Plan 2025/26.

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 reflects the aims and objectives of the central T-BUC strategy. It outlines 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.

3. Previous Decision of Council

The Executive Office (TEO) District Council Good Relations Programme funding 2024/25 of £127,076.27 was approved at the January 2025 Community Development Committee. The 2024/25 funding offer equated to a 4.35% increase in funding of £121,783.35 received in 2023/24.

The draft Good Relations Action Plan 2025/26 was approved at the January 2025 Community Development Committee, subject to anticipated funding of £144,750 requested from TEO equating to 75% of the Good Relations overall Action Plan budget.

4. Key Issues

Correspondence which had been circulated was received from TEO offering financial assistance totalling £108,562.50 towards The District Council Good Relations Programme for the period 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026.

The 2025/26 funding offer was a decrease of £18,513.77 (16%) on the 2024/25 allocation, and £36,187.50 (25%) less than the £144,750 that was requested.

To reflect the less than anticipated funding allocation from TEO a revised annual Good Relations Action Plan was circulated for Members' approval.

5. Financial Implication

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

The TEO Letter of Offer of £108,562.50 and Councils contribution of £36,187.50 equates to £144,750 for the delivery of the Good Relations Action Plan 2025/26.

6. Summary

The Council had received an offer for funding of £108,562.50 from TEO for the costs associated with the District Council Good Relations Programme for 2025/26. This was a £36,187.50 (28%) reduction on funding requested from TEO.

The 2025/26 Good Relations Action Plan had been revised to reflect the offer of funding from TEO.

Proposed by Councillor Cooper
Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

the offer of District Council Good Relations Programme funding from The Executive Office of £108,562.50 and the revised Good Relations Action Plan 2025-26 be approved.

ACTION BY: Jen Cole, Good Relations Coordinator

4.10 CE/CA/003 SOCIAL MEDIA OPERATING PROTOCOL

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the revised Social Media Operating Protocol including user terms of use.

2. Background and Introduction

The Council operates a number of social media accounts across multiple platforms to communicate and engage with people who live, work and visit the Borough.

There was a Social Media Operating Protocol, which outlined how the social media channels and accounts were managed both in terms of the communications staff role and also terms of use for those who engage with the Council through social media.

3. The Social Media Operating Protocol

The Protocol had been reviewed and updated and was circulated for Members' information.

Each of the Council's social media channels carries a link to this document so anyone engaging with the Council had access to full details of how channels and accounts were managed as well as terms of use and the consequences of improper use.

In general terms social media was a very effective way for the Council to communicate and engage with residents and visitors. However social media societally could also be subject to improper and negative use.

The Social Media Operating Protocol sets out the Council's approach to monitoring and managing all of the social media channels and accounts and advises all of those who engage with the Council through these platforms what the acceptable terms of use were and how inappropriate commentary would be addressed.

Within the Protocol users were advised that the Council would remove, ban or report users who violate the social media terms of use. There was also a mechanism to appeal such a ban.

4. Finance and Governance

The Social Media Operating Protocol would be reviewed on an annual basis with any changes brought to the Committee for approval.

The operating context of social media was particularly dynamic, ever evolving at pace so should any changes be required more frequently than annually they would be brought to the Committee for approval.

5. Summary

The Council operated a number of social media channels and had 141,000 followers across all of these in combination.

A Social Media Operating Protocol outlined the Council's approach to the management and monitoring of these accounts including acceptable terms of use by users. The Protocol had been reviewed and updated and would remain under review given the ever-changing social media landscape.

In response to a Member's query in relation to the reporting of all inappropriate comments on social media to the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the Director of Community Development outlined the challenges of operating in the digital context and advised that all incidents were dealt with on a case by case basis.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Councillor Cooper and agreed that

the Social Media Operating Protocol be approved.

ACTION BY: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Development

Alderman Boyle left and returned to the Chamber during Item 4.11.

4.11 ACTE/ED/TOU/062 WALL ART ON THE DIAMOND SPORTS PAVILION

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the installation of football related wall art panels on the exterior wall of the Diamond Sports Pavilion in Rathcoole.

2. Introduction/Background

The Council owns and operates the Diamond Sports Pavilion in Rathcoole. Over recent months this building had been subject to repeated unwanted graffiti often sinister in nature. There was an opportunity to animate the wall with football themed perspex wall art panels with a view to preventing this ongoing issue.

3. Previous Decisions of Council

It was agreed at the Committee in April that the delivery of the Street Art Project be paused. It was reported to this meeting that £19,228 of the approved budget for this project remained. The Street Art Project was originally approved at the Council Meeting in August 2023.

4. Key Issues

The Borough had a rich football heritage with many Northern Ireland men's and women's internationals coming from the area. A number of these successful footballers, past and present, had come from the Rathcoole area itself including Jonny Evans and Jimmy Nicholl.

The Council owns and operates a pitch and pavilion at the Diamond Rathcoole, which was home to local teams and also host venue for the international girl's tournament SuperCup NI in 2025, 2026 and 2027. The pavilion had been subject to ongoing unwanted and often sinister graffiti, which was removed on each occasion by the Council's estate services team or contractors at a cost.

An exterior wall art installation on the pavilion had the potential to eliminate this ongoing issue of graffiti in particular if it depicts and celebrates local football heroes from Rathcoole.

It was proposed to create a number of perspex wall art panels of local football heroes carrying information about where they lived and their football achievements to cover the wall.

There was significant evidence that such an approach within a local area and at a graffiti 'hot spot' helps to solve such an ongoing anti-social issue.

5. Finance

There was a budget of £150,000 approved to deliver the Borough Street Art Project, now paused, with £130,772 spent to date. The installation of a football themed wall art panels on the exterior of the Diamond Sports Pavilion could be achieved at an approximate cost of £5,000 using this identified underspend.

The ongoing frequent removal of graffiti from this building was resulting in ongoing unbudgeted revenue costs.

6. Governance

The final designs and content being proposed would be issued to the Macedon DEA Elected Members before proceeding to installation. A procurement exercise to identify a suitable supplier to carry out this work would be carried out with Council's in house design team included in creation of the panels.

7. Summary

The Diamond Sports Pavilion in Rathcoole had been the target of ongoing unwanted and often sinister graffiti. This venue would be hosting SuperCup NI the international girls football tournament in July 2025.

It was proposed to install football themed wall art panels, celebrating local football stars, on the exterior of the building in an effort to put an end to the nuisance of this graffiti and to celebrate local football heritage on the building for the enjoyment of all users but in particular international visitors to SuperCup NI.

In response to a Member's query in relation to using some of the remaining fund for street art, the Director of Community Development confirmed that a report would be brought back to a future Committee meeting for Members consideration.

Proposed by Councillor Dunlop
Seconded by Alderman Ross and agreed that

the installation of a football themed wall art piece on the exterior of the Diamond Sports Pavilion Rathcoole, at an approximate cost of £5,000, be approved.

ACTION BY: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Development

4.12 AC/GEN/114 ULSTER SCOTS SMALL GRANT SCHEME PILOT PROPOSAL

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for an Ulster Scots Small Grant Scheme Pilot to support individuals and groups in the Borough wishing to engage with Ulster Scots culture.

2. Background and Introduction

Both individuals and groups could engage with Ulster Scots tradition in areas of language, history, religion, music, dance and other cultural areas. The Council annually supports Ulster Scots Leid Week in November and incorporates Ulster Scots culture in a range of programming and events throughout the year.

3. Previous Decision of Council

At the Community Planning Committee in April 2024, it was agreed that the Council deliver a Gaeltacht Bursary Grant Programme for 2024 with a maximum budget of £2,500 to provide 10 bursaries of £250 with funding being provided from the Office of the Deputy Mayor.

4. A Wheen o Words and Dances

The Office of the Deputy Mayor had a budget allocation of £5,250 to meet expenses of the office. The Deputy Mayor had requested that £2,000 of this allocated budget be used to fund ten small grants of £200 to individuals, schools or community groups to explore Ulster Scots culture.

Proposed guidelines for the Grant Programme, including eligibility criteria were circulated for Members' information. The application process would operate through the Council's online Grant Funding portal accessed through the Council's website.

5. Finance

A transfer of £2,000 from the Deputy Mayors budget would be used to fund up to ten bursaries of £200 per applicant for eligible purposes as outlined in the grant guidance document.

6. Governance

Grant guidelines outlining eligibility criteria for applicants and activities as referred to above had been developed. These would be made available to all applicants as part of the online grant application process.

It was proposed to open the grant scheme on Friday 30 May and close on Monday 16 June with funding recommendations being brought to the June Council meeting. In the event of over subscription grant scoring would be used to identify the ten highest scoring applications to be recommended for funding.

7. Summary

It was proposed to deliver an Ulster Scots Small Grant Scheme Pilot in 2025 which would award ten grants of £200 to individuals and groups resident in the Borough who wish to engage in Ulster Scots culture. The budget of £2,000 would be provided by the Office of the Deputy Mayor.

It was proposed to open the scheme on Friday 30 May and close on Monday 16 June with funding recommendations to be reported to the June Council meeting. In the event of over subscription grant scoring would be used to identify the ten highest scoring applications for funding.

Proposed by Alderman Ross

Seconded by Councillor Cooper and agreed that

Members approve the delivery of an Ulster Scots Small Grant Scheme Pilot proposal with a maximum budget of £2,000 to provide up to ten grants of £200 to individuals and groups in the Borough to engage with Ulster Scots culture, using funding from the Office of the Deputy Mayor.

ACTION BY: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Development

The Chairperson advised that the following supplementary report would be taken at this point of the meeting.

4.13 CP/GEN/052 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANT AID PROGRAMME RECOMMENDATIONS 2025/26

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval in relation to a proposed financial award under the Community Development Grant Aid Programme for 2025/26.

2. Background

The Community Development Grant Aid Programme provided financial assistance to groups within the Borough towards the costs of running their Community Facilities and delivering their Programmes and Activities over a 3-year period.

Programmes funded must have Community Development as a primary objective and must develop a strong, healthy and vibrant community, encouraging maximum participation and improving the lives of people living within the Borough.

3. Previous Decision of Council

It was approved at the Community Planning Committee in September 2022 that the new Community Development Grant Aid Programme Awards would be made for up to three years. A pass threshold of 50% applied to applications to the Programme and groups were not required to demonstrate match funding. Proposed awards were subject to the receipt of all relevant supporting documentation, or the offer of funding would be withdrawn.

At the Policy and Governance Committee in January 2025, the new Grant Funding Policy was approved.

At the Community Development Committee in February 2025, it was reported that 22 applications had been received for the Community Programmes and Activities fund of the Community Development Grant Aid Programme, with 18 applications totalling £97,229.84 approved for funding.

4. Appeal

The Grant Funding Policy included provision for unsuccessful applicants to seek feedback and to appeal decisions.

The Dalaradia Cultural and Historical Society made an application to this fund and were unsuccessful, as reported to the Committee in February. Their application was deemed ineligible on the basis that officers considered community development to not be their primary objective. The Group submitted an appeal, and their appeal was reviewed by a different panel of officers. Their appeal was upheld, and it was proposed to award the Dalaradia Cultural and Historical Society an award of £5,000 from the Community Programmes and Facilities Fund. Details of their application were circulated for Members' information.

5. Financial Implication

The total estimated budget for the 2025/26 Community Development Grant Aid Programme is £768,448 as provided for in the 2025/26 estimates, of which £50,428 (similar to the amount awarded in 2024/25) was anticipated from the Department for Communities (DfC) under its Community Support Programme for 2025/26 and the remaining £718,020 from the Council. Provision existed within this budget to fund this additional award.

Funding would be subject to satisfactory annual monitoring and evaluation.

6. Summary

Dalaradia Cultural and Historical Society appealed the decision regarding the Community Programmes and Facilities Fund and a different panel of officers reviewed the appeal. This appeal had been upheld on the basis that whilst named as a Cultural and Historical Society this group did have community development as their primary objective, which they delivered through the medium of culture and heritage. It was proposed that the Dalaradia Cultural and Historical Society be awarded £5,000 from the Community Programmes and Facilities Fund, provision for which existed in the Community Development Grant Aid Programme budget.

The Director of Community Development and the Head of Community Development addressed questions in respect of the appeals process and requests for feedback and confirmed that there was a report being prepared for a future Policy and Governance Committee in relation to the grant appeal process.

Proposed by Councillor Lynch
Seconded by Councillor Cooper and agreed that

the Dalaradia Cultural and Historical Society be awarded £5,000 from the Community Programmes and Facilities Fund.

ACTION BY: Ronan McKenna, Head of Community Development

5 ITEMS FOR NOTING

5.1 CE/OA/013 NORTHERN IRELAND HOUSING COUNCIL

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to provide Members with copies of minutes from the Northern Ireland Housing Council for 13 March 2025.

2. Introduction/Background

Correspondence had been received from the Northern Ireland Housing Council providing a copy of the minutes of their meeting of 13 March 2025, which were circulated for Member's information.

3. Previous Decision of Council

At the Community Development Committee in April 2025, the minutes of the Northern Ireland Housing Council meetings held on 13 February 2025 were noted.

Councillor Cooper requested that any examples of succession to tenancy which Members become aware of on behalf of their constituents be reported to him as the Council's rep on this body.

Proposed by Councillor Lynch
Seconded by Councillor Wilson and agreed that

the minutes of the Northern Ireland Housing Council of 13 March 2025 be noted.

NO ACTION

5.2 CP/PCSP/70 APPOINTMENT OF POLICING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP CHAIRPERSON

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members regarding the appointment of the PCSP Chairperson for 2025-2026.

2. Introduction/Background

The Justice Act 2011 stated that the position of Chairperson of the Policing and Community Safety Partnership was held by an Elected Member for a period of twelve (12) months, or for a period ending with the reconstitution date. The Justice Act also stated that position was held in turn by each of the four (4) largest parties represented on the Council immediately after the last local general election. The position of Vice-Chairperson was held by an Independent Member, appointed by the Independent Members.

3. Previous Decision of Council

It was agreed at the Annual Meeting of the Council in May 2023 that ten (10) Members be appointed to PCSP for the term of Council allocated using the d'Hondt method and Chairperson be appointed for a period of twelve (12) months at a time and in turn by each of the 4 largest parties following the election.

4. Appointment of PCSP Chairperson

Councillor Michael Goodman, Sinn Féin, was appointed to the position of PCSP Chairperson at the Community Development Committee in June 2024 for a period of twelve (12) months. The Alliance Party, as the third largest party, was now allocated this position for 2025/26.

The Alliance Party nominating officer had advised that Councillor Julie Gilmour was their nomination for the position of Chairperson of the Antrim and Newtownabbey PCSP for 2025-26 with the twelve (12) month term commencing on 2 June 2025.

5. Summary

An Elected Member would hold the position of Chairperson of the PCSP for a period of twelve (12) months, or for a period ending with the reconstitution date.

At the 2023 Annual Meeting, ten (10) Members were appointed to PCSP for the term of Council, allocated using the d'Hondt method and Chairperson was appointed annually and in turn by each of the 4 largest parties following the election.

Councillor Julie Gilmour of the Alliance Party had been nominated for the position of PCSP Chairperson for 2025/26, as Alliance was the third largest party represented on the Council. This appointment would commence on 2 June 2025.

Proposed by Councillor Lynch
Seconded by Councillor Cooper and agreed that

the appointment of Councillor Julie Gilmour to the position of Chairperson of the PCSP for 2025/2026 be noted.

NO ACTION

6 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

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

Members expressed their thanks and appreciation to Officers in respect of the VE Day 80 Party in the Park and other events delivered for VE Day 80.

Several Members congratulated and thanked the Chairperson for his leadership and advice during the term and wished him well for the upcoming year.

There being no further Committee business, the Chairperson thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting concluded at 8.05 pm.

MAYOR