



**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
HELD IN ROUND TOWER CHAMBER, ANTRIM CIVIC CENTRE
ON MONDAY 6 OCTOBER AT 6.30 PM**

- In the Chair** : Alderman J Smyth
- Committee Members (In person)** : Councillors – J Archibald-Brown, J Gilmour, N Kelly, AM Logue, A McAuley, V McWilliam, L O'Hagan, M Stewart and S Ward
- Committee Members (Remote)** : Aldermen – L Boyle and P Bradley
Councillors – R Foster, E McLaughlin
- Non Committee Members (In person)** : Councillors – H Magill and B Webb
- Non Committee Members: (Remote)** : Alderman S Ross
Councillors – P Dunlop, R Lynch and M Ní Chonghaile
- Officers Present** : Director of Parks & Leisure Operations - M McDowell
Director of Sustainability – M Lavery
Head of Parks Operations - P Mawhinney
Head of Waste Strategy & Sustainability – L Daly
Head of Leisure Operations – D O'Hagan
Head of Environmental Health and Wellbeing – C Kelly
Parks Development Manager – N Campbell
ICT Systems Support Officer – C Bell
ICT Support Assistant – D Graham
Member Services Officer – L Irwin
Member Services Officer – L McDonald
- Officers (Remote)** : Director of Finance and Governance – S Cole

CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

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

Leisure Section on their achievement of APSE Service Team of the Year for Sports, Leisure and Cultural Services at the recent APSE Awards.

The Chair also introduced new member of staff Nadine Campbell, Parks Development Manager and welcomed her to the meeting.

1 APOLOGIES

Councillor M Cooper

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

3 ITEMS FOR DECISION

3.1 EH/EHS/002 DATA-SHARE AGREEMENT WITH MID AND EAST ANTRIM BOROUGH COUNCIL AGREEMENT FOR ANIMAL WELFARE SERVICES

1. Purpose

A Data-Sharing Agreement (DSA) between Mid and East Antrim Borough Council (MEABC), and Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council was required to facilitate the secure and lawful exchange of information for the investigation and enforcement of duties under the Welfare of Animals Act (NI) 2011 and the Dogs Order (NI) 1983. This agreement ensured compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

2. Introduction

Members were reminded that Councils had statutory responsibility for the investigation and enforcement of animal welfare and dog control legislation. To carry out these functions effectively, Council often needed to share personal and sensitive data between enforcement partners.

The proposed DSA formalises the arrangements for lawful and proportionate data-sharing between the three Northern Region Councils. Mid and East Antrim Borough Council (MEABC) would act as the coordinating lead authority for the agreement.

The draft agreement had been reviewed by the Legal and Governance teams of the participating councils, who had confirmed that the document was legally robust, compliant with data protection requirements, and suitable for adoption.

3. Key Issues

A formal Data-Sharing Agreement (DSA) (circulated) was required to regulate the sharing of personal and sensitive data between councils, ensuring compliance with data protection legislation. The agreement facilitates the exchange of information such as officer statements, veterinary reports, dog

licensing data, CCTV and photographic evidence, conviction records and other intelligence relevant to enforcement.

It set out strict requirements for data security, handling and retention, including the use of secure transfer methods, maintaining audit trails, and restricting access to authorised officers only. The legal basis for sharing was provided under UK GDPR, specifically Article 6(1)(e) – Public Task, and Article 9(2)(g) – Substantial Public Interest.

The DSA also established processes for managing subject access requests (SARs), Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, and Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) requests, alongside clear procedures for handling breaches, complaints, and staff training responsibilities. The agreement would be reviewed annually, with a comprehensive review every three years, or sooner if required by changes in legislation

4. Summary

The Animal Welfare Data-Sharing Agreement established a clear and secure framework for the sharing of personal and sensitive data between MEABC, CCGBC, and ANBC.

It supported statutory enforcement functions under the *Welfare of Animals Act (NI) 2011* and *Dogs Order (NI) 1983*, while ensuring compliance with data protection legislation, safeguarding individual rights, and maintaining public confidence in the Councils' handling of sensitive information.

Proposed by Councillor Kelly
Seconded by Councillor McAuley and agreed that

the signing of the Animal Welfare Data Sharing Agreement be approved.

ACTION BY: Mark Sloan, Deputy Head of Environmental Health

3.2 EH/EHS/LR/001 APPLICATION FOR THE GRANT OF AN OCCASIONAL ENTERTAINMENTS LICENCE – MARQUEE ON LAND TO THE REAR OF THE FIVE CORNERS, 249 RASHEE ROAD, BALLYCLARE, BT39 9JN

1. Purpose

The purpose of the report was to seek Members' approval for an Occasional Entertainment Licence for a marquee on land to the rear of The Five Corners, 249 Rashee Road, Ballyclare, BT39 9JN.

2. Introduction

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

Licensee	Location of Premises	Type(s) and hours of entertainment	File Number	New Application or Renewal
Mr Connor McNeill	Marquee located on land to the rear of The Five Corners, 249 Rashee Road, Ballyclare, BT39 9JN	Singing, Music, Dancing or Entertainment of a like kind Licence for not more than 14 particular days (to be specified in advance) in a 12-month period. Times to be specified in advance, but no later than 23.00 hrs on any given date. Number of persons – no greater than 250	EL221	New Application

In line with the Council Protocol for the hearing of Entertainment Licence applications, approved in December 2016, the application must be considered at the Operations Committee meeting.

Council could decide the following:

- I. Grant the licence;
- II. Grant the licence with specific additional terms, conditions and restrictions;
- III. Refuse the licence;
- IV. Defer an application for further consideration or to obtain further information.

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

3. Main Report

An application had been received for the Grant of an Entertainment Licence (Occasional Indoor) for the above-named premises. In accordance with the Entertainment Licence Policy, Members' approval was now required in advance of granting the licence.

Members were advised that the applicant had recently acquired the premises Five Corners, 249 Rashee Road, Ballyclare, BT39 9JN and had previously applied for a transfer of the pre-existing indoor annual licence into their name. This had now been completed.

This new application had been submitted to authorise events within a marquee situated to the rear of the premises Five Corners, 249 Rashee Road, Ballyclare, BT39 9JN. Fourteen such events were proposed by the applicant, with dates and times to be notified in advance to Environmental Health. No event would extend beyond 23:00 hours on any given day.

Members were further advised that an unlicensed entertainment event took place in the outdoor area adjacent to the premises at 249 Rashee Road on Saturday 23 and Sunday 24 August. In response, Licensing Officers engaged with the applicant to ensure full understanding of all Entertainment Licensing requirements for outdoor activities. A formal written warning was issued, and an Entertainment Licence application was subsequently submitted. Since then, the applicant had fully cooperated, working closely with Licensing Officers and providing all necessary documentation.

4. Summary

Application for an Entertainments Licence (Occasional Indoor) had been received from Mr Connor McNeill for 14 unspecified dates (within a 12-month period) at land to the rear of The Five Corners, 249 Rashee Road, Ballyclare, County Antrim, BT39 9JN. In accordance with Council protocol for the hearing of Entertainment Licence applications, a decision by Members was needed on the granting of the licence.

Proposed by Councillor Foster

Seconded by Councillor Archibald-Brown and agreed that

an Entertainment Licence (Occasional Licence) be granted to the applicant, Mr Connor McNeill – The Five Corners, 249 Rashee Road, Ballyclare, BT39 9JN - subject to the following conditions.

- a) **That all relevant licensing requirements are met.**
- b) **That statutory and public consultees have no objections to the approval.**
- c) **That at least 21 days' advance notice is given to Environmental Health prior to the events being held.**
- d) **That documentation requested by the Licensing Officer is provided in advance of any event being held.**

ACTION BY: Jen McGrugan, Environmental Health Officer

3.3 EH/EHS/LR/001 APPLICATION FOR THE GRANT OF AN ANNUAL INDOOR ENTERTAINMENTS LICENCE – KNAGS BAR AND GRILL, 375 ANTRIM ROAD, GLENGORMLEY, BT36 5EB

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for an Annual Indoor Entertainments Licence for Knags Bar and Grill, 375 Antrim Road, Glengormley, BT36 5EB.

2. Introduction

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

Licensee	Location of Premises	Type(s) and hours of entertainment	File Number	New Application or Renewal
Mr Kevin McCourt	Knags Bar and Grill, 375 Antrim Road, Glengormley, BT36 5EB	Singing, Music, Dancing or Entertainment of a like kind Annual Indoor Licence Monday – Sunday 12:00hrs – Midnight Number of persons – no greater than 80	EL067	New Application

In line with the Council Protocol for the hearing of Entertainment Licence applications, approved in December 2016, the application must be considered at the Operations Committee meeting.

Council could decide the following:

- I. Grant the licence;
- II. Grant the licence with specific additional terms, conditions and restrictions;
- III. Refuse the licence;
- IV. Defer an application for further consideration or to obtain further information.

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

3. Main Report

An application had been received for the Grant of an Entertainment Licence (Annual Indoor) for the above-named premises. In accordance with the

Entertainment Licence Policy, Members' approval was now required in advance of granting the licence. Members should note that the applicant previously held an Entertainment Licence for this venue, however, chose not to renew following the Covid-19 pandemic.

4. Summary

Application for the Grant of an Entertainment Licence (Annual Indoor) had been received from Mr Kevin McCourt for Knags Bar and Grill, 375 Antrim Road, Glengormley, BT36 5EB. In accordance with Council protocol for the hearing of Entertainment Licence applications, as decision by Members is needed on the granting of the licence.

Proposed by Alderman Bradley
Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

an Entertainment Licence (Annual Indoor) is granted to the applicant Mr Kevin McCourt, Knags Bar and Grill, 375 Antrim Road, Glengormley, BT36 5EB, subject to the following Conditions:

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

ACTION BY: Jen McGrugan, Environmental Health Officer

3.4 PK/REG/005, PK/REG/004, PK/REG/010 APPLICATION FOR THE RENEWAL OF PREMISES FOR CIVIL MARRIAGES/CIVIL PARTNERSHIP CEREMONIES

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Council approval for the renewal of place approvals for Sentry Hill, Barnabys Restaurant, and the Dunadry Hotel as venues where Civil Marriage and Civil Partnership ceremonies may be conducted.

2. Background

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

As part of this process, a Notice of Interest must be displayed in a prominent location at the proposed venue for a period of three weeks to allow for any public objections to be submitted.

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

3. Previous Decision of Council

All three venues were previously granted approval by Council in October 2022.

Proposed by Councillor Kelly

Seconded by Alderman Bradley and agreed that

Sentry Hill, Barnaby's Restaurant, and the Dunadry Hotel and Gardens be re-approved as venues to hold Civil Marriages under the terms of the Marriage (Northern Ireland) Order 2003, and for the registration of Civil Partnerships under the Civil Partnership Act 2004.

ACTION BY: Paula Redpath, Registrar

3.5 EH/EHS/LR/011 SCHEME OF DELEGATION

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to advise Members that, further to a review of the Scheme of Delegation, it had been necessary to add legislation in order to streamline the process for dealing with complaints.

2. Introduction

Members were reminded that the Council operates a Scheme of Delegation to ensure that decisions relating to Environmental Health could be taken efficiently, transparently, and at the most appropriate level of responsibility. The Scheme specified which functions were retained by Council and which legislative powers were delegated to senior officers.

In the context of Environmental Health, delegated powers enable authorised officers to exercise functions under relevant legislation without unnecessary referral to Council. This approach was essential to:

- Streamline service delivery- by reducing delays in matters such as regulatory functions, enforcement, and complaint resolution;
- Ensure accountability- by clearly defining the responsibilities of senior officers.

By maintaining and regularly reviewing the Scheme of Delegation, Council ensured that its decision-making processes remain effective, legally compliant, and responsive to the needs of residents and stakeholders.

3. Key Issues

Following a review of the Scheme of Delegation, it had been necessary to incorporate additional legislation in order to streamline the process for handling complaints. New additions were highlighted in red and any amendments highlighted in purple (circulated).

Legislative updates were;

New additions:

1. The Official Controls (Animal, Feed and Food) Regulations (NI) 2019
2. The Dangerous Dogs (Compensation and Exemption Schemes) Order (NI) 2024
3. The Organic Product Regulations (NI) 2020
4. The Solvent Emissions Regulations (NI) 2004

Amended legislation:

1. The Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 (as amended)

Proposed by Councillor Kelly

Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

the revised Schedule of Delegated Functions for the Director of Sustainability and Head of Environmental Health and Wellbeing be adopted.

ACTION BY: Colin Kelly, Head of Environmental Health and Wellbeing

3.6 EH/EHS/FC/004 CONSULTATION ON LOCAL AUTHORITY AND DISTRICT COUNCIL GUIDANCE ON GREY MARKET GOODS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members approval for a Council response on draft guidance for enforcement authorities of Grey Market goods in the UK.

2. Background

The Food Standards Agency had launched a consultation seeking views on guidance designed to support local authorities and district councils in identifying and addressing non-compliant food products, referred to as *Grey Market goods*. These were foods not intended for the UK market, which might contain unauthorised or excessive additives, fail to meet UK compositional standards, or omit allergen information in the prescribed format.

The draft guidance set out how councils could use existing food law to take proportionate and effective enforcement action when such products were identified.

Details of the consultation can be found at:

<https://www.food.gov.uk/news-alerts/consultations/consultation-on-local-authority-and-district-council-guidance-on-grey-market-goods-in-the-united-kingdom>

3. Key Issues

Council welcomed the draft guidance but considered that further clarification and strengthening was required in several key areas. The response was very technical due to subject matter and some of the key issues were:

- **Detaining goods** – More clarity was needed on when to use different legal powers and what options were available (e.g. returning, destroying, or treating products).
- **Allergens and labelling** – Direction was needed on how to deal with products containing allergens that were not labelled in English, and whether these should be removed from sale.
- The guidance does not take account of Northern Ireland legislative differences or data sharing mechanisms.
- **Withdrawals and recalls** – Guidance should be stronger, as some businesses delay or refuse to take unsafe products off the market. A “Permit to Trade” system could be considered, and the FSA should play a more active role in urgent cases.
- **Enforcement tools** – Councils would welcome the option of Fixed Penalty Notices for simpler offences like labelling breaches.

A copy of the draft Council response (circulated) was included for Members' information.

4. Summary

Council broadly welcomed the draft guidance as a valuable step in clarifying enforcement options for Grey Market goods. However, important issues remained, particularly around NI legislative context, clarity on detention powers, mechanisms for intelligence sharing, and ensuring effective recall and withdrawal processes.

Proposed by Councillor Foster

Seconded by Councillor Logue and agreed that

the draft consultation response be approved including request for clarification of any outstanding issues in relation to Northern Ireland's alignment with the rest of the United Kingdom.

ACTION BY: Christina McErlean, Deputy Head of Environmental Health (Commercial)

3.7 **WM/S/001 CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION REPORT**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the submission of Council's Climate Change Mitigation Report.

2. Background

Under The Climate Change (Reporting Bodies) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024, the first climate change mitigation reports were due by 31st October 2025. These regulations, established under the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022, mandated that public bodies, including Council, submit a climate change mitigation report on a 3-yearly basis.

For this first reporting round, Council's mitigation report would:

- set the baseline year for greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) covering the financial year beginning 1st April 2024 and ending 31st March 2025;
- contain the amounts and sources of GHG emissions for that financial year;
- contain the proposals and policies for reducing emissions in the exercise of its functions and the timescales for implementation.

The submission had been drafted in conjunction with all Council departments and had been reviewed by both the Corporate Leadership Team and Sustainability Working Group. A copy of the draft submission (circulated) was available for Members' information.

Council's submission required the following:

- evidence of high level, climate mitigation objectives;
- a diagram outlining the carbon emissions that we were responsible for reporting on;
- the carbon emissions statement and a breakdown of specific targets and actions that are already in place or intended to take place in the future to reduce our GHG emissions.

All of the objectives, targets and actions had been taken from publicly available documents, such as the Corporate Plan, Community Plan and the Climate Change Action Plan.

3. Summary

In compliance with the Climate Change Regulations, Council was required to submit a Climate Change Mitigation Report. The report set out how Council would reduce its carbon emissions and would be submitted every three years.

Proposed by Councillor Archibald-Brown
Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

the draft Climate Change Mitigation Report be approved.

ACTION BY: Claire Evans, Climate, Waste and Sustainability Officer

3.8 WM/S/002 DRAFT RESPONSE TO NORTHERN IRELAND'S DRAFT CLIMATE ACTION PLAN 2023-2027

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the response to the consultation on Northern Ireland's Draft Climate Action Plan 2023-2027.

2. Background

The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 set an ambitious target to reduce Northern Ireland's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to net zero by 2050. The Act required the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) to prepare and publish a Climate Action Plan every five years.

This plan set out policies and proposals to achieve required reductions in emissions and the actions to enable this to happen. The focus of this draft Climate Action Plan was on meeting the first carbon budget, 2023-2027.

Council Officers had attended dedicated topic Workshops to consult on findings and had drafted a response to the consultation which was due for submission 8 October 2025.

3. Key Information

Members would be aware that Council was a member of Sustainable NI who drafted a wide ranging and robust response on behalf of the sustainability sector. Council's response (circulated) built on Sustainable NI's submission, however it was proposed not to comment on actions or targets outside of Council's remit i.e. agriculture, forestry, fisheries and soil quality.

The proposed response emphasised the need for financial packages and support of all households to prevent inequality in achieving the actions set out in the plan. In addition, the important role of local government in decision making and implementation of actions was highlighted.

Key points:

- support for the emphasis on renewable energy deployment and grid strengthening but note that delays in planning and insufficient grid capacity remain significant barriers;
- Council supported active travel funding and EV infrastructure expansion, however, had noted that the plan should take account and prevent a rural-urban equity gap. The CAP should prioritise affordable public transport, bus electrification, and targeted support for all households to access low-carbon mobility;
- local authority buildings should be eligible for government retrofit funding schemes, recognising our leadership role and visibility in the community;
- Council support mandatory commercial recycling and improved and harmonised kerbside recycling services for households, with legislative changes and funding to enable Local Council or Government to implement and enforce them; and
- recommend that the Climate Action and Green Growth governance are merged into a single integrated Climate & Sustainability Programme Board.

This will reduce duplication, align economic and climate objectives, and ensure just transition principles are embedded from the outset.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour
Seconded by Councillor Kelly and agreed that

the draft response to the Northern Ireland's Draft Climate Action Plan 2023-2027 be approved.

ACTION BY: Lynsey Daly, Head of Waste Strategy and Sustainability

3.9 G/MSMO/067 NEWTOWNABBEY ROTARY CLUB - CROCUS PLANTING

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek approval for Newtownabbey Rotary Club to plant crocuses at Hazelbank Park as part of their efforts to support Polio awareness.

2. Background

Council had supported Newtownabbey Rotary Club over the last number of years through their crocus planting initiative. In 2019, the club established a commemorative crocus bed at Jordanstown Special Needs School, marking the start of their local commitment. In 2021, they expanded the project by adding crocus planters at the Northern Ireland Children's Hospice in Glengormley. Continuing their efforts in 2022, they planted a commemorative crocus bed in V36. Each year, these plantings served as visual symbols of the Rotary Club's dedication to the eradication of Polio.

3. Benefits to Council

Council had supported Newtownabbey Rotary Club's crocus planting initiative for several years, contributing to both community engagement and enhancement of local parks and open spaces. In addition to their aesthetic appeal, crocus plantings enhance biodiversity in each area, while also raising awareness for an important cause of the global fight against Polio.

Proposed by Councillor Archibald-Brown
Seconded by Councillor McWilliam and agreed that

approval be granted for Newtownabbey Rotary Club to plant crocuses at Hazelbank Park as part of their ongoing efforts to promote Polio awareness.

ACTION BY: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

3.10 PK/BIO/046 SMALL WOODLAND GRANT SCHEME- TREE PLANTING PROPOSAL FOR 2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members on the Small Woodland Grant Scheme and to seek approval for the proposed sites identified for tree planting in 2025.

2. Introduction

Members were reminded of Council's commitment to tree planting through the One Million Trees initiative and its ongoing efforts to encourage participation from residents, community groups, schools, and other key stakeholders.

To support the delivery of the initiative, Officers would be submitting an application to the Small Woodland Grant Scheme. This scheme, administered by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), provided financial assistance to landowners for the creation of new native woodlands covering an area of 0.20 hectares or more.

The grant included an annual payment for woodland establishment over a ten-year period. The scheme was designed to enhance biodiversity, support ecosystem services, mitigate climate change, and improve water, soil, and air quality.

3. Key Issues on Sites

Through the Small Woodland Grant Scheme, 100% of eligible costs were covered for the supply and planting of native tree species at approved locations.

For the 2025 programme, it was proposed that a total of 2,492 native trees would be planted across two sites:

- Allen Park, and
- Church Road, Newtownabbey, in an area adjacent to Valley Leisure Centre

Site plans for both proposed locations were circulated for Members' reference.

In the course of site selection, a number of other Council-owned lands were identified as potentially suitable for future planting initiatives. These included Gideons Green, Sentry Hill, and Burneys Lane. While initial assessments were positive, further detailed investigation and environmental appraisal were required before these sites can be confirmed as feasible planting locations.

Other areas considered included Caulside Park and Hazelbank Park. However, these did not meet the specific eligibility criteria of the Small Woodland Grant Scheme and therefore could not be progressed within the current programme. Notwithstanding this, officers remain committed to identifying and developing further opportunities for woodland creation and biodiversity enhancement

across the Borough, and these sites would be revisited as part of ongoing environmental improvement initiatives.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour
Seconded by Councillor Kelly and agreed that

the proposed tree planting locations for the Small Woodland Grant Scheme 2025 at Allen Park, Antrim, and Church Road, Newtownabbey be approved.

ACTION BY: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks

3.11 PK/GEN/116 BIRD RINGING PROPOSAL FOR THREEMILEWATER CONSERVATION PARK

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek approval for the use of Threemilewater Conservation Park as a designated site for participation in a bird ringing scheme.

2. Introduction

Council Officers were recently approached by a representative of the British and Irish Ringing Scheme, organised by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), to explore the potential of Threemilewater Conservation Park as a site for bird ringing activities.

Bird ringing was a well-established scientific method used to monitor wild bird populations. It involves the safe and ethical capture of birds, which were then fitted with a lightweight, uniquely numbered metal ring typically on the right leg.

Researchers record key biometric data such as body weight and wing length to assess the health and condition of each bird. The main objectives of bird ringing were to collect long-term data on survival rates, breeding success, population trends, and movement patterns. Where relevant, the data also provided insights into shifts in migratory behaviour.

3. Key Issues for the Site

Threemilewater Conservation Park had been recognised for its rich biodiversity and regularly attracted a wide variety of bird species. Notably, the site supported a high density of summer-visiting species such as Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler, which was particularly significant given the park's relatively compact size.

Threemilewater Park might also be suitable for participation in the Constant Effort Sites (CES) Scheme, which was the first national standardised ringing programme under the BTO. Operating since 1983, the CES Scheme involved the systematic use of mist nets at fixed locations, at regular intervals, throughout the breeding season.

Currently, approximately 120 CES sites are active across Britain and Ireland. The scheme provided robust long-term data on adult and juvenile abundance, productivity, and adult survival rates for 24 species of common songbirds.

4. Environmental overview

It was proposed that bird ringing sessions be conducted during the early hours of the morning and in discreet areas of the site to minimise disturbance to both the public and local wildlife. These sessions not only facilitate the capture of new birds for study but also enable the recapture of previously ringed individuals. Such data provided valuable insights for ornithological research and supports long-term bird conservation efforts.

Trained and licensed ringers were adept at recognising signs of excessive stress in individual birds. In the rare cases where a bird exhibited signs of significant distress, it was promptly released without being ringed, prioritising the bird's welfare above data collection.

Proposed by Councillor Kelly

Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

approval be granted for Threemilewater Conservation Park to be designated as a site for participation in the bird ringing scheme.

ACTION BY: Nadine Campbell, Parks Development Manager

3.12 **CE/GEN/078 NORTHERN IRELAND WATER – ESSENTIAL SITE SEWAGE WORKS AT VALLEY PARK**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Council approval for Northern Ireland Water (NI Water) to carry out construction works at Valley Park, as part of its wastewater infrastructure rehabilitation project within the Mill Road catchment area.

2. Introduction

Correspondence had been received from NI Water, formally requesting access to Valley Park to undertake essential works as part of the Mill Road Catchment and Remediation Project. The correspondence was circulated for Member's reference.

Following previous surveys of the wastewater network, NI Water had identified the need for sewer rehabilitation works on existing infrastructure located within Valley Park. These works were considered critical to maintaining the integrity and performance of the local wastewater system.

3. Site Investigation

As part of the pre-construction phase, **NI Water** was requesting access to the park in order to undertake a series of preparatory works. These works will include:

- The construction of temporary access routes through the park, including along the existing path adjacent to the motorway.
- The installation of up to four maintenance bays to facilitate activity within the existing tree line.

Maps outlining the proposed work areas had been provided by NI Water and were circulated for Members' reference.

NI Water had confirmed that all works would be undertaken in a manner designed to minimise disruption to park users and the surrounding environment. The extent of land required would be restricted to the minimum necessary to complete the works safely and efficiently.

4. Proposed Works

The planned works involved the temporary modification of existing access routes and the creation of new temporary paths to support the rehabilitation of the sewer network. The duration of the works was estimated to be up to four months, from mobilisation to demobilisation. Subject to Council approval and NI Water contract finalisation, the proposed timeline for these works was from December 2025 to March 2026.

5. Key Considerations

While NI Water held statutory powers under the Water and Sewerage Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 to access land for essential works, it was also seeking formal Council consent to proceed. This approach reflected NI Water's commitment to maintaining transparency and partnership with Council throughout the process.

The proposed works would result in temporary disruption to Valley Park, including:

- Restricted access or temporary closure of certain areas during construction
- Visual and landscape impacts
- Noise and general disruption associated with excavation and construction activity

NI Water had committed to minimising disruption where possible and would take appropriate measures to maintain public access to unaffected areas of the park. Importantly, NI Water had also committed to restoring all impacted areas upon completion of the project, helping to ensure long-term environmental and community benefits.

Proposed by Councillor Foster

Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

Council grants approval to Northern Ireland Water to undertake the proposed rehabilitation works on the existing wastewater infrastructure within Valley Park.

ACTION BY: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

3.13 WM/WM/033 REQUEST FOR LIVE HERE LOVE HERE SUPPORT

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to set out Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful's request for financial support for the Live Here Love Here programme.

2. Background

As Members would be aware, Council funds Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful (KNIB) who managed a number of environmental awareness programmes including Live Here Love Here, Eco Schools and the Green Flag accreditation. For the last four years Council had contributed £21,000 per annum and last year this funding helped deliver the following:

- Over £13,000 of support for 10 community environmental projects;
- 95 groups participating in the Adopt a Spot programme;
- 64 schools visits through the Eco School programme;
- 28 Green Flags in the Borough.

This year, KNIB had requested an increase in funding to £26,250, an increase of £5,250 on the previous four years, with 50% of the funding ringfenced for Live Here Love Here projects and the other 50% to support local community groups delivering environmental projects through their Small Grants scheme. In 2024-25, over 85% of the monies returned to projects in the Borough as direct funding.

3. Financial Implication

If the request for funding of £26,250 was approved, it would be included in the 2026-27 estimates with the cost split between the Sustainability and Parks and Leisure Directorates.

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

financial support of £26,250 to Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful for 2026/27 be approved.

ACTION BY: Lynsey Daly, Head of Waste Strategy and Sustainability

3.14 PK/GEN/212 OUTSCAPE - WALKING FOR ALL PROGRAMME

1. Purpose

This report sought approval for the proposed delivery of the Walking for All programme through PEACEPLUS via Outscape.

2. Introduction/Background

Outscape (formerly Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland) was a not-for-profit organisation that promoted responsible outdoor recreation in a safe, inclusive, and sustainable way.

Through the PEACEPLUS Programme, under Theme 4: Healthy and Inclusive Communities – Rural Regeneration and Social Inclusion, Outscape had secured €7,536,957 to deliver a three-year programme in partnership with councils across Northern Ireland. The proposal included the appointment of a Walking for All Officer in each participating Council area. While Outscape would fund salary and associated administrative costs, Councils would act as the employing authority and provide office accommodation and support.

The Officer posts would be fixed term, linked to the funding period. Their role would focus on recruiting, training, and supporting volunteer Walk Leaders to deliver regular walking sessions within rural communities.

The Walking for All programme aimed to create a coordinated and strategic approach to walking initiatives across Northern Ireland. Governance would be provided by a steering group comprising key stakeholders, including the Public Health Agency, Sport NI, local Councils, and Health and Social Care Trusts.

3. Previous Decision of Council

Members were reminded that, in November 2023, Council approved in principle participation as a named partner in Outscape's PEACEPLUS application for the 'Walking for All' programme, and agreed that, if successful, the Council would act as the employing authority for the Walking for All Officer, while also providing office space and administrative support as an in-kind contribution.

4. Financial Position/Implication

There were no financial implications for Council, as all recruitment and employment costs would be met externally by Outscape.

5. Commencement

The programme was scheduled to commence in January 2026 for a fixed term of 36 months. Redundancy costs have been factored into the salary budget to ensure there is no additional financial liability to Council at the end of the post.

Proposed by Councillor Kelly
Seconded by Councillor Logue and agreed that

approval be granted for the delivery of the Walking for All programme through the PEACEPLUS Programme via Outscape, and that a Walking For All Officer be recruited on a fixed-term contract to support its implementation.

ACTION BY: Nadine Campbell, Parks Development Manager

4 ITEMS FOR NOTING

4.1 EH/EHS/008 AIR QUALITY MONITORING

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to provide Members with an update on the findings of the 2024 Air Quality monitoring in the Borough.

2. Background

Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) operated under the Environment Order (NI) 2002, providing the framework for managing air quality by Northern Ireland's local authorities. This report delivered the results of monitoring conducted in 2024.

3. Key Issues

Members were reminded that Council was responsible for reviewing the state of air quality in the Borough. To assist this process an Air Quality Strategy (AQS) had been devised for the UK. This set down standards and objectives for the air quality pollutants causing the problems and allowed councils to review air quality in their area against these.

LAQM required Council to review and assess a range of air pollutants against the objectives set by the AQS, using a range of monitoring, modelling, and other methodologies.

Council had designated one Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) - the Antrim Road, Glengormley. This area was identified as air quality testing indicated that the levels of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂), commonly associated with vehicle pollutants, were above the UK's annual mean target. This station provided live data accessible via the following link;

<https://www.airqualityni.co.uk/site/NWT5>

Levels of NO₂ were required by Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to be monitored on an hourly basis to ensure that the 1-hour mean and annual mean legislative objectives were not being exceeded.

[A summary of the results for 2024 are as follows:](#)

- The NO₂ annual mean for 2024 was 33 µg m⁻³ which did not exceed the AQS objective of 40 µg m⁻³.
- The NO₂ 1-hour AQS Objective was not exceeded for any period of time.

Historical data showed that NO₂ emissions in 2020 and 2021 were lower due to reduced traffic flows during the Covid-19 pandemic. Levels subsequently increased as restrictions were lifted, but remained below pre-2020 levels, likely due to improvements in vehicle technology resulting in reduced emissions, increased use of public transport and changes in commuting practices.

4. Summary

Air quality monitoring within the Borough in 2024 showed that levels of NO₂ remain below the AQS objective of 40 µg m⁻³. The NO₂ 1-hour AQS Objective was not exceeded for any period of time during 2024.

The Director of Sustainability undertook to investigate the possibility of identifying other areas to relocate the air quality monitoring equipment.

Proposed by Councillor Foster

Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

4.2 **WM/WM/037/VOL2 HARMONISATION OF WASTE COLLECTION SERVICES UPDATE**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members on the progress of the Harmonisation of Waste Collection Services in the Borough.

2. Background

Members would be aware that Officers were actively working on the Harmonisation of Waste Collection Services across the Borough along with key stakeholders including, third party waste companies, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and dedicated consultants. Officers had continued to provide Members with a monthly update on how the project was progressing.

3. Key Information

Deliveries of wheelie boxes and black bins commenced week commencing (w/c) 8 September to allow additional time to complete the deliveries and mop-up any missed areas. This enabled first up-lifts of blue bins as timetabled on w/c 15 September and then first collection of Wheelie Boxes in these areas w/c 22 September as planned. At the time of writing, no significant issues with the delivery, uplift and collection of the wheelie boxes had been reported.

To enable ongoing service efficiencies through this roll-out Members would be aware that change of collection days or weeks was previously approved. At present Bryson Recycling used their fleet of bin lorries to collect black bins one week and then blue bins the next week from the same properties. Once the

wheelie box collections have commenced there was no requirement for the vehicles on blue bin collection weeks and it would not be efficient to have these vehicles idle for a week.

As a result, during week commencing 27 October 2025 approximately 10,000 households would see a week change for the collection of their black bin. The week change would be done by collecting the black bin two weeks in a row and then every fortnight thereafter.

Residents would be advised with letters directly to their household notifying them of this change and contingencies have been put in place to assist with missed collections during this period. There would also be social media posts advising residents of the change.

Delivery of the communication plan was ongoing throughout the rollout/collection, with billboards, adshels and ongoing social media to further highlight the project. Residents due to receive their notifications of swap over in October would have started to received their direct 2nd letter from Royal Mail w/c 29 September. This letter would indicate their roll-out will be within the next few weeks and will provide them with further information on the system, collection days and what could be recycled in each container.

External monitoring was being provided by WRAP with Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) funding. The WRAP Officers have been assessing and monitoring the roll-out and collection service and Council Officers would be involved in this process so this level of contract management could continue in order to improve service standards.

An updated timescale of all actions and a visual demonstration were included (circulated) for Members' information.

Following a query from a Member, the Head of Waste Strategy and Sustainability advised she would look into a technical error with Council's online bin checker. She explained that the platform was being updated in line with the harmonisation of waste collection services and may have been offline for a short period.

Proposed by Councillor Kelly
Seconded by Councillor Logue and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION.

4.3 PK/GEN/022, PK/GEN/057 IRELAND'S BEST KEPT TOWN AND GREEN FLAG AWARDS 2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to provide an update on Ireland's Best Kept Town Competition and the Green Flag Awards for 2025.

2. Ireland's Best Kept Town

Ireland's Best Kept Town was a prestigious all-island competition that brought together top-ranking towns and villages from the Republic of Ireland's Tidy Towns initiative and Northern Ireland's Best Kept competition. This year's awards ceremony was held at Farmleigh House, Phoenix Park, Dublin, on June 17, 2025.

Randalstown was one of just 14 finalists selected from nearly 1,000 eligible towns and villages across the island. Competing in the Small Town category, Randalstown secured a place among the top four an impressive achievement that highlights the town's dedication to community pride, environmental stewardship, and overall presentation.

3. Green Flags

The Green Flag Award was an internationally recognised accolade that signified excellence in the management, maintenance, and community involvement in parks and open spaces. The programme in Northern Ireland was managed by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful. To earn Green Flag status, a site must have a management plan that meets strict criteria, including horticultural standards, cleanliness, environmental management, biodiversity, community involvement, and safety.

This year, a total of 20 council-managed sites and 12 community spaces across the Borough had been awarded the internationally recognised Green Flag accreditation.

Among the new recipients were Ballyclare Cemetery and Neillsbrook Fold, both of which had shown exemplary dedication to enhancing the social and environmental benefits that parks and green spaces bring to our communities.

In addition to these Green Flag achievements, local volunteer Áine Gilchrist from Monkstown Village Community Garden had been honoured with the prestigious 'Pollinator of the Year' Award. This accolade recognised her exceptional efforts in promoting biodiversity and creating pollinator-friendly environments.

Park / Open Space	Green Flag Awarded by Type
Antrim Castle Gardens	Heritage
Sentry Hill Historic House	Heritage
Antrim / Belmont and Six Mile Cemetery	Council - Parks
Antrim Lough Shore Park and Gateway	Council – Parks
Ballyclare Cemetery	Council - Parks
Ballynure Old Graveyard	Council - Parks
Jordanstown Loughshore Park, Hazelbank Park & Gideon's Green	Council – Parks
Kilbride Cemetery	Council – Parks

Lilian Bland Park	Council – Parks
Mallusk Cemetery	Council – Parks
Mill Race Trail	Council – Parks
Newtownabbey Way	Council – Parks
Randalstown Riverside Walk	Council – Parks
Rashee Cemetery	Council – Parks
Sixmilewater Park	Council – Parks
Valley Park (V36 and Glas-na-Braden Glen)	Council – Parks
Wallace Park	Council – Parks
Crumlin Glen	Council – Parks
Threemilewater Park	Council – Parks
Whiteabbey Glen	Council – Parks
Clotworthy Courtyard at Antrim Castle Gardens	Community
Duneane Community Garden	Community
Cranfield Church and Holy Well	Community
Ballyeaston Church Ruin	Community
Elevation Randalstown	Community
Toome Linear Park	Community
The Sovereign Complex, Rathfern	Community
Monkstown Village Community Garden	Community
Neilsbrook Fold	Community
Monkstown Village Community Garden	Community
Maine Fold - Randalstown	Community
Sentry Hill Community Garden	Community

Proposed by Councillor Kelly
 Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

4.4 PK/BIO/019/VOL4 DEPARTMENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE CORRESPONDENCE – GREENWAY PROJECTS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members on recent correspondence from the Department for Infrastructure regarding proposed Greenways funding for the 2025–2026 and 2026–2027 financial years.

2. Background

Correspondence from the Department for Infrastructure's (DfI) Active Travel Team outlined upcoming grant funding opportunities for Greenway projects during the 2025–2026 and 2026–2027 financial years. The correspondence was circulated for Members' reference.

In recent years, Council Officers had worked collaboratively with DfI's Active Travel Team to advance a range of priority Greenway and Active Travel schemes across the Borough. This partnership had played a key role in progressing strategic infrastructure projects that promote sustainable transport and enhance community connectivity.

DfI was now offering funding for up to 50% of total capital costs, spread over two financial years. Eligible projects must incur at least 50% of expenditure by March 31, 2026, with the remainder in 202/26.

3. Difference between Active Travel and Greenway Projects

Both Active Travel and Greenway initiatives support walking, cycling and wheeling, but they were delivered through separate DfI programmes with different focuses. Active Travel funding supports urban and commuter routes such as cycle lanes, footways and crossings, usually led by DfI or in partnership with Councils.

Greenway funding supported longer-distance, traffic-free routes connecting towns and villages, typically led by Councils with DfI grant aid. In essence, Active Travel focuses on everyday transport, while Greenway funding supported recreational and inter-urban connectivity.

4. Active Travel and Greenway Projects in the Borough

Significant progress had been achieved on two strategic routes within the Borough. The Mallusk/Hightown to Gideon's Green Active Travel Route had emerged as a vital link within the Borough's expanding active travel network. Furthermore, funding had recently been secured to complete the final 400-metre section of path at Valley Park for this project and would largely complete the connection along the Mallusk/Hightown to Gideon's Green Route.

In parallel, work had continued on the Doagh to Larne Greenway. A major milestone in this project had been the recent completion of a new shared-use bridge at Memorial Park, Ballyclare, which had significantly improved accessibility and safety for both pedestrians and cyclists.

5. Key Issues

Due to ongoing land availability issues, particularly along the Doagh to Larne Greenway route, the project had been unable to progress. The required land agreements remain unresolved and were unlikely to be secured within the Department for Infrastructure's current funding timeframe. Given the strict deadlines for the 2025–2026 and 2026–2027 funding cycles, submitting an application now would carry a high risk of non-delivery. In addition, no other suitable or available land within the Borough had been identified to support a viable Greenways funding application at this time.

Proposed by Councillor Archibald-Brown
Seconded by Councillor Kelly and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION.

5 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

- 5.1** Members expressed their appreciation to Council staff for their efforts in response to Storm Amy. The Director of Parks and Leisure Operations advised that he would provide members with an update on the current status of the storm recovery.

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

- 5.2** Several Members condemned the recent act of vandalism at the Glengormley war memorial. The Director of Parks and Leisure advised that Officers were liaising with the PSNI regarding the incident and confirmed that he would review the monitoring hours of the CCTV in the area.

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

- 5.3** In response to a Member's query, the Director of Parks and Leisure Operations confirmed that the arrangements for Remembrance events would remain unchanged. He also agreed to verify that the floral displays for the event led by the British Legion in Whiteabbey were in place as planned.

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

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED 'IN CONFIDENCE

Proposed by Councillor Ward
Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed

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

ITEMS IN CONFIDENCE

- 6.1** **IN CONFIDENCE** WM/arc21/4/VOL11 arc21 JOINT COMMITTEE PAPERS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members on the August and September Joint Committee meetings.

2. Introduction

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

3. Previous Decisions of Council

All previous papers have been noted.

4. Main Report

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

- 28 August 2025
- 25 September 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



Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

6.2 **IN CONFIDENCE** L/LEI/BE/007 BALLYEARL SQUASH CLUB – LEASE RENEWAL

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the granting of a new 10-year lease to Ballyearl Squash Club for use of the licensed social club and associated facilities at Ballyearl Arts and Leisure Centre.

2. Background

Ballyearl Squash Club had a long-standing association with Ballyearl Arts and Leisure Centre, operating from the licensed social club premises within the building for a number of decades. The Club provided an important social and sporting outlet for its members, supporting participation in squash and related recreational activity within the local community.

The most recent formal lease was agreed in December 2009 for a 10-year term and expired in December 2019. That lease carried an annual rental of £ [REDACTED] and provided the Club with access to:

- the licensed social club area
- a storage facility
- kitchen provision, and
- toilet accommodation

Upon expiry of the lease, discussions regarding renewal coincided with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. In recognition of the significant restrictions placed on access and use of leisure facilities during this period, a temporary concession was applied, reducing the annual rental by 50%. This arrangement supported the Club's financial sustainability at a time when income generation opportunities were severely curtailed.

The concession remained in place until April 2025, when normal operations had resumed and the full assessed rental charge was reinstated.

3. Rates Valuation

A fresh valuation was carried out by Land and Property Services (LPS) in 2025. The assessment confirmed that the annual rental value for the leased premises remains at £ [REDACTED] per annum, with provision for a mid-term review after 5 years.

This valuation was consistent with the previous lease and demonstrates stability in the assessed rental market value of the facility.

4. Rationale for Renewal

The Club continued to play an active role in promoting squash and encouraging physical activity within the Borough. The presence of a dedicated social club facility not only supported Club members but also contributed to the wider offering at Ballyearl Arts and Leisure Centre by sustaining football and community engagement.

Renewal of the lease on the proposed terms would:

- Provide the Club with long-term security of tenure, enabling forward planning and investment in its activities
- Ensure continued occupation and maintenance of a key area within the Arts and Leisure Centre
- Maintain a stable rental income for the Council at a level independently assessed by LPS

- Reinforce the Council's commitment to supporting local sporting organisations and community-based leisure provision

5. Financial and Resource Implications

Approval of the lease would secure an annual income of £[REDACTED], payable by Ballyearl Squash Club, subject to review in year 5 of the 10-year term. No additional Council resources were required beyond standard lease management and oversight.

The Director of Parks and Leisure Operations undertook to liaise with the Director of Community Development and to update Members on any progress regarding the proposed future of Ballyearl Theatre.

Proposed by Alderman Bradley
Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed that

approval be granted of a new 10-year lease to Ballyearl Squash Club for the licensed social club at Ballyearl Arts and Leisure Centre, at an annual rental of £[REDACTED], subject to review in 5 years.

ACTION BY: Glenda James, Parks and Leisure Administration Manager / Matt McDowell, Director of Parks and Leisure Operations

6.3 **IN CONFIDENCE** FI/PRO/TEN/611 **PROCUREMENT FOR THE PROVISION OF PEST CONTROL SERVICES**

CONTRACT PERIOD 1 NOVEMBER 2025 – 31 OCTOBER 2028 WITH AN OPTION TO EXTEND FOR UP TO A FURTHER 24 MONTHS, SUBJECT TO PERFORMANCE AND REVIEW

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to obtain approval for the appointment of a suitably qualified and experienced organisation to provide pest control services across the Council's estate.

2. Introduction/Background

The Council's Estate Services section oversee the contract management of pest control across sites throughout the Borough, including civic buildings, leisure centres, community centres, parks, and cemeteries. The appointed Contractor would be responsible for carrying out routine inspections and maintenance, as well as providing a reactive response to any potential infestation incidents. The annual expenditure for this contract was approximately £[REDACTED], which was contained within the approved budgets for 2025/2026.

3. Procurement Process

This tender was procured in line with good practice laid out in the Procurement Act 2023. The opportunity was made available on eSourcingNI on 26 August 2025.

Three tender responses were opened via the eSourcingNI Portal on 12 September 2025 and referred to the evaluation panel for assessment. The tenders were evaluated on a two-stage basis as follows:

STAGE 1 – SELECTION STAGE

The tenders were evaluated on a pass/fail basis for:

- tenderer's professional conduct
- economic and financial standing
- management systems and practices
- previous relevant experience
- technical capacity and capability
- declarations and form of tender

The tenders met the requirements of Stage 1 of the evaluation process and proceeded to Stage 2.

STAGE 2 – AWARD STAGE

Sub-Stage 1 – Technical Assessment

The tenders were evaluated on a pass/fail basis for:

- compliance with the specification.

The tenders met the requirements of this stage and proceeded to the next stage of evaluation.

Sub-Stage 2 – Quality & Commercial Assessment

The tenders were evaluated on the basis of:

- implementation plan (15%),
- capacity and capability to deliver (15%)
- contract management and performance monitoring (15%)
- cost (55%)

One tenderer failed to meet the quality threshold and did not proceed further in the evaluation. The remaining tenderers' quality scores exceeded the threshold for the qualitative criteria and officers were content that the tenderers could deliver a high-quality contract in accordance with all aspects of the specification. Full details of the evaluation methodology were circulated.

The recommendation is as follows:

Supplier	Quality Assessment (out of 45%)	Cost Assessment (out of 55%)	Total % Score	Estimated Total Cost (£) (excl. VAT)
Vergo Pest Management Ltd	██████	██████	██████	██████

Proposed by Councillor Kelly
 Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed that

having achieved a score of ██████ Vergo Pest Management Ltd be appointed to provide pest control services at the tendered rates for the period of 1 November 2025 – 31 October 2028, with an option to extend for up to a further 24 months, subject to performance and review.

ACTION BY: Melissa Kenning, Procurement Manager

6.4 IN CONFIDENCE CE/GEN/089 ALL-PARTY GROUP ON CLIMATE ACTION – FACILITATING NATURAL, LOW-CARBON AND SUSTAINABLE BURIAL OPTIONS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek approval for the response to the All-Party Group on Climate Action, regarding the facilitation of low-carbon and environmentally sustainable burial options within the Borough.

2. Background

Members were reminded that correspondence from the All-Party Group on Climate Action at the Northern Ireland Assembly was received at last month's meeting of the Operational Committee.

The correspondence, circulated for Members' reference, outlined the environmental impacts associated with traditional burial and cremation practices, including carbon emissions, chemical pollution, and long-term land use.

The All-Party Group noted a growing public interest in more sustainable alternatives, such as natural (green) burials and tree pod interments. These environmentally conscious options had already been implemented in various parts of the UK.

3. Considerations

The All-Party Group on Climate Action had formally requested that all Councils consider and respond to the following matters as part of their ongoing efforts to promote environmentally sustainable practices in relation to burial and, to include:

- Examine the feasibility of providing sustainable burial options within existing or new cemeteries, including designated natural burial grounds or woodland burial areas
- Report back to the All-Party Group on Climate Action if there were any legislative, planning, infrastructure, or regulatory barriers to delivering such options locally.

4. Key Issues and Response

Having reviewed the matters raised in the correspondence, Officers had prepared a draft response for Members' consideration and approval. This response was (circulated) for reference and summarised below.

i. Feasibility of providing sustainable burial options

There was currently no provision for natural or green burials within cemeteries managed by Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council. However, the Council was actively engaged in reviewing potential land options for the development of a new cemetery within the Borough.

As part of this process, the inclusion of sustainable burial alternatives, such as natural burial areas or woodland interment spaces, may be considered within the design and planning of any new site. The feasibility of incorporating such options would be subject to compliance with all relevant statutory and regulatory requirements, including planning, environmental, and public health legislation.

Any decision to provide natural burial facilities would also likely involve engagement with the local community, potentially through a public consultation process, to assess levels of public interest and support for these environmentally conscious alternatives.

ii. Legislative, planning, and regulatory considerations

Councils currently operated under the Burial Grounds Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1992, which remains the principal legislation governing burial practices. The development of sustainable burial options, such as natural or woodland burial grounds, is subject to a range of statutory planning requirements. These included detailed assessments of land use, ground conditions, drainage, and potential environmental impacts to ensure suitability and long-term sustainability.

In addition, any proposed site must fully comply with existing public health standards and relevant burial legislation. This ensured that both environmental protections and public health safeguards were maintained throughout the planning and operational phases.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour

Seconded by Councillor Kelly and agreed that

Members approve the proposed response to the All-Party Group on Climate Action, regarding the facilitation of low-carbon and environmentally sustainable burial options within the Borough.

ACTION BY: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

6.5 IN CONFIDENCE L/GEN/079 ABBEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE 3G PITCH AND CHANGING FACILITIES

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek approval on the preferred design specification of Option 1 – a traditional design, at an estimated cost of £[REDACTED], for the construction of the changing facilities at the Abbey Community College 3G pitch.

2. Background

Members were reminded that Council previously approved the sale of land at Threemilewater Playing Pitches to the Education Authority (EA) for £1.1 million to facilitate the development of the new Abbey Community College campus. The sale was completed on 1 April 2025.

To compensate for the loss of playing facilities, it was agreed that the 3G pitch within the new campus would be available for Council use outside school hours. The Council also retained adjoining land to provide dedicated changing facilities. As the EA's plans did not include floodlighting (school use being restricted to daylight hours), the Council would be required to install lighting to enable evening use. Encouragingly, 100% funding for the floodlights was looking favourable through Sport NI's *Your School, Your Club* funding programme.

Officers had previously identified the opportunity to upgrade the facility to Intermediate Football standard through modest design enhancements, particularly relating to changing room size, pitch access, and fencing. These improvements would enable St Mary's Football Club, who had recently achieved Intermediate League status, to use the facility as their home ground for competitive matches. This proposal also aligned with the Council's long-standing commitment to assist St Mary's in securing a suitable home pitch.

The original aim was to align the construction programme for the changing facilities with that of the 3G pitch, which was scheduled for completion in Spring 2026. This coordinated approach would enable efficient delivery and help minimise disruption.

3. Previous Decisions of Council

Members were also reminded that in April 2025, Council approved the following:

- i. The progression of the project to Stage 1 of the Capital Programme, including the development of an Outline Business Case (OBC); and
- ii. An allocation of £[REDACTED] for design services to be delivered in conjunction with the EA's construction process.

Subsequently, in June 2025, Council approved progression to Stage 2 of the Capital Programme, which encompassed the development and completion of the Final Business Case, as well as detailed design, planning, and procurement activities.

At Stage 1, the OBC estimated the cost of changing facilities at approximately £[REDACTED]. However, following further design development and consultation with the Integrated Consultancy Team (ICT), revised cost estimates had been received which were significantly higher than initially anticipated, reflecting updated design requirements and inflationary pressures within the construction market.

4. Design Specification Options

The ICT had provided three design specification options for the changing facilities, all of which meet the Irish Football Association (IFA) intermediate standards relating to changing facilities.

Option 1 – Traditional (Est. £[REDACTED])

A blockwork/steel structure constructed using the same materials and design details as the new Abbey Community College. Delivered by EA's contractor who is currently on site, this approach offers high durability, energy efficiency, minimal maintenance, and long-term cost certainty, supported by a 50-year warranty on design elements. Works could commence promptly with no access issues, and a planning submission was currently underway. Disadvantages included higher preliminary costs and potential weather-related delays.

Option 2 – Modular (Est. £[REDACTED])

A steel-framed modular structure fabricated off-site, allowing for rapid construction and reduced on-site supervision. This option included a 30-year structural warranty and a 5-year product warranty. However, it presented several challenges, including higher running and maintenance costs, potential planning constraints, and restricted site access. There would also be a delay between completion of the pitch and construction of the pavilion, as the EA's contractor would not permit external contractors to access the site during their works for health, safety, and liability reasons. Construction of the pavilion could therefore only commence after completion of the EA's works. In addition, access to the Council-owned land at this stage would be challenging, as new entrances would be required from Doagh Road to avoid impacting the Education Authority's land and completed works.

Option 3 – Precast (Est. £[REDACTED])

A precast modular off-site package delivered to a turnkey standard. Also delivered by EA's contractor, this option minimised on-site supervision,

scaffolding, and disruption, while offering long-term durability, energy efficiency, and a 60-year warranty. Access was straightforward, and the controlled factory production process provided a high degree of cost certainty. However, as the structure would need to be fabricated off-site, this option introduced a delay to the overall programme. Additional limitations include potential implications for planning determination, external finishes that would not fully match the new school, and reduced flexibility for future expansion.

5. Financial Implications

All options exceeded the original OBC estimate of £[REDACTED], reflecting updated design requirements and inflationary pressures within the construction market. To provide additional assurance, Officers had commissioned two independent consultants to review and verify the cost estimates for Option 1.

The Council's Finance Section had confirmed that, in the context of the £1.1 million capital receipt from the land sale for the new Abbey Community College campus, all three options were considered affordable.

6. Next Steps

Following approval of the design specification, Officers would instruct the ICT to undertake a detailed final financial appraisal prior to progressing to Stage 3 of the Council's Capital Programme. This would inform the completion of the Final Business Case and support the investment decision to be considered for approval by Members at that time.

The Director of Parks and Leisure Operations agreed to liaise with the Council's Capital Development section and provide clarification on the reasons for the significant increase in costs for the changing facility compared to the initial Outline Business Case.

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

approval be granted to proceed with the design specification of Option 1 – a traditional design, at an estimated cost of £[REDACTED], for the construction of the changing facilities at the Abbey Community College 3G pitch.

ACTION BY: Deaglan O'Hagan, Head of Leisure Operations / Matt McDowell, Director of Parks and Leisure Operations

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 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 7.42pm.

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.