



24 June 2026

To: Each Member of the Council

Dear Member

MEETING OF ANTRIM AND NEWTOWNABBEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

A meeting of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council will be held in the **Council Chamber, Mossley Mill** on **Monday 29 June 2026** at **6.30 pm**.

You are requested to attend.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Baker".

Richard Baker, GM MSc
Chief Executive, Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council

For any queries please contact Member Services:

Tel: 028 9448 1301/028 9034 0107 memberservices@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk

AGENDA

- 1 Bible Reading and Prayer (In accordance with Standing Orders, Members are not required to attend for this part of the meeting and, following this part of the meeting, Members outside the Chamber will be called to the meeting).
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Declarations of Interest
- 4 To take as read and confirm the minutes of the proceedings of the Council Meeting of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council held on Tuesday 26 May 2026, a copy of which is **enclosed**.
- 5 To take as read and confirm the minutes of the proceedings of the Annual Meeting of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council held on Monday 1 June 2026 a copy of which is **enclosed**.
- 6 To approve the minutes of the proceedings of the Operations Committee Meeting of Monday 8 June 2026, a copy of which is **enclosed**.
- 7 To approve the minutes of the proceedings of the Community Development Committee Meeting of Monday 15 June 2026, a copy of which is **enclosed**.
- 8 To approve the minutes of the proceedings of the Policy and Governance Committee Meeting of Tuesday 16 June 2026, a copy of which is **enclosed**.
- 9(a) To take as read and confirm the Part 1 of the minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee Meeting held on Monday 22 June 2026, a copy of which is **enclosed**.
- 9(b) To approve Part 2 of the minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee Meeting held on Monday 22 June 2026, a copy of which is **enclosed**.
- 10 To approve the minutes of the proceedings of the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting of **Tuesday 23 June** 2026, a copy of which is **to follow**.
- 11 NOTICE OF MOTION
- 12 ITEMS FOR DECISION
 - 12.1 Shaping Sustainable Places Programme
 - 12.2 Ask Capital Grant Programme Grant Awards
 - 12.3 Business Digitisation Programme Grant Awards
 - 12.4 Consultation on the Local Growth Fund In Northern Ireland 2026-2029

13 ITEM FOR NOTING

- 13.1 Review of the Effectiveness of the Audit and Risk Committee and Annual Report 2025/26

14 ITEMS IN CONFIDENCE

- 14.1 Tender for the Supply, Stock and Maintenance of Vending Machines at Leisure Centres
- 14.2 Ballyclare Rugby Club – The Cloughan Project
- 14.3 Appointment of the Integrated Consultant Team for the Small Areas Revitalisation Programme
- 14.4 Contract Variation Request for Small Settlements Programme Environmental Improvement Scheme
- 14.5 Lifecycle Projects
- 14.6 Legal Update

11 MOTION

Proposed by Councillor O'Hagan
Seconded by Councillor Logue

"Council recognises the 78th Anniversary of the National Health Service on the 5th July 2026 and places on record its sincere appreciation for all the health and social care workers across Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough.

Members acknowledge the dedication, professionalism and compassion of health and social care staff who continue to deliver compassionate care despite facing unprecedented demand and workforce challenges. Council also recognises the contribution made by those who have come from other countries, and for whom this borough is home. They are valued members of our workforce and our communities.

Accordingly, Council agrees to

- a) Place on record its thanks and appreciation to all health and social care workers serving in our borough
- b) Write to the Northern Health & Social Care Trust and convey councils continued gratitude and support for their workforce
- c) Mark the NHS Anniversary through civic message celebrating the contribution of the health & Social care workers across the borough".

12 ITEMS FOR DECISION

12.1 ED/REG/094 SHAPING SUSTAINABLE PLACES PROGRAMME

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update Members on correspondence received from the Department for Communities (DfC) in relation to the outcome of their public consultation process in respect of the Shaping Sustainable Places Programme and to seek approval to commence the development of the Council's Shaping Sustainable Places Action Plan.

2. Introduction

Members will be aware that the Department for Communities (DfC) in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) are jointly developing a new regeneration programme entitled Shaping Sustainable Places.

Members were advised in September 2025 of the public consultation process initiated by DfC during June to August 2025 seeking views from Stakeholders on the proposed programme. Members acknowledged the response to the consultation developed by Officers over the summer which was submitted in September 2025.

As set out in the consultation documentation issued at the time, Shaping Sustainable Places aims to create a flagship programme of interventions to address the decline in village, town and city centres. The Departments anticipate that through more strategic place-based interventions, the Programme will contribute to stimulating places and catalysing private sector activity to further protect them. It is hoped that Shaping Sustainable Places lays the foundation for new ways of delivering regeneration outcomes.

The Shaping Sustainable Places Programme will predominantly be a capital scheme which focuses on key capital projects aimed at improving village, town and city centre environments and which may include interventions such as tackling dereliction and vacancy, enhancing public realm, improving physical connectivity, improving safety and security etc. From the initial programme overview, this initiative has four key objectives:

- To improve the places, we love by ensuring they are sustainable into the future to create places where people want to live, work, invest and visit.
- To prioritise the safety, health and wellbeing of people through regeneration and creation of people-centred accessible and inclusive spaces.
- To shape places to become more resilient to the risks and impacts of climate change
- To work collaboratively across the departments and through Local Councils, we will be able to deliver a programme that is greater than the sum of its parts.

3. Key Issues

Officers are in receipt of correspondence issued by DfC on 1 May 2026 providing an update on the outcome of the public consultation process in terms of the production of a consultation report and summary document. This document is (enclosed).

Members will note from the summary within the document that the Departments have reported on the key findings in that there is broad support for the direction of travel in respect of the Programme, and general support for its component parts in terms of the key placemaking approach. Members will also note specific details within the consultation report and summary in respect of the responses received, and how these are helping to shape the development of the programme.

The report sets out the next steps by DfC in terms of finalising the programme design and business case, publishing the funding and prioritisation approach, providing practical delivery guidance to Councils and other key matters. DfC anticipate that between the period Spring-Autumn 2026, that they will secure Executive approval, publish the allocation model and delivery guidance as well as identify early projects. Whilst there is currently no specific date for a formal programme launch, it is anticipated that it will take place further into the current financial year.

In the meantime, Officers continue to engage with DfC and have attended a recent session on the 3 June 2026 designed for local authorities to continue to feed into the programme design process.

At the workshop it was clear that with the anticipated programme launch later this year local Councils now needed to prepare for the programme by undertaking the development of a new Action Plan for the Shaping Sustainable Places programme that considers the areas and projects which could be supported through the programme in Antrim and Newtownabbey. DfC would like this action planning process to be largely complete by the end of the current financial year and given the need for large scale engagement with Members, businesses and residents it is timely to get this work underway.

The Department has made clear that allocations to the Council will be based upon a costed action plan and therefore to ensure maximum draw down of funding for the Borough the action plan needs to be robust and evidence based.

The cost of the development of the action plan will have to be met by the Council in the first instance but will be recoverable from DfC in the Year 1 allocation providing it does not exceed 4.75% of the Council's total 10-year allocation.

Considering this indicative timeline, approval is sought to undertake a procurement exercise for suitable consultancy support to begin the development of the action planning process with a further report to be presented in due course. It is expected that the cost will be in the region of

£60,000, which will be recovered from the Department in full in due course. In order to meet the anticipated timeframe for the action plan development, the cost will have to be met from the Economic Development budget 2026/27 in the first instance. Whilst this wasn't accounted for in the estimates process, Officers are content that through effective budget management this expenditure can be accommodated.

4. Financial Implications

Members will note that as part of the overall proposed Central Government funding package of £150m across Northern Ireland over the next ten years. There is a 10% match funding requirement from Councils over the same period which will bring the total funding envelope to £165m.

Whilst exact allocations are yet to be confirmed, the potential average Council allocation will likely be in the region of £11-13m over the ten years meaning an expected Council contribution of between £1.1m - £1.3m, roughly up to £130,000 per year for the next ten years.

These figures have been provided as a purely illustrative estimate at this stage to inform financial planning.

Members should also note that this is a capital programme focusing on larger scale projects in villages and towns across the Borough. From engagement with DfC officials, it is expected that the programme will be administered and solely delivered by Councils in addition to the business-as-usual funding provided by DfC for town centre regeneration. In light of this, additional staff resources in both Economic Development and Capital Development may be required, and it is unclear at this time whether the salaries of these posts could be considered as part of the Council's match funding contribution to the programme.

5. Summary

The Department of Communities is bringing forward a new £165m Shaping Sustainable Places Programme over the next 10 years. This will be delivered and administered by the Councils and could be worth around £13m to each local authority. In order to progress this project an evidence-based Action Plan needs to be developed that identifies areas and projects that could be funded to maximise impact and meet the overall objectives.

6. Recommendation

It is recommended that Members:

- a) Note the update on the Shaping Sustainable Places programme; and**
- b) Approve the procurement of support to assist with the development of the Council's Shaping Sustainable Places Action Plan at an estimated cost of £60,000.**

Prepared and Agreed by: Steven Norris, Deputy Director of Regeneration and Infrastructure and Michael McKenna, Deputy Director of Investment and Business Development

Approved by: Majella McAlister, Director of Economic Development and Planning.

12.2 ED/DI/005 ASK CAPITAL GRANT PROGRAMME GRANT AWARDS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Members approval for the award of five grants under the ASK Capital Grant Programme.

2. Background

The ASK (Advice, Skills and Knowledge) Mentoring Programme was launched in September 2025 and supports local businesses through tailored one-to-one mentoring and business development support.

Through the programme businesses can access up to 10 hours of mentoring support across a range of areas such as Advanced Digital Technologies, Digital Infrastructure & Strategy, Innovation & Product Development, Business Strategy and Planning and Sales & Marketing.

To support the implementation of mentor-led recommendations, the Council introduced the ASK Capital Grant Programme, which provides eligible businesses with grant assistance towards capital investment projects.

Following completion of mentoring eligible businesses may be invited to apply for an 80% funded capital grant of up to £1,500 to support investment in software, systems, equipment and other innovation-enabling technologies aligned with Economic Development objectives.

3. Previous Council Decision

In May 2026, Members approved the extension of the Ask Capital Grant Programme, with a budget allocation of £75,000 for the 2026/27 financial year.

4. Capital Grant Applications Received

Members are advised that during the period 1 April 2026 to 8 June 2026 a total of five applications were received and assessed by officers, with £6,687.83 being recommended for approval, subject to the receipt of all relevant supporting documentation. Grant awards are set out in the table **enclosed**.

5. Financial Position

The overall ASK Capital Grant Programme budget for 2026/27 is £75,000. To date, £17,713.00 has been awarded. Should Members approve the five grant recommendations within this report the remaining programme budget would be £50,599.00.

6. Summary

This report makes five grant recommendations under the ASK Capital Grant Programme for the period 1 April 2026 to 8 June 2026, subject to the receipt of all relevant supporting documentation.

7. Recommendation

It is recommended that Members approve the five grant awards totalling £6,687.83 to the successful applicants under the ASK Capital Grant Programme, subject to the receipt of all relevant supporting documentation.

Prepared by: Natasha Donald, Economic Development Manager

Agreed by: Steven Norris, Deputy Director of Infrastructure and Regeneration

Approved by: Majella McAlister, Director of Economic Development and Planning

12.3 ED/ED/313 BUSINESS DIGITISATION PROGRAMME GRANT AWARDS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Members approval for the award of 15 grants under Call 2 of the Local Economic Partnership (LEP) Business Digitisation Programme.

2. Introduction / Background

The Business Digitisation Programme is one of a number of projects being delivered through the Council's three-year Local Economic Partnership (LEP) Action Plan, funded by the Department for the Economy (DfE). The overall LEP Action Plan has a total budget allocation of £2,868,000. The Business Digitisation Programme provides grant assistance to micro, small and medium-sized businesses to invest in digital technologies, supporting improvements in productivity, operational efficiency and competitiveness.

Eligible businesses can apply for a grant of up to £5,000.00, at a grant rate of 80%.

3. Applications Received

Members are advised that for the period 25 March 2026 – 8 May 2026, 17 applications were received and assessed by an assessment panel, with 15 achieving the required pass threshold. The total value of grant funding recommended for approval is £57,668.95. Grant awards are set out in the table **enclosed**.

4. Financial Position

The overall budget allocated to the Business Digitisation Programme is £200,000. To date £38,143.42 has been awarded under Call 1 of the Programme. Should Members approve the 15 grant recommendations (enclosed) under Call 2, the remaining programme budget would be £104,187.63.

5. Summary

This report makes 15 grant recommendations under Call 2 of the Local Economic Partnership (LEP) Business Digitisation Programme, subject to receipt of all relevant documentation.

6. Recommendation

It is recommended that Members approve the 15 grant awards totalling £57,668.95 to the successful applicants under Call 2 of Business Digitisation Programme, subject to receipt of all relevant documentation.

Prepared by: Conor Steele, Local Economic Partnership Officer

Agreed by: Steven Norris, Deputy Director of Regeneration and Infrastructure

Approved by: Majella McAlister, Director of Economic Development, Planning

12.4 ED/GEN/018 CONSULTATION ON THE LOCAL GROWTH FUND IN NORTHERN IRELAND 2026-2029

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update members on the public consultation in relation to the Local Growth Fund and retrospectively approve the Officers' response provided by the deadline of 26th June.

2. Introduction/Background

The UK Government's Spending Review for 2025 announced a new targeted approach to local growth funding that is designed to drive economic growth across the United Kingdom. The Local Growth Fund (LGF) will support long-term investment programmes aimed at delivering sustained growth throughout Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The UK Government has committed £129 million over the next three years to support this growth and the LGF represents significant commitment, providing targeted investment to address structural barriers to growth whilst capitalising on opportunities.

The consultation seeks views on the proposed strategic framework for the fund helping to shape how this investment is directed to maximise impact for the Northern Ireland economy. The deadline for responses was 26 June 2026.

3. Previous Decision of Council

No previous decision

4. Key actions

Given the deadline of 26th June, Officers have provided a corporate response to the UK Government's Public Consultation (**enclosed**). The response is fundamentally based around the objectives set out in the Council's Corporate Plan 2024-2030.

5. Financial Position

No financial implications.

6. Recommendation

It is recommended that Members approve the draft response retrospectively.

Prepared by: Stewart McCormack, Investment Officer

Agreed by: Steven Norris, Deputy Director of Regeneration and Infrastructure and Michael McKenna, Deputy Director of Investment and Business Development

Approved by: Majella McAlister, Director of Economic Development and Planning

13 ITEM FOR NOTING

13.1 FI/AUD/02 REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE AND ANNUAL REPORT 2025/26

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend to Members to note the Review of the Effectiveness of the Audit and Risk Committee and the Committee's Annual Report for 2025/26.

2. Introduction / Background

Members are advised that Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Audit Committee – Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police 2022, places a requirement on Audit Committees to "Report regularly on their work, and at least annually report an assessment of their performance".

3. Key Points

In February 2025, Members of the Audit and Risk Committee reviewed the Committee's performance throughout 2025/26, through the completion of the 'Self-Assessment of Good Practice' and the 'Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Audit Committee' checklists.

The results (enclosed) of this review were agreed by the Audit and Risk Committee at their meeting in March 2026.

The Audit and Risk Committee has also prepared an Annual Report (enclosed) which was agreed by Members at the Audit and Risk Committee in June 2026.

This report outlines the Audit and Risk Committee's activities during 2025/26 and how the Committee has discharged its roles and responsibilities as set out in the Audit and Risk Committee Terms of Reference.

4. Recommendation

That Council notes the Review of the Effectiveness of the Audit and Risk Committee and the Committee's Annual Report for 2025/26.

Prepared by: Paul Caulcutt, Head of Internal Audit

Approved by: John Balmer, Director of Finance