



**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE HELD
AT ANTRIM CIVIC CENTRE ON MONDAY 2 OCTOBER 2023 AT 6.30 PM**

- In the Chair** : Councillor J Burbank
- Committee Members
(In person)** : Aldermen – L Clarke and J Smyth
Councillors – AM Logue, H Magill, E McLaughlin,
V McWilliam, M Ní Chonghaile and M Stewart
- Committee Members
(Remote)** : Alderman P Bradley
Councillors – R Foster, J Gilmour, A McAuley and
L O'Hagan
- Non Committee
Members
(In person)** : Councillor R Lynch
- Non Committee
Members:
(Remote)** : Councillors – A Bennington and B Webb
- Officers Present** : Director of Sustainability – M Lavery
Head of Environmental Health & Wellbeing – C Kelly
Head of Leisure Operations – D O'Hagan
Head of Property Services (Interim) – D Blair
ICT Systems Support Officer – C Bell
Member Services Manager – A Duffy
Member Services Officer – C McIntyre

CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

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

1 APOLOGIES

Councillor L Smyth
Director of Parks & Leisure - M McDowell

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

3 INTRODUCTION OF NEW STAFF

None

4.1 WM/WM/040 DRAFT RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY OBLIGATIONS (PACKAGING AND PACKAGING WASTE) REGULATIONS [2024]

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), in partnership with Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), Welsh Government and Scottish Government have released draft Producer Responsibility Obligations Regulations, for consultation. These regulations implement the changes from previous consultation exercises for the introduction of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR).

Whilst a 12 month deferral of the implementation of EPR for packaging payments has been put in place, the devolved administrations have sought views on the draft text to ensure that the draft Regulations achieve the policy intentions of creating clear and operationally feasible obligations.

The government have sought views mainly on:

- the clarity on the definitions of the responsibilities placed on producers, exporters, reprocessors, compliance schemes, the Scheme Administrator, and the regulators, the key considerations for local authorities and the identification of any points of ambiguity;
- if the draft Regulations are clear and whether the Regulations create obvious and understandable obligations to the Council;
- the feasibility of the operational processes required to meet the obligations as set out in the draft Regulations as they apply to the Council;
- the completeness of the draft Regulations as the basis for the implementation of EPR for packaging as per the confirmed policy intent, and;
- any unintended consequences of the draft Regulations as a whole.

The draft consultation can be found at: [Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging \(defra.gov.uk\)](https://www.defra.gov.uk/extended-producer-responsibility-for-packaging). The response is due on 9 October 2023.

Sections of the consultation that are most relevant to local authorities include:

- **Provision of recycling information and labelling (Refer: draft Regulations Part 2, Chapter 2).** The draft Regulations introduce a single, UK-wide approach to packaging labelling. Producers that are brand owners' packer/fillers and importers must label primary and shipment packaging using the appropriate 'Recycle Now' mark and wording (Recycle or Do Not Recycle). This would provide consumers with clear and consistent information on what packaging they can and cannot recycle.

- **Scheme Administrator calculation of producer disposal and administration fees (Refer: draft Regulations, Part 6, Chapter 2).** The Scheme Administrator would be required to calculate producer fees based on the amount and type of household packaging the producer had supplied and its cost of disposal, together with scheme administrator rates included. The Scheme Administrator is responsible for calculating producer disposal fees which would cover local authority household packaging waste and binned packaging waste disposal costs, and Scheme Administrator public information costs.
- **Scheme Administrator's calculation of disposal costs and scheme administrator costs to be recovered from producers (Refer: draft Regulations, Part 6, Chapter 3 (disposal costs), Chapter 4 (Scheme Administrator costs) and Chapter 5 (payments to relevant authorities)).** The draft regulations do not place any direct obligations on local authorities as primary powers do not allow for this. However, the draft Regulations limit payments to local authorities to the costs of "efficient" and "effective" packaging waste management services, protecting producers from excessive and unfair costs. The Scheme Administrator (SA) must assess local authority costs in managing household packaging waste from Year 1.

Due to the technical and legal nature of the draft regulations, Council had drafted a response in line with the LARAC (Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee) policy team who represent local authorities in all four devolved administrations. A copy of the draft response was circulated.

The Director of Sustainability responded to a Member confirming details of the new Scheme Administrator and the scope of the responsibility/cost for disposal of packaging. He advised that Council's response was developed with input from the views of arc21 and LARAC.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
 Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed that

the draft response to the Consultation on the Draft Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging and Packaging Waste) Regulations [2024] be approved.

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

5 ITEMS FOR NOTING

5.1 EH/PHWB/015 MULTI AGENCY HOARDING PROTOCOL TRAINING

Members were reminded that the Antrim and Newtownabbey Multi-Agency Support Hub was a partnership of statutory services working together to enhance the well-being of vulnerable individuals. This partnership had been chaired by and administered through the Antrim and Newtownabbey Policing and Community Safety Partnership.

Environmental Health represent Council on the Antrim and Newtownabbey Multi-Agency Support Hub and had noted the prevalence of hoarding cases throughout the Hub's activities. Consequently, Environmental Health within the Support Hub had worked collaboratively to create Northern Ireland's sole multi agency Hoarding Protocol. Additionally, Environmental Health had established a working partnership with the business 'Respect my Stuff', which supports and improves the safety and quality of life of individuals dealing with hoarding tendencies or living in extreme cluttered environments.

To ensure the effective implementation of the Hoarding Protocol, a multi-agency training day had been organised for 25 October 2023, at Mossley Mill. Invitations to attend this event had been extended to all representative organisations from the Antrim and Newtownabbey Multi-Agency Support Hub. Furthermore, invitations were also being shared with the Regional Multi-Agency Support Hub steering group and to the other ten Councils within Northern Ireland.

Mr Jack Moore, Director of Respect my Stuff, would lead the training on hoarding, providing insights into the motivations behind hoarding behaviours. Local level representatives from Environmental Health and other Support Hub partners would also present anonymised case studies, to demonstrate how the protocol would work in practice in real life situations.

This event marked the official launch of the Multi-Agency Hoarding Protocol and it was hoped that through the Regional Multi-Agency Support Hub, this Protocol would be adopted on a regional scale. This Protocol aimed to significantly 'Make a Difference' by improving responses to and interventions for hoarding cases throughout the Borough, making a tangible difference in addressing the issue.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Alderman Clarke and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.2 EH/GEN/010 SCHEME OF EMERGENCY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PODCAST FOR MEMBERS

Members were reminded of the Scheme of Emergency Financial Assistance (SEFA), which was activated by the Minister for the Department of Communities (DfC) in response to instances of flooding.

Frequently residents reach out to Members and would seek information about the eligibility criteria for making a claim under this scheme when their homes had been affected by flooding.

To provide assistance on when flood damage to homes fell within the Scheme's criteria, an informative podcast had been created by Environmental Health for Members which could be accessed using Flux at the following

location:

Members Information/Emergency Information and Contacts/Scheme of Emergency Financial Assistance Podcast-Sept 23

As outlined in the podcast, adherence to the Scheme's criteria was essential for DfC to reimburse Council expenditure incurred when responding to the needs of householders.

The immediate payment of £1,000 to eligible householders who had suffered severe inconvenience was aimed at swiftly aiding the recovery process after a flooding incident. The monies were initially paid by Council and then reimbursed by DfC, but only if the scheme criteria had been met.

Further details on The Scheme of Emergency Financial Assistance, could be accessed by contacting the Environmental Health section or via:

<https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/residents/residents-community-information/community-advice/extreme-weather/flooding/>.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth

Seconded by Alderman Clarke and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.3 EH/EHS/CP/004 TOBACCO TEST PURCHASE EXERCISE - APRIL AND AUGUST 2023

Members were reminded that local authorities in Northern Ireland had a statutory duty to enforce the legislation relating to the sale of certain age-restricted products such as cigarettes and tobacco products. The Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 make it an offence to supply cigarettes or tobacco products to any person under the age of 18.

From 1 February 2022, in Northern Ireland, it became an offence under The Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 to sell nicotine inhaling products to persons under the age of 18. A 'nicotine inhaling product' means a nicotine inhaling device (used to inhale nicotine through a mouth piece), nicotine cartridge (contains nicotine and forms part of a nicotine inhaling device) or nicotine refill substance (generally known as e-liquid). Nicotine inhaling devices are commonly referred to as 'e-cigarettes' and the law covers both disposable and rechargeable types. Nicotine inhaling products would include vapes although some vapes do not include tobacco.

The Public Health Agency fund the employment of Tobacco Control Officers (TCO's) who work on behalf of District Councils in Northern Ireland to promote compliance with tobacco control legislation and to provide advice on compliance.

Throughout the year, TCO's in each Council area would be required to carry

out a minimum of 50 visits to retailers of tobacco/vaping products, including test purchases, to verify compliance with age restricted sale legislation. These test purchasing exercises, conducted in April and August of this year, were also used as an opportunity assess compliance with the new regulations which introduced an age limit of 18 for the purchase of nicotine inhaling products.

An advisory letter explaining the requirements for both sets of regulations was sent to 276 premises early in 2023. Prior to the test purchase visits, two Tobacco Control Officers also conducted advisory visits to 225 businesses that sold age restricted products, to assist business owners in complying with the regulations.

The test purchasing exercises were conducted over two days, one in April and one in August. The TCO's visited 30 retailers in the Borough, accompanied by a young person aged under 18 years who attempted to purchase either tobacco products or nicotine inhaling products.

	Tobacco Retailers visited	Nicotine Inhaling Product Retailers visited	Result of test purchase	Follow up action
Test Purchase	13	17	All retailers passed – no sales or displays.	Letters to retailers, advising the result as a 'Pass'.

The test purchase exercises were the first two in a series of planned test purchase exercises to be carried out in 2023/2024, during which at least 50 premises in total would undergo test purchasing for age restricted products.

A Tobacco Awareness Programme, which was an interactive programme developed by Mid and East Antrim Council on behalf of the Council and Causeway Coast and Glens Council, had been made accessible to both major and independent tobacco retailers across the Borough. Retailers could utilise this programme to monitor staff awareness and their understanding of the practical aspects relating to preventing off sales of age restricted products to those under the age of 18.

A Member's query was addressed by the Head of Environmental Health and Wellbeing with the frequency and rotational testing across all retailers within the Borough outlined and it was stated that this was part of the annual testing programme to meet the targets set by the Public Health Agency.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
 Seconded by Alderman Clarke and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.4 EH/PHWB/002 HOME SAFETY EVENT AND ELECTRIC BLANKET SWAP

Members were reminded that one of the key roles of Environmental Health's Home Accident Prevention Officer was to reduce the number of home accidents.

As winter approached, many households would turn to electric blankets for night-time warmth. However, in the United Kingdom the Fire Service estimated that unsafe electric blankets caused over 5,000 home fires each year (fireservice.co.uk).

Electric Blankets could pose safety risks that if unchecked could increase the likelihood of fires. The Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service recommended replacing electric blankets once they reached 10 years old and staying vigilant for the following danger signs:

- Scorch marks or discolouration areas on the fabric.
- Worn or frayed fabric, or visible wires.
- Damage to the power cable between the plug and the blanket's controller or between the control and the blanket.
- A buzzing sound or scorching odour when switched on.
- Damage or overheating where the electrical cable connects to the blanket.

The Home Accident Prevention Officer had planned two Home Safety and Electric Blanket Swap Events, one in The Old Museum Space, Mossley Mill on Thursday 30 November and the other in The Steeple Suite, Antrim Civic Centre on Friday 1 December. Each event could accommodate up to 100 people, and a booking system would be established so that residents could book a thirty-minute slot. For those who could not attend in person, arrangements would be made for a home visit by the Home Safety Prevention Officer.

The events would offer residents an opportunity to replace older or a potentially faulty electric blanket for a safer alternative, such as a rechargeable hot water bottle, and dispose of their old ones. During the events, residents could also enquire about Home Accident Prevention Assessments and explore the range of equipment available from Environmental Health such as CO monitors, touch lamps and hand grabbers.

The events would have representations from Community Advice Antrim and Newtownabbey, the Police and Community Safety Partnership and Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service to provide residents with free one-to-one advice and support on topics such as, income maximisation and debit advice, household energy efficiency and grants, home security and crime reduction.

Promotion of the events would occur through the Council's social media, website and direct outreach to community groups. They would also be featured in the Antrim and Newtownabbey Age Friendly newsletter which would be issued at the beginning of November 2023.

Evaluations on both events would be completed and used when planning

future events.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Alderman Clarke and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.5 EH/PHWB/012 WINTER WOOLLIES

Members were advised that the Environmental Health would be launching the Winter Woollies initiative 2023 following its successful run in 2022. Last year, the initiative saw the donation of nearly 600 individual items, all of which were distributed to and warmly received by households in need across the Borough.

The Winter Woollies initiative aimed to encourage experienced or novice crafters to knit items that could provide warmth during the winter season. These items encompass a wide range, from hats, scarfs and blankets in various sizes suitable for babies, toddlers, and older residents alike. Those interested in contributing could donate their handcrafted items to Council.

The Mayor would personally choose his favourite Winter Woollies items, and the chosen creators would receive gift vouchers for local crafting shops. Each "Winter Woolly" item donated would be passed on to a resident in need of warmth during the winter months. The distribution of donations would be coordinated by the Health and Wellbeing team in collaboration with the Northern Health and Social Care Trust, which would ensure that items reached the right recipients. Donors would be encouraged to include a friendly message with their contributions, which would be passed along to the anonymous recipients.

For convenient drop-off, entries and donations could be left at designated boxes in the Council's Civic Buildings including Antrim Civic Centre and at Mossley Mill. Individuals or groups unable to visit these locations could arrange for item collection directly with Environmental Health.

Winter Woollies would be promoted through Council's social media channels, engagement with local Knit & Natter groups at libraries across the Borough, and collaboration with various community groups. Additionally, information leaflets on Winter Woollies would be distributed to interested groups.

Donations would be accepted from 2 October to the 17 November 2023, with the Mayor's selection of his favourites taking place week commencing 20 November 2023.

Participants would be advised that the Council would not be responsible for the cost of the materials used and entries could not be returned.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Alderman Clarke and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.6 L/GEN/070 LEISURE NET PROMOTER SCORE

Members were reminded that Council's Leisure Service utilised a digital customer engagement system, which continually measured customer satisfaction through a Net Promoter Score (NPS), and also utilised the customer feedback gained from the system to continually improve service delivery.

From its inception in 2018, the NPS performance across leisure had been well above the UK leisure industry average of 34, and continued to improve year-on-year.

Year	NPS
2018	59
2019	52
2020	62
2021	62
2022	64
2023 (1 st quarter)	63
2023 (2 nd quarter)	69 to date

For the second quarter in 2023, the current rolling score for leisure was 69 up 6 points from Quarter 1, with all centres demonstrating an upward trend.

Centre	NPS	Responses	Promoters	Passives	Detractors	Percent Promoters	Percent Passives	Percent Detractors	Trend
Ballyearl Arts & Leisure	85	65	57	6	2	88	9	3	18%
Sionile Leisure Centre	71	107	84	15	8	79	14	7	16%
Valley Leisure Centre	68	257	196	40	21	76	16	8	30%
Antrim Forum	66	239	179	38	22	75	16	9	12%
Crumlin Leisure Centre	63	48	37	4	7	77	8	15	9%

On request from a Member, a detailed summary was provided by the Head of Leisure Operations regarding the NPS.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Alderman Clarke and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.7 L/LEI/001 APSE AWARDS 2023

Members were reminded that Council had been shortlisted for the Best Service Team: Sports, Leisure and Cultural Service in the 2023 APSE Awards, having been previous finalists in both 2018 and 2019.

Elected Members and Officers attended the Awards Ceremony on Thursday 14

September 2023 at the Titanic Belfast where the Council was announced as the winner in the category.

APSE is a networking community that assists local authorities who are striving to improve their frontline services. The APSE Service Awards uniquely recognise the profound contribution of local council frontline services to local communities and local people.

Congratulations were extended to the Head of Leisure Operations and his staff on this recent achievement.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Alderman Clarke and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.8 WM/FM/001 REVIEW OF VEHICLE OVERLOADING POLICY & OPERATING PROCEDURES

As Council had a legal obligation to ensure that its vehicles were not operated beyond their permissible operating limits. The Vehicle Overloading Policy would provide guidance to Council employees on the processes and responsibilities to be followed to ensure legal compliance and their personal and vehicle safety.

The Vehicle Overloading Policy and Procedure (circulated) and The Standard Operating Procedures for Vehicle Trailer Overloading (circulated) had been reviewed and updated in accordance with Council's agreed Policy Framework and schedule. The Policy and Procedure, which covered the management of vehicle overloading, was last updated in December 2020.

A Member's query was addressed by the Director of Sustainability who confirmed that the requirements of the Policy would be relayed to all new staff, including agency or seasonal staff, as well as refresher training to existing staff. The Director of Sustainability agreed that the Head of Parks Operations would respond to the Member regarding the movement of soil from Crumlin Cemetery to Antrim.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Alderman Clarke and agreed that

the Vehicle Overloading Policy and Procedure review be noted.

ACTION BY: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

5.9 WM/FM/010 REVIEW OF VEHICLE REPLACEMENT POLICY

This Policy outlined the expectations and responsibilities regarding the management of vehicle replacements within Council and would assist operational departments to ensure they had efficient and effective vehicles available to deliver their required services.

The Vehicle Replacement Policy (circulated) had been reviewed and updated in accordance with Council's agreed Policy Framework and schedule. The Policy, which covered the management of vehicle replacements of Council's fleet, was last updated in December 2020.

The Director of Sustainability confirmed that this Policy would take account of lower emissions models as and when a replacement vehicle is required.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Alderman Clarke and agreed that

the Vehicle Replacement Policy review be noted.

NO ACTION

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

In response to a Member, the Director of Sustainability agreed to clean the external entrance area to the Civic Centre building.

The Head of Property Services (Interim) agreed to provide new road signs at a number of locations within the Borough and to maintain the general visibility of Council signs across the Borough.

It was agreed that the current condition of the toilets at Lilian Bland would be investigated in response to a complaint which had been received by a Member.

The Head of Property Services (Interim) responded to confirm that a Play Park Audit had commenced and that a further report would be brought back to Members which would incorporate a full comprehensive review and programme for maintenance going forward.

A Member thanked staff for cleaning the John Street Play Park in Randalstown.

ACTION BY: David Blair, Head of Property Services (Interim)

In response to a Member, the Head of Environmental Health and Wellbeing agreed to investigate concerns over the existence of micro plastics in the Sixmile waterway near to Lough Neagh. The Member asked that samples be taken.

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

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED 'IN CONFIDENCE'

Proposed by Councillor Logue
Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed

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

6 ITEMS IN CONFIDENCE

6.1 IN CONFIDENCE WM/ARC21/4/VOL ARC21 JOINT COMMITTEE PAPERS

The papers for the arc21 Joint Committee Meeting were circulated for:

- 28 September 2023

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.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed that

the papers be noted.

NO ACTION

6.2 IN CONFIDENCE PBS/PS/016 SHORT TERM ENERGY ACTION PLAN - MORE SUSTAINABLE ACTION UPDATE

Members were reminded that Council had a commitment to reducing energy consumption, emissions and associated costs on an ongoing basis. Whilst progress had been made in reducing each of these areas, work continued on retrofitting existing buildings, replacement of mechanical/digital systems, streamlining operational efficiencies and considering the feasibility of alternative energy solutions.

Analysis of Main Council Sites

As previously reported, the top five consumers of energy and therefore those with the biggest environmental and financial impact were: -

- Valley Leisure Centre
- Antrim Forum
- Mossley Mill
- Sixmile Leisure Centre
- Antrim Civic Centre

In 2022/2023, these buildings equated to 72% of the Council's entire energy consumption and CO2 emissions from built assets.

The following tables highlighted the actual changes in consumption and costs within the above buildings during 2022/2023. This data was then compared with Council's base line in pre-pandemic year of April – March 2018/19 which showed that energy consumption levels had reduced by 12.4%. The 2022/2023 data was further compared with 2021/2022 data to establish more recent trends i.e. 3.4% increase in consumption. Unfortunately costs had risen significantly in the last year due to industry wide energy price increases.

The recent small increase in consumption at the three wet leisure sites was due to increased activity with full sporting calendars returned.

In order to mitigate against increases in costs, Council had been able to avail of the Government Energy Bill Relief Scheme which was introduced in September 2022. This had reduced utility costs, only when the energy purchase price exceeded a Government set cap. It was noted that this scheme had recently been replaced in April 2023 by the Energy Bills Discount Scheme which would hopefully continue to reduce costs, although the current scheme had a higher Government set cap. Due to the current volatility of the energy market, the actual energy costs (i.e. gas, electricity and biomass) for these five buildings had more than doubled in one year. In comparing the months April – March 2021/2022 with April – March 2022/2023, actual costs for the five properties had risen from £1,272,830 to £2,540,427 (112%).

2022/2023 Energy cost and usage comparison with 2018/2019

Site	April – March 18/19 Consumption (kWh)	Apr – March 22/23 Consumption (kWh)	% Change	Apr – March 18/19 Cost	April – March 22/23 Cost	% Change
Antrim Civic Centre	1,431,578	1,337,224	-6.6%	£ 123,554	£ 271,927	+120.1%
Mossley Mill	2,967,859	2,859,170	-3.7%	£ 246,936	£ 528,049	+113.8%
Antrim Forum	3,706,060	3,308,352	-10.7%	£ 327,776	£ 640,634	+95.4%
Valley Leisure Centre	4,415,153	4,159,688	-5.8%	£ 244,234	£ 606,346	+148.3%
Six Mile Leisure Centre	4,462,162	3,216,955	-27.9%	£ 330,328	£ 493,469	+49.4%
Total	16,982,812	14,881,389	-12.4%	£ 1,272,830	£ 2,540,427	+99.6%

2022/2023 Energy cost and usage comparison with 2021/2022

Site	21/22 Consumption (kWh)	22/23 Consumption (kWh)	% Change	21/22 Actual Cost	22/23 Actual Cost	% Change
Antrim Civic Centre	1,370,069	1,337,224	-2.4%	£ 126,858	£ 271,927	114.4%
Mossley Mill	2,979,361	2,859,170	-4.0%	£ 248,830	£ 528,049	112.2%
Antrim Forum	3,237,744	3,308,352	2.2%	£ 279,135	£ 640,634	129.5%
Valley Leisure Centre	3,808,456	4,159,688	9.2%	£ 325,703	£ 606,346	86.2%
Six Mile Leisure Centre	3,001,920	3,216,955	7.2%	£ 217,888	£ 493,469	126.5%
Total	14,397,550	14,881,389	3.4%	£ 1,198,416	£ 2,540,4277	112.0%

Energy Improvement measures – Updates

As approved in the Energy Management Action Plan, the main focus of activity were improvements to the top five energy using buildings. Consultant proposals were currently being reviewed at the three wet leisure centres, with regards to pool plant energy improvements, with further updates to follow when costed feasibility studies had been completed. Surveys were also being completed to evaluate which council assets are best suited to the installation of solar panels. The following update details the extent of work being undertaken specifically at the top five, with costs being met from the Capital Fund for Energy Efficiency which was approved in April 2022:

Valley Leisure Centre

- i. The Biomass boiler was upgraded in March 2023, to take Biomass pellets instead of wood chip. New silos had been installed to increase capacity and modifications to the existing boiler had been completed. The boiler is fully operational with only minor adjustments required to ensure the system operated efficiently with the existing building management heating control software. This work was due to be completed by the end of September 2023.

As energy consumption was constantly monitored, the subsequent reduction in gas usage would be collated and provided at the next update. It was hoped that these works would reduce gas consumption on the site by at least 20-25% – this equated to over 75,000 kWh and represented an estimated saving in excess of £50,000 per annum based on current tariffs. In tandem, carbon dioxide emissions would reduce by 68,000kg CO₂.

- ii. Consultant recommendations would be brought to Committee for consideration in November, for the replacement of boiler and heat pump installations to reduce energy consumption, emissions and costs.
- iii. A lighting upgrade scheme had commenced with the following actions

being completed to date.

All sports halls have had lighting changes to LED. The front carpark lighting was now LED on timers and photocells to reduce consumption. Internal motion sensors and LED lights had also been added throughout the building to limit energy use. Floodlighting at the More Soccer Pitches has had photocells installed which ensured that lighting only operates when low natural light levels exist.

- iv. As previously stated, a hydrogeological assessment had been completed and was being reviewed at present. A report would be brought to Committee for consideration in due course, detailing options for the ground source heat pumps on site.

Antrim Forum

- i. The recently installed combined heat and power plant was being monitored at present to ensure its power output was optimised. Consultants were attending the site this month to review the system and advise accordingly. Please note that electrical phase rebalancing had already been completed to facilitate future improvements.
- ii. All Forum car park lighting had been changed to LED bulbs with an anticipated 50% reduction in energy consumption, resulting in potential savings of over £2,000 per annum. A review of internal LED lighting provision had been completed and works were scheduled to be completed throughout the remaining year.

Mossley Mill

- i. Solar array on the Mossley Mill North wing roof - The Property Services Section had been successful in applying for a G99 licence from NIE Networks. This permitted Council to proceed as the energy supplier was content with the proposed works. Further, formal applications were now being prepared i.e. Planning, Building Control and Historic Environment Division. Costs were estimated to be in the region of £[REDACTED] and the anticipated return on investment is 6 years. It was also hoped that such an installation would generate 7% of the electricity demand for the building.
- ii. Consultant recommendations would be brought to committee, for consideration in November, for the replacement of boiler and heat pump installations to reduce energy consumption, emissions and costs.
- iii. Hydroelectric power at Mossley Mill was initially examined in a feasibility report in 2020. Property Services had procured an updated report in 2023 that provided revised costings and recommends that water flow rate data should be gathered over 12 months to ensure an accurate measurement of potential energy generation was possible. Approval had been given for this study to be completed so the resulting data would be used to accurately evaluate the potential for HEP at Mossley Mill next year.

- iv. Both Council and its lighting consultant were reviewing the Mill lighting report procured earlier this year. It was hoped that costings were favourable so that savings could be made. Recommendations would be brought for consideration in due course. Any improvements with regards to lighting type, sensors, controls etc. could be rolled out to other sites to maximise overall council savings.
- v. A pilot scheme to monitor individual power usage at each workstation were also due to commence later this year. Such work would highlight areas which could be 'shut down' when staff were carrying out their duties elsewhere e.g. on site. The most appropriate time for such works to be completed was in the winter months when office work was more common.
- vi. Following an assessment of the Energy Management Software package earlier this year, new digital monitoring equipment would be installed on primary mechanical systems so that accurate energy usage could be established. Such works would be completed by late November with one wing being set up on a pilot basis in the Mill. The Gateway Centre and Sentry Hill would also be completed so that a variety of building types were included.
- vii. The existing air handling system had been inspected with short term improvements being implemented continually. Long term proposals involve the replacement of the existing system so additional information would be provided in due course as a further detailed report with associated costings would be required.
- viii. The consultant's report regarding air source heat pumps had been reviewed and additional information was required for a full assessment to be completed. Further information would follow in due course.

Sixmile Leisure Centre

- i. Heating/Cooling report recommendations -
 - Phase 1 complete - rebalancing air handling units to suit occupancy levels in changing areas.
 - Phase 2 complete - underfloor heating improvements and heat recovery systems adjusted. Cost savings would be determined on comparisons to the previous year.
- ii. Phase 3 works include: -
 - a. Supply and extract ductwork to be cleaned throughout (to help performance of the system and reduce stress on motors)
 - b. Review of the control strategy for the pool hall, especially in the summer months
 - c. Alterations to the exhaust louvre as the current arrangement is inefficient.

Works to be tendered in September as technical specifications were required to ensure works were bespoke to the existing systems.

- iii. Biomass system operational efficiency improvements are ongoing to ensure maximum output with improved linkage to the Building Management software system therefore maximising this green energy source.
- iv. LED replacement programme for both external and internal areas were being progressed at present (further information would follow).

Antrim Civic Centre

- i. Consultant recommendations would be brought to committee for consideration in November for the replacement of boiler and heat pump installations to reduce energy consumption, emissions and costs.
- ii. The Property Services team had recalibrated and reset the heating/cooling strategy profiles for the building. Conflicting mechanical units had been realigned so that unnecessary energy consumption would be avoided. Air Conditioning controls were being upgraded with modern control systems and meters in one wing to pilot energy savings with the hope that Council could roll these improvements to the rest of the wings if favourable.
- iii. Specialist advice was currently being sought with regard to seasonal heating and cooling system operational limits to reduce energy demand.
- iv. One wing had already had lighting changed to LED. Other floors/areas would be completed on a rolling programme throughout the year.

Minor projects to improve efficiency

In addition to the proposals underway for the top 5 energy consuming buildings, a series of other minor improvements were being progressed.

Heating Improvements

- Improvements were continuing to be made to the Allen Park biomass system to ensure maximum efficiency
- Hydrogenated vegetable oil (HVO) as a boiler fuel source, for premises currently using heating oil, was being assessed at present.

Lighting improvements

- Ballyearl - LED bulb replacement and new sensors were being installed which would include internal/external lighting including the driving range bays and floodlights.
- ESD - Vehicle garage, Parks depot, Maintenance Depot, Council stores and all offices had had replacement LED fittings installed. In August the final 20% of external lighting would be changed to LED lighting, which would complete all areas under Council control. The projection was that consumption would be reduced by 50% in that area.
- Belmont Cemetery Public Toilet - all LED lights on Sensors
- Floodlighting and remote switching at Foundry Lane, which would allow the

system to be controlled from Sixmile Leisure Centre, therefore minimising wasteful energy with pitches only being lit when occupied.

Energy Champions

Following Council's commitment to establish Energy Champions throughout the organisation, an initial meeting was held in June to promote internal communications, best practice and knowledge sharing.

This meeting brought together staff from multiple departments and focused discussions on changing staff behaviours, sharing examples of improvements already made and promoted discussions covering innovative ideas with respect to saving energy.

The meeting developed a list of proposed improvements/actions that were currently being reviewed for their viability.

The Head of Property Services (Interim) provided a detailed summary of the report and, in response to Members' suggestions, agreed to investigate the potential for further opportunities for energy efficiencies.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Councillor McAuley and agreed that

the report be noted.

ACTION BY: David Blair, Head of Property Services (Interim)

IN CONFIDENCE ANY OTHER BUSINESS

In response to a number of complaints received by Members, the Head of Environmental Health and Wellbeing confirmed Council's procedure in respect to the investigation of statutory nuisances. He stated that there was an ongoing investigation into the food premises and out-of-hours visits would be required. A Member asked that a similar odour complaint be investigated from a second food premises in the Borough. It was agreed that Members would be kept informed of developments.



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

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED OUT OF 'IN CONFIDENCE'

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Alderman Clarke 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 7.25pm.

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.