



5 June 2024

Committee Chair: Councillor V McWilliam

Committee Vice-Chair: Councillor A McAuley

Committee Members: Aldermen P Bradley, L Clarke, J McGrath and J Smyth

Councillors J Burbank, R Foster, H Magill, J Gilmour,
A M Logue, E McLaughlin, M Ní Chonghaile, M Stewart
and S Ward.

Dear Member

MEETING OF THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Operations Committee will be held in the **Round Tower Chamber, Antrim Civic Centre on Monday 10 June 2024 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

PLEASE NOTE: Refreshments will be available in the Café from 5.20pm

For any queries please contact Member Services:

Tel: 028 9448 1301

memberservices@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk

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REPORT ON BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING ON MONDAY 10 JUNE 2024

3 ITEMS FOR DECISION

3.1 EH/EHS/LR/010 ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ENFORCEMENT POLICY

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Members approval for the review of the Environmental Health Enforcement Policy in accordance with Council procedures.

2. Background

Members are reminded that the enforcement activity carried out by the Environmental Health team is delivered in accordance with an Environmental Health Enforcement Policy.

The Policy sets out the principles and approach adopted in applying the legislation falling under the remit of Environmental Health to ensure effective, consistent and open enforcement.

3. Key Issues

The Policy sets out the principles and approach adopted in applying the legislation falling under the remit of Environmental Health to ensure effective, consistent and open enforcement.

As set out in the Policy, it was agreed that a review would take place every two years to ensure that it satisfies current legal requirements and customer expectations. This review is now due and has now been completed (**enclosed**) for Committee's consideration.

The latest amendments have been made to:-

- reflect the change in job title of the Director of Sustainability
- reflect the change in structure and removal of the Director of Operations and the Deputy Director of Operations

The revised policy has undergone Equality Screening and an Impact Assessment is not required.

4. Summary

The Environmental Health Enforcement Policy has been reviewed in accordance with the Council procedures. There are no substantial changes to the Policy, and changes made reflect staff structural changes.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that the revised Environmental Health Enforcement Policy be approved.

Prepared by: Colin Kelly, Head of Environment Health and Wellbeing

Approved by: Michael Lavery, Director of Sustainability

3.2 WM/S/003 SUSTAINABILITY WORKING GROUP MINUTES

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the minutes of the Sustainability Working Group.

2. Introduction/Background

The meeting of the Sustainability Working Group was held on 8 April 2024 and a copy of the minutes (**enclosed**) are attached for Members approval.

3. Key Issues

At the meeting, Members were updated on the following:

- 1) Climate and Sustainability Policy;
- 2) Actions, Adaptation and Mitigation Policy
- 3) Antrim and Newtownabbey's Carbon Footprint;
- 4) Carbon Literacy Training Programme;
- 5) Big Spring Clean Events
- 6) Northern Ireland Resource Network Membership.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that the minutes of the Sustainability Working Group held on 8 April 2024 be approved.

Prepared by: Gillian McGrath, Personal Assistant to the Director of Sustainability

Agreed by: Lynsey Daly, Head of Waste Strategy and Sustainability

Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Sustainability

3.3 EH/EHS/018 FOOD SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN 2024-2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the Food Service Delivery Plan 2024-2025.

2. Key Issues

The Council is required to produce an annual plan showing how it intends to fulfil its statutory duties and deliver Food Control services, (enclosed) a copy is included for Members information. A review of the Food Service Delivery Plan for 2023-2024 has been undertaken (enclosed) and is included for Members information.

The Plan sets out how Environmental Health will address both Council's statutory obligations.

3. Summary

Environmental Health has a key role in securing the safety of food processed, manufactured etc. in the Borough. The plan's key focus is to demonstrate how the Council will meet its statutory obligations and duties related to food safety for the year 2024-2025.

The Food Safety Service Delivery Plan outlines key objectives for the Food Safety section including:

- I. the implementation of a thorough inspection regime;
- II. strategies for education and enforcement;
- III. a detailed approach to achieving these objectives within the current resource levels.

4. Financial Implications

The 2024/25 budget includes financial provision to deliver the Food Service Delivery Plan.

5. Recommendation

- a. **It is recommended that the Food Service Delivery Plan 2024-2025 be approved;**
- b. **It is recommended that the review of Food Service Delivery Plan 2023-2024 be noted.**

Prepared by: Christina McErlean, Deputy Head of Environmental Health

Agreed by: Colin Kelly, Head of Environmental Health and Wellbeing

Approved by: Michael Lavery, Director of Sustainability

3.4 EH/EHS/011 HEALTH & SAFETY SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN 2024-2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the Health and Safety Delivery Plan 2024-2025.

2. Key Issues

Members are reminded that under Article 20 of the Health and Safety at Work Northern Ireland Order 1978 Council has to set out a planned Health and Safety activity programme on an annual basis.

A copy of the Health and Safety Service Delivery Plan 2024-2025 (**enclosed**) is included for Members information.

3. Summary

Environmental Health plays a crucial role in ensuring the safety of employees and the public in business workplaces for which the Council has statutory responsibility. The primary aim of the plan is to outline how the Council will meet its statutory obligations and duties related to Health and Safety for the year 2024/2025.

The Health and Safety Service Plan details key objectives for the Health and Safety section including:

- I. the implementation of a comprehensive inspection regime;
- II. strategies for education and enforcement;
- III. a detailed approach to achieving these objectives within the current resource levels.

4. Financial Implications

The 2024/25 budget includes financial provision to deliver the Health and Safety Service Delivery Plan.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Health and Safety Service Delivery Plan 2024-2025 be approved.

Prepared by: Christina McErlean, Deputy Head of Environmental Health

Agreed by: Colin Kelly, Head of Environmental Health and Wellbeing

Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Sustainability

3.5 EH/EHS/002 SERVICE DELIVERY WELFARE OF ANIMALS (NI) ACT 2011

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Members on the delivery of the Animal Welfare Service and to seek funding for the continued delivery of the service.

2. Background

Members are reminded that since April 2015, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council (MEA) has acted as a Sub-Regional Lead Council responsible for the delivery of the Animal Welfare Service across the Northern Region (Mid and East Antrim; Antrim and Newtownabbey; and, Causeway Coast and Glens). Previously the 11 Councils in Northern Ireland have received 100% funding, £1.25M, from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) for the cost of this service.

The Department has stated in written communication that it will no longer be able to provide funding support to Councils due to the reduction in DAERA budget. The Department has stated that their focus is on discharging its own statutory obligations, with Animal Welfare (Non Farmed Animals) being a Council responsibility. Fermanagh and Omagh District Council are currently reviewing the Departments decision on behalf on the 11 Councils and has sought a judicial review of the decision.

3. Previous Decision of Council

In November 2023, Members agreed that Council approved the use of Council funds to finance the Animal Welfare service during 2023-24 to enable continued service delivery at a cost of approximately £140,000.

4. Key Issues

In April 2024, the Department wrote to Councils indicating that they have received an additional resource allocation, £625,000 for 2023-2024, which will be distributed to the 11 Councils as a contribution towards costs incurred in 2023-2024. It should be noted that this funding did not meet the cost of providing the service and Council funds were also required.

However, DAERA have stated that it remains their position that in the absence of any additional future funding from the Northern Ireland Executive, finance will not be available for 2024-2025 or future financial years. Consequently, there will be no allocation of funds to Northern Ireland Councils in this current financial year. This would equate to approximately £140,000 for Council.

MEA has sought confirmation from Council and Causeway Coast and Glens Council that the necessary funds will be transferred to them for this year (2024-2025). As this animal welfare service to non-farmed animals is a statutory requirement, it is proposed to acknowledge MEA's request and Council would pay our contribution as Officers believe this is the most economically

effective was of delivering the service at present.

As Members will be aware, Officers have been reviewing Council spend in order to estimate the end of year outturn. Due to the uncertainty of the funding from DAERA, it was felt prudent to include the £140,000 contribution in the current figures and future years. This year, it is being proposed to finance Council's for the service by holding the recruitment of Environmental Health staff until there is clarity on the potential of external funding. Should the outcome of the judicial review find in favour of the Councils, a further report will be brought before Members for review.

5. Summary

In April 2024, DAERA informed the Northern Ireland Councils that they received an additional resource allocation of £625,000 for 2023-2024, to be distributed among the 11 Councils for expenses incurred that year. However, the Department also noted that without future funding from the Northern Ireland Executive, there would be no financial support available for 2024-2025 or future years.

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council (MEA) has requested confirmation from the Council and Causeway Coast and Glens Council that they will receive the necessary funds of £140,000 for 2024-2025 to maintain the current Animal Welfare Service. As the service is a statutory responsibility for Council, it is proposed that this continues to be the most efficient means of delivering the service.

6. Recommendation

It is recommended that Council approve the current delivery mechanism for the Animal Welfare Service through Mid and East Antrim Borough Council at an estimated cost of £140,000 in 2024-25.

Prepared by: Colin Kelly, Head of Environmental Health and Wellbeing

Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Sustainability

3.6 L/GEN/005 DISCOUNT TO 3G PITCH TRAINING RATE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to discount 3G pitch bookings during the seasonal grass pitch maintenance period.

2. Background

Members are informed that grass-playing pitches undergo rest and maintenance from May to September each year to preserve their condition and ensure their availability during the playing season. In recent years, the football playing season has extended, resulting in increased wear on the pitches. With the season starting in late August, there is demand for pre-season training and matches as early as June.

In April 2023, approval was granted to discount 3G pitches to match the lower rates of grass pitches for matches during the summer months. Officers have noted increased demand for grass pitches for summer training, leagues, and pre-season friendlies. While matches can be accommodated at the approved discounted rate, no such approval exists for training.

3. Proposal

It is proposed that the Council's 3G pitches be offered at a 50% discount on the training rate during July and August. Usage of 3G pitches declines significantly in the summer, and this discount would likely increase facility income during this period. This discounted rate will be available only to constituted clubs within the Borough.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that approval be granted to apply a 50% discount to training rate for 3G pitch bookings during July and August.

Prepared by: Conor McCallion, Leisure Development Manager

Agreed by: Deaglan O'Hagan, Head of Leisure Operations

Approved by: Matt McDowell, Director Parks & Leisure Operations

3.7 WM/WM/040 CONSULTATION RESPONSE RETHINKING OUR RESOURCES

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek approval on the draft response of the Consultation “Rethinking our Resources: Measures for Climate Action and a Circular Economy in NI”.

2. Background

As Members will be aware following discussion at April committee, the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) is currently consulting on the future of resource management and recycling in Northern Ireland. The overall aim of the consultation is to improve the quality and quantity of household and non-household municipal recycling, reduce food waste, decrease the amount of waste we send to landfill and help enhance the services offered to households and businesses.

Officers have taken the views of Members, attended webinars and workshops, worked in collaboration of other organisations such as NILGA, arc21, LARAC and other Northern Ireland Councils to produce a draft response (**to follow**) which is included for Members information.

As Members will be aware, these proposals may lead to significant changes in collection requirements of waste, although they are broadly in line with the Council's waste collection harmonisation plans.

3. Main Points

Members will note that Officers have only proposed responses to questions applicable to Council services we will be expected to provide. Some of the proposals including in the consultation have limited evidence to justify their introduction and where this is the case, it is proposed to ask for further clarification as part of the response.

The main points to note:

- Council agreed with the proposal to require a restriction in the amount of residual waste capacity for households of 90 litres per week, however we state that it is up to individual Councils how this is delivered i.e. 180L bins fortnightly currently provided to Newtownabbey residents;
- Councils should be required to collect a core set of dry recyclables from households, including glass bottles and containers, paper/card, plastics, and metal packaging, with flexible plastic packaging to be collected by March 2027 subject to funding being provided to assist with new collections;
- A default position that household dry recyclables should be collected separately, as per the wheelie box scheme, to ensure the quality of the recycled materials. A commingled bin collection would only be allowed following a comprehensive assessment.
- Further information is required for the measure of Quality as Northern

Ireland will be the only devolved administration using this benchmarking tool;

- Further information is requested on the proposals to increase the collection of food waste from households including the possibility of weekly food collections, including compositional analysis after the introduction of the restriction of residual waste capacity;
- Council agreed that businesses and the wider non-household municipal (NHM) sector should be required to recycle a core set of recyclables, however requested information on how this will be applied and enforced as there is a concern there will be an increased burden on Council to deliver these services;
- Legislative and logistical concerns regarding the possibility of opening up household recycling points and recycling centres for NHM users have been noted.
- Funding is required to assist Councils and businesses to implement the collection schemes proposed.

4. Summary

Whilst Council support the majority of the proposals set out in the draft consultation response, further clarification is required from DAERA on how these proposals will be implemented and enforced.

The proposed draft response (to follow) is presented to Members for approval for Council to submit for the deadline of Thursday 27 June 2024.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that of the draft response for the Consultation “Rethinking our Resources: Measures for Climate Action and a Circular Economy in NI” is approved for submission.

Prepared by: Lynsey Daly, Head of Waste Strategy and Sustainability

Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Sustainability

3.8 PK/GEN/035/VOL4 GRASS CUTTING

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to inform Members about the current grass cutting arrangements and seek approval to conduct a review, with further recommendations to be presented at a future Operations Committee meeting.

2. Introduction

Members are aware that the responsibility for grass cutting on road verges, roundabouts, and various public spaces is shared among several organisations, including Council, the Department for Infrastructure (DFI), and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. A detailed list of locations, land ownership, and the organisations responsible for cutting grass in these areas across the Borough is (to follow) for Members' reference.

3. Background

Due to budget cuts by DFI, legacy councils had taken on the grass cutting of various roundabouts and verges, receiving approximately £29,000 annually from the Department. Following the merger of the legacy councils, this payment ceased, but the Council continued to maintain 69 locations (34 roundabouts and 35 verges), incurring costs that should have been covered by the Department.

4. Grass Management Sub-committee

In 2016, the Grass Management Sub-committee (now called the Parks and Open Spaces Sub Group) was established to address the impact of new Traffic Management Regulations and the reduction in grass cutting frequency by DFI in urban areas. Changes in regulations related to speed limits on adjacent or approaching roads have prohibited the Council from maintaining 14 roundabouts and 3 verges. The remaining 52 locations are still maintained by the Council during the grass cutting season. The specific locations are (to follow) for Members' reference.

5. Urban Grass Cutting

Since 2016, the Council has annually approved an arrangement with DFI to provide additional urban grass cuts in high-traffic areas throughout the Borough. Beyond the two cuts that are the Department's responsibility, the Council has provided an additional five cuts, incurring costs that have increased from £10,000 to £16,000 per cut in 2024, resulting in a total annual cost of £80,000 for the grass cutting of urban areas owned by the Department.

6. DFI Biodiversity Policy

Starting in 2023, DFI announced a new verge management approach across

Northern Ireland's road network to protect and create habitats for biodiversity. Grass cutting has been significantly reduced, with a single swathe of 1.1 metres along strategic road verges cut twice per year, while sight lines at junctions are also cut at least twice a year. On rural roads, one cut is performed late in the growing season to allow flowers to set seed and pollinators to become less active.

7. Current Position

There is no standardised grass cutting approach across the Borough, with the frequency and quality of cuts varying depending on the responsible organisation. DFI has also announced a further reduction in grass cutting for the 2024 season, applying its biodiversity policy of a 1.1-metre swathe to areas within the urban grass cutting schedule.

8. Summary

Since 2015, Council has significantly increased grass cutting on land it does not own or have responsibility for. This includes an annual payment of £80,000 to DFI for additional urban area cuts and an estimated £60,000 per annum for maintaining roundabouts and verges at 51 additional locations.

9. Recommendation

It is recommended that approval be granted for the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-group to conduct a review of all current grass cutting arrangements and report their recommendations to a future Operations Committee meeting.

Prepared and Approved by: Matt McDowell, Director of Parks and Leisure Operations

4 ITEMS FOR NOTING

4.1 EH/PHWB/010 NORTHERN HEALTHY LIFESTYLES PARTNERSHIP FUNDING THE FOOD PROGRAMME

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an overview of The Food Programme that was carried out during the 2023/2024 financial year.

2. Background

Members are reminded that Environmental Health received £6,000 funding for 'The Food Programme' from the Trusts Northern Healthy Lifestyles Partnership (NHLP), for 2022/2023 and 2023/2024. Learning sessions were conducted across the 7 DEA's in January and February 2023 successfully raised awareness among older adults about the importance of a nutritious diet and assisting with menu planning and cooking skills. Building on this success, the programme was continued for 2023/2024 with a renewed focus on young and single parents.

3. Key Issues

The food programme targeted single parents with young children, who may face multiple barriers to affording a healthy diet for various reasons. These parents can also experience significant social isolation and are at risk for loneliness. Young mothers, in particular, have highlighted the isolation that comes with parenting at a young age and have expressed the need for supportive spaces where they can connect with others.

The Food Programme consisted of two parts; theory and practical. The theory sessions covered nutritious meal preparation, batch cooking, meal planning, reducing food waste, budgeting, and smart shopping. In the practical sessions, participants used air fryers to prepare healthy meals and each received an air fryer to take home.

To help foster new community relationships, the sessions were held in each of the 7 DEA's in local community centres and hubs which make them accessible to parents with limited transport options. In addition, the sessions were held at times to accommodate parents of school-aged children.

A total of 46 participants were recruited through referrals from stakeholders such as Sure Start, Home Start, local schools and via the Council's social media and website. Feedback was extremely positive with participants appreciating new connections, knowledge on reducing food waste, and the usefulness of air fryers.

Due to high interest, additional sessions are planned for June and October 2024 targeting both young parents and older adults. Any persons interested can register their interest for future sessions at;

<https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/residents/community-initiatives/the-food-programme/introduction/>.

4. Financial Position/Implication

The programme has been funded by the Northern Healthy Lifestyles Partnership (NHLP). Environmental Health received £6,000 for the delivery of the programme in 2022/23 and 2023/24. As there has been an underspend of £500, the further shorter programme will be run in 2024/25 with the agreement of the NHLP.

5. Summary

To date this year, Environmental Health delivered 7 Food Programme sessions targeting young and single mothers in order to enhance their ability to provide cost-effective, nutritious meals. Due to the success of the programme, additional sessions are planned for later this year.

6. Recommendation

It is recommended that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Fay Downey, Environmental Health Officer

Agreed by: Colin Kelly, Head of Environmental Health and Wellbeing

Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Sustainability

4.2 L/LEI/OO/007 SUPERCUP NORTHERN IRELAND FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT 2024

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the 2024 SuperCup Northern Ireland Football Tournament.

2. Background

Members are reminded that since 2022, the Council has supported the SuperCup Northern Ireland (NI) Football Tournament through funding and by hosting games at Council playing pitches. The girls' section of the tournament is exclusively hosted within the Borough and attracts teams from around the world. Local football teams play a significant role in the tournament by providing volunteers, and the event leaves a lasting legacy, especially for girls' football in the Borough. All teams are accommodated within the Borough which provides significant economic benefit to local businesses, in particular hoteliers.

3. 2024 Tournament

This year's tournament will take place from 22-26 July 2024 and will feature sixteen teams across the Junior and Premier Sections. For the first time, English teams such as Manchester United, Aston Villa, and Wolverhampton Wanderers are confirmed to compete.

Games will be played across five venues within the Borough, including three Council-owned facilities: Cloyne Crescent, Monkstown; The Diamond, Rathcoole; and Chimney Corner, Antrim. Additional venues include Mossley Park and Dixon Park, Ballyclare.

The tournament draw was held on 22 May at the Theatre at the Mill. Fixtures and venue details are now available at supercupni.com

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Conor McCallion, Leisure Development Manager

Agreed by: Deaglan O'Hagan, Head of Leisure Operations

Approved by: Matt McDowell, Director of Parks and Leisure Operations

4.3 PT/CI/049 PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2023/24 – PERFORMANCE PROGRESS REPORT QUARTER 4 – OPERATIONS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend to Members that the Performance and Improvement Plan 2023/24 Performance Progress Report Quarter 4 be noted.

2. Background

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

The Council's Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2023/24 was approved in June 2023. This set out a range of robust performance targets, along with six identified improvement objectives and a number of Statutory Performance Targets.

3. Previous Decision of Council

As agreed at the August 2023 Council meeting, quarterly performance reports will be presented to the relevant committee or Working Group.

4. Main Report

Fourth Quarter performance progress reports for Parks and Leisure Services and Sustainability are **enclosed** for Members information.

5. Summary

The main points to highlight are:

- The temporary closure of the centre's main entrance has affected data collection, along with the refurbishment-related closure of the swimming pool, combine to have a negative impact on leisure usage figures.
- Council achieved Platinum status in the NI Environmental Benchmarking Survey;
- Target of 85% of general planning applications processed within 15 days of receipt;
- 60% recycling rate has been exceeded;
- Reduction in the cost of service per household for Waste Management and Environmental Health and Wellbeing services.

6. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Performance and Improvement Plan 2023/24 Performance Progress Report Quarter 4 be noted.

Prepared by: Allen Templeton, Performance Improvement Officer

Agreed by: Lesley Millar, Head of Organisation Development

Approved by: Helen Hall, Director of Corporate Strategy

4.4 EH/PHWB/012 THREE YEAR AGE FRIENDLY ACTION PLAN CONSULTATION

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to inform Members that residents of the Borough are being consulted on the Council's Three Year Age Friendly Action Plan.

2. Background

Members are reminded that in October 2019 Council joined the World Health Organisation's (WHO) Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. This membership underscores the commitment to making Antrim and Newtownabbey a welcoming place for older adults promoting their inclusion to create a more age-friendly Borough.

An Age-Friendly Officer within the Environmental Health section is dedicated to this initiative, focusing on the eight domains of age-friendliness established by the WHO:

1. Outdoor spaces and buildings;
2. Transportation;
3. Housing;
4. Social Participation;
5. Respect and Social Inclusion;
6. Civic Participation and Employment;
7. Communication and Information;
8. Community Support and Health Services.

The Age-Friendly work is funded by the Public Health Agency (PHA) with a key component being the development of a three-year action plan. This plan aims to benefit everyone living, working, and visiting the Borough as they age.

3. Key Issues

To develop the three-year action plan, a baseline questionnaire focusing on the eight domains was completed by 308 residents in 2023 to gather their views on age-friendly provisions in the Borough. Additionally, focus groups were held in each District Electoral Area (DEA) between September and December 2023, in collaboration with community organisations. These sessions allowed residents to share their perspectives on the issues faced by older people in the Borough.

The insights from the questionnaire and focus groups informed the development of the three-year action plan which outlines actions identified by older residents to improve the Borough's age-friendliness.

In March 2024, the PHA funded an independent facilitator to conduct seven in-person consultation sessions on the action plan. These sessions, held across each of the DEAs, provided residents with an opportunity to share their views on the action plan. To ensure broader participation an online consultation is available for 12 weeks until 24th July 2024;

<https://consultations.antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/environmental-health/age-friendly-action-plan/>

To promote the consultation, a press release was issued to local media and an article was published in the summer edition of "News for You," the Council's age-friendly magazine. Throughout the consultation period, regular social media posts and a promotional video will encourage residents to participate. For those unable to access the online consultation, outreach sessions will be held between May and July at all libraries across the Borough where residents can receive assistance in completing the online consultation.

<https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/residents/community-initiatives/age-friendly/age-friendly-consultation/>

The findings from the consultation will be incorporated into the action plan and shared with members in the coming months.

4. Financial Position/Implication

The Age-Friendly service is fully funded by the PHA, which provided £49,773 for the 2023/2024 period. This amount includes a £3,000 enhancement for an independent facilitator to oversee the in-person focus groups.

5. Summary

A three year Age-Friendly Action Plan has been developed to improve the lives of older people living, working, or visiting the Borough. The action plan is available online for consultation until 24th July 2024.

6. Recommendation

It is recommended that the report be noted.

Prepared by: James O'Kane, Health and Wellbeing Manager

Agreed by: Colin Kelly, Head of Environmental Health and Wellbeing

Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Sustainability

4.5 PK/GEN/021 ULSTER IN BLOOM 2024

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on Council's submission for the 2024 Ulster in Bloom Competition.

2. Background

The Translink Ulster in Bloom competition has been coordinated by the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) since 2006. NILGA, the council-led representative body for local authorities in Northern Ireland, includes all 11 councils in Northern Ireland as members. The competition emphasises the collaboration between Councils and local community groups, focusing on three key areas of horticulture, environment, and community. The Council has enjoyed significant success in the competition, with consistent placings across all categories. Groups from Randalstown and Ballynure have even gone on to represent NILGA at the Britain in Bloom Awards.

3. Review of 2023 Awards & Submission for 2024

Officers have reviewed the judging feedback from the 2023 awards, which was detailed across the three scoring categories of horticulture, environment, and community. The review revealed that four areas, Straid, Glengormley, Ballyrobert, and Mallusk, are facing significant challenges in making improvements due to landscape issues and limited community involvement. Consequently, these areas will not be included in this year's submission. Instead, Officers are developing a detailed action plan for each area, including engaging local community groups with the aim of building capacity and ensuring inclusion in future submissions. As a result, the Council will have 15 towns and villages included within the 2024 Ulster in Bloom submission.

Antrim	Ballyclare	Crumlin	Toome
Templepatrick	Ballynure	Parkgate	Killead
Randalstown	Doagh	Burnside	Ballyeaston
Carnmoney	Merville	Whiteabbey	

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that the report be noted.

Prepared and Agreed by: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

Approved by: Matt McDowell, Director of Parks and Leisure Operations

4.6 EH/EHS/LR/007 DOG CONTROL LEGISLATION – INTRODUCTION OF XL BULLY SAFEGUARDING MEASURES

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the new safeguarding control measures for XL Bully dog breeds to be introduced in Northern Ireland by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).

2. Background

On 5 March 2024, DAERA Minister Andrew Muir announced plans to introduce new control measures for XL Bully breed dogs in Northern Ireland to enhance public safety. This decision follows a number of fatal dog attacks in the UK involving this breed.

Currently, Northern Ireland has about 200 licensed XL Bully dogs, with 30 in Antrim and Newtownabbey. The number of licensed XL Bully dogs in Northern Ireland has doubled in the last six months following the UK Government's announcement in September 2023 about banning these dogs in England and Wales.

It is proposed that the XL Bully breed will be added to the list of dangerous dogs under the Dangerous Dogs (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 through the Dangerous Dogs (Designated Type) (Northern Ireland) Order 2024. This legislation will not ban XL Bully dogs outright but will make it illegal to breed, sell, gift, exchange, abandon, or permit them to stray. In addition, XL Bully dogs must also be leashed and muzzled in public. These measures are scheduled to take effect on 28 June 2024.

An "Exemption Register" scheme will allow owners to legally keep their dogs by obtaining an Exemption Certificate, which requires registering their dogs with the Council.

Representatives from the Environmental Health Northern Ireland (EHNI) Northern Ireland Dogs Advisory Group (NIDAG) has been nominated to work with DAERA on implementing the new legislation and managing the Exemption Register. Regular liaison meetings are held fortnightly and the Council has representation on the working group.

3. Key Issues

3.1 Legislation Timeline

To prioritise public safety, DAERA plan to implement the new legislative provisions by the end of June 2024. The implementation timeline (**enclosed**) is included for Members information.

- **Stage 1 – May/June 2024:** The Dangerous Dogs (Designated Type) (Northern Ireland) Order 2024 was approved by the Agriculture, Environment, and Rural Affairs Committee on 23 May 2024, and will be considered at the Executive Committee Meeting in July 2024. If

approved, the legislation will be enacted in July 2024 (subject to change).

- **Stage 2 – July 2024:** The Dangerous Dogs (Compensation and Exemption Schemes) (Northern Ireland) Order 2024 will follow.

Stage 1 of the new Regulations will provide for designation of XL Bully type dogs as the type appearing to be “bred for fighting or having the characteristics of a type bred for that purpose”, as prescribed by Article 25A of The Dangerous Dogs (Northern Ireland) Order 1991. This will add XL Bully dogs to the existing list of dangerous dogs, which already includes the breeds Pit Bull Terrier and Japanese Tosa.

As outlined above, these provisions will make it an offence to breed, sell, gift, exchange, abandon, or permit an XL Bully to stray. It will also be an offence to permit such a dog to be in a public area unless it is leashed and muzzled.

Stage 2 will enact both an Exemption Scheme to allow XL Bully owners to retain ownership of their dogs via the issuing of an Exemption Certificate, as well as a Compensation Scheme, which will facilitate dog owners to surrender their dog for humane destruction, should they not wish to comply with the requirements.

While the legislation aligns with the rest of the UK, Northern Ireland's application for an exemption certificate will differ as it is managed by local Councils.

3.2 Self-Certification Exemption Scheme

Owners of XL Bully dogs will need to self-assess their dogs against the DEFRA UK XL Bully Conformation Standard. If their dog meets the criteria, they must apply for an Exemption Certificate from Councils. The application window is expected to be open from 1 August 2024 to 31 December 2024 and from January 2025, it will be illegal to own an XL Bully dog without an Exemption Certificate.

The exemption scheme requires owners to:

- Pay a £92.40 application fee
- Have appropriate insurance
- Keep their dog leashed and muzzled in public
- Ensure their dog is neutered

3.3 Compensation Scheme

The Dangerous Dogs (Compensation and Exemption Schemes) (Northern Ireland) Order 2024 will include a compensation scheme for owners who choose to surrender their dogs for humane destruction, offering £100 plus £100 towards veterinary costs. This scheme will be fully managed by DAERA.

3.4 Guidance on the New Regulations

DAERA will provide guidance and support to help XL Bully owners understand the new regulations, including identifying XL Bully dogs using the DEFRA Conformation Standard. This information, along with advice on responsible dog ownership, will be widely disseminated.

3.5 Communication/Awareness Campaign

Council representatives from Environmental Health and Marketing and PR sections are collaborating with DAERA's Press team to ensure timely communication about the new restrictions, compliance steps, and support for XL Bully owners.

4. Financial Implication

The new legislative controls for XL Bully dogs will incur annual net costs for Councils. Councils are working with DAERA through the Chief Executives Body - SOLACE NI and NIDAG to manage these costs effectively and secure funding for additional responsibilities. Financial considerations include

- Administration of the exemption process
- IT system enhancements
- Training for Dog Control and Animal Welfare staff
- Kennelling costs for XL Bully breeds
- Legal expenses for enforcement activities

There are ongoing discussions with DAERA regarding financial support for Councils to implement the legislation.

5. Summary

The new legislative controls aim to protect the public from risks posed by XL Bully dogs in Northern Ireland. NIDAG representatives will continue collaborating with DAERA to ensure effective implementation and management of the XL Bully Exemption Register. A further report will be brought back to Members when the full details of the legislation and its implementation are known.

6. Recommendation

It is recommended that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Mark Sloan, Deputy Head of Environmental Health (Environment)

Agreed by: Colin Kelly, Head of Environmental Health

Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Sustainability

4.7 L/LEI/SD/018 HEALTH INTERVENTION ACTION PLAN - UPDATE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an annual update on Council's Health Intervention Action Plan.

2. Introduction/Background

Members are advised that Council approved the Health Intervention Action Plan (2022-27) in November 2022, a copy is enclosed for Member's reference. The Action Plan is designed to increase regular and sustainable participation in exercise across all age groups, with the wider aim of tackling wider health issues in vulnerable and inactive groups.

3. Results 2023/24

Officers develop and coordinate delivery of a range Council led programmes as well as working in collaboration with relevant partner organisations, to facilitate the effective delivery of the Action Plan. During 2023/24 a total of 21,529 participated in these programmes, 112% above the overall target with a detailed breakdown as follows:

Programmes	Target	Actual
Physical Activity Referral Scheme (PARS)	180	179
Move More Cancer Rehabilitation and Rehabilitation Programme	150	238
Age Friendly (Live Long, Fall's Prevention, Walking Netball, Aqua Fit and Nordic Walking)	8000	18,640
Exercise for Mental Health Programme	800	860
Respiratory Rehabilitation and Maintenance Programme	400	808
Cardiac Rehabilitation and Maintenance Programmes	800	432
Programmes for People with a Disability	400	372

Breakdown of external funding received to assist in the delivery of programmes:

Programme	Funded by	Total
Physical Activity Referral Schemes (PARS)	PHA	£31,156
Nordic Walking Programme	NHSCT	£3,000
Walking Netball Programme	NHSCT	£800
Falls Prevention Steady and Strong Programme	NHSCT	£1,500
Move More (Cancer Rehabilitation	Macmillan	£22,500

Programme)		
	Total	£58,956

4. Targets 2024/25

Programmes	Target 2024/25
Physical Activity Referral Scheme (PARS)	400 referrals 50% completers up to 200 per annum
Move More Cancer Rehabilitation and Rehabilitation Programme	150
Age Friendly (Live Long, Fall's Prevention, Walking Netball, Aqua Fit and Nordic Walking)	20,000
Exercise for Mental Health Programme	900
Respiratory Rehabilitation and Maintenance Programme	800
Cardiac Rehabilitation and Maintenance Programmes	600
Programmes for People with a Disability	400
Overall participants	23,050

Officers aim to introduce three new programmes in 2024/25: Drug & Alcohol Addiction, Army Veterans and Active Pregnancy.

5. **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the report be noted

Prepared by: Anna Boyle, Sport & Physical Activity Manager and Conor McCallion, Leisure Development Manager

Agreed by: Deaglan O'Hagan, Head of Leisure Operations

Approved by: Matt McDowell, Director Parks and Leisure Operations

4.8 EH/EHS/CP/004 TOBACCO TEST PURCHASE EXERCISE APRIL 2024

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to inform Members about the results of test purchasing activities conducted for the sale of age-restricted products like cigarettes and tobacco.

2. Background

Members are reminded that The Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 makes it illegal to supply cigarettes or tobacco products to anyone under the age of 18. Furthermore, as of 1 February 2022, it is also an offence under The Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 to sell nicotine inhaling products (including e-cigarettes and e-liquids) to individuals under 18.

The Public Health Agency funds Tobacco Control Officers (TCOs), who work on behalf of Councils in Northern Ireland to promote adherence to tobacco control legislation and offer compliance advice.

3. Key Issues

Throughout the year, TCOs in each Council area must conduct at least 70 visits to retailers of tobacco and vaping products, including test purchases, to ensure compliance with age-restricted sale legislation.

In early April 2024, a reminder letter was sent to 141 retail businesses outlining the requirements for both sets of regulations and informing businesses that test purchases would occur throughout the year. Between January and April 2024 TCO's conducted 177 advisory visits to businesses selling age-restricted products to help owners comply with the regulations.

At the end of April 2024, a test purchasing exercise was conducted. TCOs, accompanied by a young person under 18, visited 15 retailers in the Borough. The young person attempted to purchase either tobacco products (cigarettes) or nicotine inhaling products (vapes).

Out of the 15 premises visited, 11 were fully compliant with legislative requirements. However, three premises sold a nicotine inhaling product and one premises sold a tobacco product to an underage person without checking for age identification.

TCOs notified the management at the four premises about the illegal sales of tobacco products or nicotine inhaling products at the time of the visit. In response, all premises have agreed to provide refresher training to their staff on the sale of age-restricted products. Additionally, a written warning has been sent to each premises that sold a product to the underage person advising that any future violations will result in formal action in accordance with the Councils enforcement policy. A follow up test purchase exercise will be conducted on the four premises over forthcoming months to check

compliance.

4. Summary

A recent test purchase exercise was conducted, marking the first in a series of planned visits for 2024/2025. Throughout this period, at least 70 premises will undergo test purchasing to ensure compliance with age-restricted product regulations.

During the recent test purchase exercise, 11 out of the 15 visited premises were fully compliant with legislative requirements. However, three premises sold a nicotine inhaling product, and one premises sold a tobacco product to an underage person. Written warnings have been sent to the four non-compliant premises, and a follow-up test purchase exercise will be conducted.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Gareth Thompson, Environmental Health Manager (Health & Safety, Consumer Protection, Tobacco Control)

Agreed by: Colin Kelly, Head of Environmental Health and Wellbeing

Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Sustainability

4.9 L/GEN/070 NET PROMOTER SCORE - 2023/2024 RESULTS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Net Promoter Score for Council's Leisure Centres.

2. Introduction

To gather customer feedback and measure satisfaction, the leisure service uses digital software to calculate a Net Promoter Score (NPS). This score is calculated from randomly sampling customers who use the leisure centres and asking them to rate the facilities on a scale of 1 to 10. Additionally, a second question seeks feedback on the reasons behind their rating, offering valuable insights for management to address.

3. Results 2023/24

Key results for the 2023/24 period are as follows:

- Total survey requests: 13,818
- Total responses: 2,362
- NPS: 63
- The most positively scored areas include "Facilities," "Staff," and "Courtesy."
- Ballyearl is the highest scoring centre with an NPS of 73.

For 2023/24, the overall NPS for all leisure centres was 63, a slight decrease from 64 in 2022/23. This minor decline is attributed to the extensive refurbishment at Antrim Forum, which caused significant disruptions. Despite this, the performance remains well above the U.K. leisure industry average of 34. The detailed results for 2023/24 and a summary of customer feedback are enclosed.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that the report be noted

Prepared by: Conor McCallion, Leisure Development Manager

Agreed by: Deaglan O'Hagan, Head of Leisure Operation

Approved by: Matt McDowell, Director of Parks & Leisure Operations

4.10 EH/EHS/FC/011 FOOD SAFETY INITIATIVES – ALLERGEN SEMINAR

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to advise Members of recent food allergen seminars aimed at assisting businesses to comply with legislation.

2. Background

Members are reminded the Food Information Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 came in to effect on 13th December 2014. This means that food business operators must:

- Provide allergen information to the consumer for both prepacked and non-prepacked food and drink;
- Manage food allergens effectively during food preparation.
- Ensure staff receive adequate training on food allergens.

3. Key Issues

Environmental Health routinely inspects food businesses and provides advice on food allergen management. During these inspections, it was found that some food businesses were not fully compliant with legislative requirements. Common areas of non-compliance noted were;

- Inaccurate allergen matrices – the information that businesses hold about what allergens are present in the dishes they serve;
- Staff not adequately trained on allergens;
- Lack of procedural controls in place for preparation of allergens and allergen-free meals.

To improve compliance levels, a regional allergen enforcement approach has been agreed upon across the 11 Councils. This approach will be used during visits to businesses and follow-up visits resulting from failed food sample testing to ensure a consistent approach across Northern Ireland. This enforcement approach highlighted the need to support businesses by providing them with the necessary information to comply with legal requirements.

As part of this new coordinated approach, three food allergen awareness seminars were held at Mossley Mill and Antrim Civic Centre and attended by 163 people from 102 food businesses. The aim of the seminars was to raise food businesses awareness of their legal duties in terms of food allergens.

The seminars included an in-depth presentation by Environmental Health Officers and an interactive workshop with practical exercises, featuring real-life examples and a Q&A session. Evaluation forms were distributed, and returned by 78% of attendees. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with 99% of participants rating the seminar as excellent or good.

Additionally, 81% reported a substantial improvement in their knowledge and

understanding of allergens and food business responsibilities, while 19% noted a moderate improvement.

Overall, the seminars effectively enhanced participants' knowledge and provided practical tools to improve allergen management in food businesses. The seminar presentation and course material will be made available online on the Council's website to ensure that all food businesses in the Borough have access to the resources, aiding them to achieving full compliance.

The regional allergen enforcement approach will continue for the rest of the year and Environmental Health will continue to use enforcement and education tools to ensure compliance.

4. Summary

Three seminars were conducted with 163 people from 102 food businesses in attendance. The seminars aimed to assist business in complying with legislative requirements relating to allergen management, identify areas of non-compliance and an opportunity for food business operators to ask pertinent questions relating to their business to Environmental Health Officers. On evaluation, 99% of participants rated the seminar as excellent or good.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Christina McErlean Deputy Head of Environmental Health

Agreed by: Colin Kelly Head of Environmental Health

Approved by: Michael Laverty Director of Sustainability

4.11 WM/FM/018 VEHICLE HIRE REPORT

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to advise Members about what vehicles are currently being hired by Council.

2. Background

At the last Operations Committee meeting, Members requested a report on the number of hire vehicles currently being used by Council. While Council has a fleet of over 150 vehicles, there are occasions when a vehicle or specialist equipment will need to be hired in.

Hire is normally to cover vehicles when they are undergoing essential reactive maintenance and a replacement is required for a particular duty. In general, these will be short-term hire periods.

When a vehicle has a mechanical defect, the Fleet Management Officers assess whether it is economically advantageous to complete the repairs before they are approved i.e. does the cost of the repair outweigh the value of the vehicle. This assessment will be carried out with the management of the appropriate section to consider operational requirements.

3. Main Points

The table below shows the vehicle hire requirements for Council in May 2024:

Department	Type Vehicle	Type of Hire	Approx Cost of Hire	Reason for Hire
Parks	Cage Tipper Van	Short-term - seasonal	£1,800	Litter picking duties in parks areas over summer period
Parks	Large Crew Van	Short-term - seasonal	£1,800	Litter picking duties in parks areas over summer period
Parks	Large Crew Van	Short-term - seasonal	£1,800	Transporting summer staff throughout the Borough Council vehicle currently being repaired
Waste	Hookloader (large skip vehicle)	Short-term - est 1 week	£1,500	

Parks	Mechanical Digger	Long Term (Jan 2024) - procurement ongoing	£9,750	Replacement for stolen digger
Waste	Large Dropside Van	Long Term (Sept 2020) - procurement ongoing	£4,560 per annum	Replacement for 5.2T dropside disposed of due to uneconomical to repair Due to contractual issues, vehicle required to maintain waste bays at Craigmore Recycling Centre
Waste	Small Mechanical Shovel	Long Term (March 2023) - business case to be completed	£10,000 per annum	

The main points to note:

- Most of the vehicle and plant equipment hire are for short-term periods to meet essential operational requirements ;
- Procurement has commenced to remove the need for the Parks' mechanical digger and Waste's dropside van;
- There is an ongoing economic appraisal to ascertain the best delivery method for the maintenance of the waste bays at Craigmore Recycling Centre.

A further vehicle hire report will be presented to Operations Committee on a quarterly basis.

4. Financial Implications

Financial provision has been made in the 2024-25 budgets for all fleet costs and this includes the purchase, maintenance and hire expenditure.

5. Summary

In May 2024 Council had seven vehicles and plant equipment on hire. These are a mixture of long and short-term agreements with the relevant operational sections and the Fleet Management team monitoring the requirement for each item.

6. Recommendation

It is recommended that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Lynda Gregg, Transport & Contracts Manager

Approved by: Michael Lavery, Director of Sustainability