



**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE HELD
AT MOSSLEY MILL ON MONDAY 7 JUNE 2021 AT 6.30 PM**

- In the Chair** : Councillor A Logue
- Members Present** : Aldermen - F Agnew, T Burns, L Clarke, M Girvan,
J McGrath and J Smyth
Councillors - A Bennington, R Foster, J Gilmour, L Irwin,
N Kelly, J Montgomery, R Swann and R Wilson
- Non Committee Members** : Councillors – M Cooper, P Dunlop, R Lynch, A McAuley,
V McWilliam, N Ramsay, S Ross and B Webb
- Officers Present** : Deputy Chief Executive of Operations (Interim) - G Girvan
Deputy Director of Operations (Leisure & Parks) - M McDowell
Deputy Director of Operations (Environmental Health, Building
Control and Property) (Interim) - C Todd
Deputy Director of Operations (Waste and Fleet) – M Lavery
ICT System Support Officer – Colin Bell
Member Services Officer - S Boyd

CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

The Chairperson welcomed returning and new Committee Members to the June Operations Committee meeting and reminded all present of the audio recording procedures.

In order to protect public health during the current COVID-19 emergency it was not possible to allow the public or the press to physically attend the meeting. The public and the press can access those parts of the meeting which they are entitled to attend via livestream (a link to which is on the Council website). The meeting minutes and audio recording would be published on the Council's website.

1 APOLOGIES

None

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

3 ITEMS FOR DECISION

3.1 L/LEI/015 YOUR SCHOOL YOUR CLUB

Members were reminded that Your School Your Club (YSYC) is a Department for Communities capital funding programme administered by Sport Northern Ireland (Sport NI). The programme aims to promote use of school sports facilities by sports club and communities recognising that the opening of schools sports estate in such a way has a major impact on the provision of sports facilities throughout Northern Ireland. Applications are made by the individual schools however, Sport NI requires local Councils to support applications to ensure alignment with any wider Council strategic objectives.

A request for support had been made by Edmund Rice College as follows:

School	Project title	Project cost	Amount requested from Sport NI	Partnership funding
Edmund Rice College	Installation of a sprung floor in dance studio	£13,000	£12,000	£1,000

Edmund Rice College, in partnership with St Mary's Football Club, Newington Football Club, The Judo Academy and a local autism group had completed an expression of interest form to Your School Your Club requesting £12,000 towards project costs.

Letters of support from St Mary's and Newington Football Clubs were circulated.

Following a question from a Member the Deputy Director of Operations (Leisure and Parks) agreed to confirm that all schools, primary and post primary, are notified of the Your School Your Club scheme.

Proposed by Councillor Montgomery
Seconded by Alderman McGrath and agreed

that Council supports the application to the Your School Your Club funding programme made by Edmund Rice College.

ACTION BY: Matt McDowell, Deputy Director of Operations (Leisure and Parks)/Anna Boyle, Sport & Physical Activity Programmes Manager/Deaglan O'Hagan, Commercial Programmes Manager/

3.2 PK/GEN/035/VOL2 GRASS MANAGEMENT SUB GROUP

The Grass Management Sub Group met on 4 May 2021. Members considered a detailed report which included a number of key areas:

- Roundabout Improvement Programme
- Grass cutting
- Local Biodiversity Action Plan

- Update on seasonal planting (to include works in Carnmoney Village and successional bulb planting)
- Best Kept Garden Competition, Accreditations update and Green Flag Awards
- Centenary planting
- Covid -19 Memorial Beds and trees
- Climate Change: Plant a million Trees Programme, progress on tree planting, and grassland meadows
- Parks improvement projects

Arising from the meeting a series of recommendations were made for consideration by the Operations Committee and were detailed within the circulated Minutes.

Proposed by Councillor Foster
 Seconded by Alderman Smyth and agreed

that the minutes of the Grass Management Sub Group of 4 May 2021 be approved.

ACTION BY: Matt McDowell, Deputy Director of Operations (Parks & Leisure)

3.3 PK/GEN/35/VOL4 MEMBERSHIP OF THE GRASS MANAGEMENT SUB GROUP

Members were reminded that the Grass Management Sub Group was established in October 2015 to plan and manage the challenges of new traffic regulations, roundabout maintenance improvements and impact of Department for Infrastructure budget cuts on urban grass cutting. This sub group had proven very effective in achieving improvements in these areas and also as a mechanism for a wider range of operational Parks matters.

Meetings are scheduled up to 6 times per annum, and are normally held prior to the Operations Committee. The Chair of the sub group is normally the Chair of the Operations Committee. The minutes of the meeting are considered at the following month's Operations Committee.

The current membership of this subgroup was noted below:

Current Membership
Chair of Operations Committee
Alderman J Smyth
Alderman L Clarke
Councillor M Magill
Councillor J Montgomery
Councillor V McWilliam

Proposed by Councillor Foster
 Seconded by Alderman Smyth and agreed that

that membership of the Grass Management Sub Group be approved as set out with the addition of Councillors Foster and Kelly.

ACTION BY: Vicki Kyles, Executive Assistant to Director of Operations

Amended by Council 28 June 2021

3.4 WM/WM/40 EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY CONSULTATION DRAFT RESPONSE

As reported to Members in April 2021, the Westminster Department for the Environment, Farming, and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), in conjunction with the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and the Department for Agriculture, Environment, and Rural Affairs (DAERA) in Northern Ireland are consulting on the Extended Producer Responsibility (consultation circulated).

Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging is being proposed so that producers pay the full costs of dealing with the waste they produce. This is expected to cost producers in the region of £2.7bn in the first full year of implementation with the industry responsible for the full net cost recovery for the management of the collection and disposal of all packaging waste. This includes packaging waste from households in both the recycling containers and residual waste bins and that which has been littered in the Borough.

The consultation documents were extensive and technical in detail. There are some questions aimed at the packaging sector and as a result Council is proposing to respond 'unsure' rather than 'yes' or 'no' in these sections. A response has been drafted and was circulated. A summary of the main points of the draft response were set out below:

1. Agree minimum recycling targets for six packaging materials (plastic, wood, aluminium, steel, paper/card, & glass) with an overall recycling rate for EPR packaging of 73% by 2030 although raised concerns about the displacement of wood from reuse treatment options;
2. Support a mandatory, producer-led takeback obligation on sellers of filled disposable paper cups with larger businesses starting by the end of 2023 and all businesses by the end of 2025;
3. Propose a single agreed cross product label to indicate whether a product is recyclable to assist public understanding;
4. A new kerbside recycling collection service is proposed for plastic film from 2026/27 and while Council welcomes increased recycling, there are limited processing and end markets for this material currently available therefore we are unable to support this at present;
5. The 'necessary costs' payable to Council will include the cost of collection of packaging materials within the scope of this new legislation (except the DRS materials). These materials are collected through wheelie boxes/blue bins, household recycling centres, black bins or street sweeping and litter picking operations. The council supports payment linked to good practice and collected on a quarterly basis;
6. Packaging waste from businesses will also be covered by the Regulations and we have supported this proposal;
7. We agree that full cost recovery of collecting and treating littered packaging materials should be available to both statutory bodies, like

- Northern Ireland Housing Executive, and the voluntary sector through the scheme;
8. Seeking further consideration of the impact of the legislation for cross-border businesses;
 9. We support the least complex systems for the packaging producers in order to protect small businesses from excessive burden;
 10. While it would be preferable for the introduction of the scheme in 2023, the timescale is challenging and a prudent approach is recommended with a possible phased approach.

As approved by Council in May 2021, the response would be submitted to meet the consultation deadline of 4 June with a note that full ratification would occur in June and the submission may be subject to change.

Following a comprehensive overview by the Deputy Director of Operations (Waste & Fleet) and a lengthy discussion it was

Proposed by Councillor Bennington
Seconded by Councillor Montgomery and agreed

that the consultation response for Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging be approved.

ACTION BY: Michael Laverty, Deputy Director of Operations (Waste & Fleet)

3.5 WM/WM/40 DEPOSIT RETURN SCHEME (DRS) CONSULTATION DRAFT RESPONSE

As reported to Committee in April 2021, the Department for the Westminster Environment, Farming, and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), in conjunction with the Welsh Government and the Department for Agriculture, Environment, and Rural Affairs (DAERA) in Northern Ireland are consulting on the introduction of a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) (consultation circulated).

Members noted that the Scottish Government had already approved the introduction of a DRS which is scheduled to go live on 1 July 2022. It will require consumers to pay a 20p deposit on each glass, can or plastic container purchased, which is then reimbursed when the empty container is returned.

This consultation relates solely to deposit return schemes (explicitly for drinks containers) whereby you pay an upfront deposit and you must return the container to redeem the monetary value. While the initial start date for DRS is planned for 2023 and the Governments remain committed to this, the consultation does recognise the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the economy and society and considers whether there is a continued appetite is for a deposit return scheme in a "post-Covid" context. If the consensus remains that DRS schemes are required, then it is anticipated that it would be late 2024 at the earliest before introduction.

Similar to the Extended Producer Responsibility consultation, the document was extensive and technical in detail. There are questions aimed at producers, retailers and the packaging sector and as a result Council is proposing to

respond 'unsure' rather than 'yes' or 'no' in these sections. A response has been drafted and was circulated for consideration. The main points of the draft response were as follows:

1. A DRS is potentially beneficial, however a delay in the implementation should be considered to enable the full implementation and analysis of the impact of the introduction of the Extended Producer Responsibility scheme due to be implemented from 2024.
2. DRS has the potential to significantly reduce the materials collected through kerbside recycling services with the residents utilising Return Vending Machines to redeem their deposit. This brings the potential that additional car journeys will be made and this is not deemed to be sound environmental practice.
3. 'On-the-go' (drinks containers 750ml in volume or less) is preferred to 'all-in' (all drinks containers up to 3L in volume) because a focus on 'on the go' drinks containers targets littered items although a delay is recommended to allow further research to take place;
4. Council is supportive of a UK wide digital solution which should be developed and implemented to enable an "All-in" system to utilise kerbside collection schemes by Local Authorities, with the support of centralised Return Vending Machines. This would assist Council in collecting good quality recyclable materials from the kerbside rather than residents driving to the Return Vending Machines.
5. One of the aims of the proposal is to reduce litter but regularly littered items are not included like takeaway cups and fast food packaging. While Council has recommended that takeaway cups and fast food packaging should be included we realise that the public will purchase the product and then travel away from the point of sale and therefore the Extended Producer Responsibility may be a better channel to address this issue;
6. Further collaborative working is recommended between the government of the Republic of Ireland, DAERA and DEFRA and scheme administrators to ensure consistent policy and administration and to prevent cross-border fraud;
7. Mandatory and consistent labelling will be required to prevent consumer confusion and assist on the collection method;
8. Systems must be in place to financially reimburse local authorities for any DRS items they must deal with, in recycling, residual waste or litter;
9. The majority of monitoring and enforcing functions should fall to the environmental regulators in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, a role for local authorities/Trading Standards to regulate the consumer-facing obligations that are placed on retailers is envisaged.

As approved by Council in May 2021, the response will be submitted to meet the consultation deadline of 4 June with a note that full ratification will occur in June and the submission may be subject to change.

Following a comprehensive overview by the Deputy Director of Operations (Waste & Fleet) and a lengthy discussion it was

Proposed by Councillor Montgomery
Seconded by Councillor Kelly and agreed

that the consultation response for Deposit Return Scheme be approved.

ACTION BY: Michael Laverty, Deputy Director of Operations (Waste & Fleet)

3.6 L/GEN/056 FACILITY CLOSURES - LEISURE

Members were reminded that in March, the annual review of facility closures was approved for the Leisure Service. Due to a formatting error with the enclosure, some dates for closure were incorrect and therefore an amended schedule of facility closures with correct dates was circulated for approval.

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Alderman Smyth and agreed

that the amended closures as set out above be approved for 2021/2022.

ACTION BY: Vicki Kyles, Executive Assistant to Director of Operations

3.7 PK/GEN/186 THE QUEEN'S GREEN CANOPY – THE PLATINUM JUBILEE 2022

Following the decision by Council to participate in the Queen's Green Canopy Project which will mark Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, in 2022, proposals had been considered by the Grass Management Sub Group, minutes circulated.

A number of recommendations were set out in the minutes while some aspects of the project required further development and/or research.

Officers would investigate the potential for support with appropriate organisations.

Following a query from a Member, the Deputy Chief Executive of Operations (Interim) confirmed that the Sub Group had recommended that the Platinum Jubilee Copse, School Tree and Community Project included both Macedon and Threemilewater DEAs while the Platinum Jubilee Avenue proposals related to the Borough's five towns.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Alderman Clarke and agreed

that the minutes of the Grass Management Sub Group meeting of 3 June be approved with the inclusion of Macedon and Threemilewater DEAs in the Platinum Jubilee Avenue category.

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

4 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

4.1 PK/GEN/001/VOL3 COMMEMORATIVE PROGRAMME

Update on Commemorative Programme Sponsorship of Benches and Trees for the last quarter of 2020 - 2021.

Benches

Year	Total	Location
Qtr 4 2020/21	2	Antrim Castle Gardens (1), Hazelbank Park (1) Additional plaque added to bench at Macedon Point (1)

Trees

Year	Total	Location
Qtr 4 2020/21	1	Hazelbank Park (1)

All requests were compliant with Council policy.

Proposed by Alderman Girvan
Seconded by Alderman Smyth and agreed

that the report be noted.

NO ACTION

4.2 L/LEI/SD/016 PARKRUN

Members were reminded that Parkrun is hosted in three venues across the Borough, on Council premises; V36/Valley Park, Antrim Loughshore Park, and Sixmilewater Park in Ballyclare.

Due to public health restrictions arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, the weekly Parkrun events have not taken place since March 2020. Following the easing of restrictions, Parkrun officials have now contacted Council to advise of a proposed return to weekly events from June 26.

Proposed by Alderman Girvan
Seconded by Councillor Kelly and agreed

that the report be noted.

NO ACTION

4.3 PBS/BC/002/VOL2 BUILDING CONTROL MATTERS FOR THE PERIOD 1-30 APRIL 2021

BUILDING REGULATIONS

The following submissions under Regulation 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 & 14 of the Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 (as amended) were received.

Applications Received

Full Plans – 42
Building Notices – 236
Regularisation Certificates – 35

Full Plans

Approvals – 47
Rejected applications requiring resubmissions – 54

Commencements & Completions

Commencements – 302
Completions – 264

Inspections - A total of 1004 Site Inspections were carried out.

Regularisation Certificate - 60 Regularisation Certificates issued.

Building Notice- 140 Completion Certificates issued

Property Certificates

Received – 302
Issued – 273

Income

Plan Fees Received for Month	£9351.75
Inspection Fees Invoiced for Month	£34170.37
Building Notice Fees Received for Month	£10552.00
Regularisation Fees Received for Month	£3345.60
Property Certificate Fees Received for Month	<u>£21140.00</u>
TOTAL	£78559.72

Projected Income To Date	Year to Date Actual Income
£67,000	£100,565

Postal Numbering & Development Naming

Numbers of official postal numbers issued – 169

LPS Partnership

Property details surveys completed - 50

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Alderman Clarke and agreed

that the report be noted.

NO ACTION

4.4 WM/SC/001 DEVELOPMENT OF A BOROUGH LITTER ACTION PLAN

Members were reminded that at the May meeting of Committee it was agreed that a Litter Action Plan would be developed for the Borough taking into account new or innovative ways to address all types of litter; dog fouling, fast food packaging, beverage cups, cigarette butts, and fly tipping.

In developing the Plan, a workshop was agreed and Officers plan to hold this on Wednesday 1 September. This would allow the results of the residents' survey, about the cleanliness of the Borough in the current edition of Borough Life, to be analysed and reported at the workshop. In addition, it is intended to seek Members' ideas and suggestions as well as research on examples of good from around the UK and beyond.

It was also hoped that restrictions will have eased further by September allowing more Members to attend in person.

Proposed by Councillor Bennington
Seconded by Councillor Kelly and agreed

that the report be noted.

NO ACTION

4.5 WM/SC/001 MCDONALDS LITTER COMMUNICATIONS CAMPAIGN PARTNERSHIP

In order to tackle the takeaway litter being discarded across Northern Ireland, McDonalds had developed two campaigns that will be run over the summer months. The campaigns, which coincide with McDonalds celebrating 30 years in Northern Ireland, are as follows:

1. social media campaign to highlight the problem of litter;
2. Community and staff litter picks called "30 Parks in 30 Days".

Officers had been working in partnership with McDonalds, to help tackle the problem of takeaway litter across the Borough and as part of their "30 Parks in 30 Days" three litter-picks had been arranged in Parks/paths near McDonalds Restaurants as follows:

- 15 June, 2.30pm – Hazelbank Park (led by the Abbey Centre restaurant)
- 19 June, 10am – along Ballymena Road North in Antrim (led by the Antrim restaurant)
- 20 June, 9am – Lilian Bland, Glengormley (led by Glengormley restaurant)

Council would provide resources during the day to assist in the clean-up, including staff and PPE and will collect and dispose of all litter collected by the teams to aid recycling and recovery of the waste through the Support in Kind Scheme. Additional PR would also be provided by Council to increase awareness of the effects litter is having in our local areas and to further support the McDonalds campaign. As a direct result of this work, it was envisaged that McDonalds will partner Council on future joint litter awareness campaigns.

Following questions from Members, the Deputy Chief Executive of Operations (Interim) agreed to ensure that McDonalds be notified of the views of some Members in relation to the proposed location of the Antrim and Newtownabbey litter picks.

Proposed by Councillor Bennington
Seconded by Councillor Montgomery and agreed

that the report be noted.

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

4.6 L/GEN/077 PITCH STRATEGY

Members were reminded that the Council's Recovery Plan sets out a commitment to provide accessible Leisure facilities, Parks, Open Spaces, Community and Arts and Culture facilities and services, and Play parks to improve the quality of life of our residents.

In relation to pitch provision in the Borough, the development of a Pitch Strategy would assist in planning for provision to meet this commitment. A specialist leisure consultant who previously completed work for Sport Northern Ireland for the 11 Councils will update the work already undertaken including, stakeholder consultations, audit, benchmarking and recommendations.

Following a question from a Member relating to changing facilities the Deputy Director of Operations (Leisure & Parks) provided clarity to Members on the current IFA and DfC guidelines.

Proposed by Councillor Kelly
Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed

that the report be noted.

NO ACTION

The Chairperson took the Supplementary report at this point of the meeting.

4.7 DIR/OPS/003 REQUEST TO PRESENT TO OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

Correspondence had been received from Translink (circulated) requesting to make a presentation to the Operations Committee regarding refurbishment of

the existing rail infrastructure in Whiteabbey as part of their wider Communications Plan.

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor Bennington and agreed

that Translink be invited to present at the next available Operations Committee.

ACTION BY: Member Services

6 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Following a request from a Member, the Deputy Chief Executive of Operations (Interim) agreed to provide an update on grave provision in the Newtownabbey area.

ACTION BY: Geraldine Girvan, Deputy Chief Executive of Operations (Interim)

Following a request from the Chairperson the Deputy Director of Operations (Environmental Health, Building Control and Property) agreed to review signage in Dog Control areas throughout the Borough.

ACTION BY: Clifford Todd, Deputy Director of Operations (Environmental Health, Building Control and Property) (Interim)

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED 'IN CONFIDENCE'

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Councillor Bennington and agreed

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

5. ITEMS IN CONFIDENCE

5.1 IN CONFIDENCE WM/arc21/4/VOL7 arc21 JOINT COMMITTEE PAPERS

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

- May 2021

Members were reminded that the documents are 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 Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor Bennington and agreed

that the papers be noted.

NO ACTION

5.2 IN CONFIDENCE PK/GEN/107, PK/GEN/151, PK/BIO/019 DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL AFFAIRS (DAERA): ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGE COMPETITION

In May 2021, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) reopened its Environmental Challenge Competition for applications.

There was a very short window to submit applications with a closing date of the 1 June 2021. Funding needed to be spent by the 15 March 2022.

Two potential projects had been identified and speculative applications submitted. It was expected that DAERA would fund up to 85% of the total project costs.

Hightown/Mallusk to Gideon's Green

Members were reminded that this route, identified as a possible greenway, is being developed in phases as funding becomes available. Some sections had already been completed through funding from the Department for Communities.

The potential to further extend the route through the Valley Park (as highlighted on the circulated, marked in red – 900m in length), had been previously reported whereby enabling works are being undertaken in anticipation of funding becoming available.

An application for a new 3-metre-wide accessibility route with road crossing points within the park close to the entrance to V36 at an estimated cost of £[REDACTED], had been submitted.

Post-project, an application would be made to DAERA's Small Woodland Grants Programme for the planting of 2,000+ native tree species. This would not only enhance the value of the site for biodiversity, but would also act as a buffer between the route and the motorway.

Disability Sport NI and Valley Parkrun had indicated that this new path will provide added value to their activities.

Ballyclare

Members recalled that both a feasibility study and design works were carried out for a Doagh to Larne Greenway (total of 34km) in 2017/18, through funding from the Department for Infrastructure (DfI). The total estimated cost to develop at the time, was £[REDACTED] and a partnership with Mid and East Antrim Borough Council would be required to deliver this project.

In the meantime, it was possible to develop parts of the route in phases, and for this reason, an application had been submitted speculatively for a new 3m wide accessibility route at an estimated cost of £[REDACTED]

This route would connect the new relief road currently under construction by DfI at the western periphery of Ballyclare, linking housing developments in this area to the Sixmilewater Park (map circulated marked in red 800m in length).

Officers had also applied to Department for Communities (DfC) Access and Inclusion Fund, to develop a safe, off-road access point into the Sixmilewater Park at the Eastern end of the Route. This involves 350m of upgrading access into the Park, as well as developing new paths in the Park itself (marked in green on map circulated).

As well as being important in the development of the Doagh to Larne Greenway, phased proposals would provide invaluable off road routes through the town improving opportunities for walking and cycling.

Both projects would include the installation of information panels on the natural environment, in order to satisfy funding criteria.

In the event that the applications are successful, detailed Economic Appraisals would be brought to Committee for consideration with the maximum estimated contributions by Council expected to be approximately £27,750.

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Alderman Agnew and agreed

that the report be noted.

NO ACTION

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED OUT OF 'IN CONFIDENCE'

Proposed by Alderman Girvan
Seconded by Councillor Montgomery 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 patience in light of the IT issues, wished everyone a safe and enjoyable summer break, and the meeting concluded at 7.34 pm.

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.