



7 June 2024

Committee Chair: Councillor M Brady

Committee Vice-Chair: Alderman J McGrath

Committee Members: Aldermen – L Boyle and S Ross

Councillors – M Cooper, P Dunlop, J Gilmour, R Lynch,  
T McGrann, V McWilliam, M Ní Chonghaile, A O'Lone,  
L Smyth, S Ward and S Wilson

Dear Member

### **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

A meeting of the Community Development Committee will be held in the **Council Chamber, Mossley Mill on Wednesday 12 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 5.20**

**For any queries please contact Member Services:**

Tel: 028 9448 1301

[memberservices@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk](mailto:memberservices@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk)

## **A G E N D A**

### **1 APOLOGIES**

### **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

### **3 PRESENTATION**

3.1 Integrated Education Fund – Future School's Project

### **4 ITEMS FOR DECISION**

4.1 Equality and Diversity Working Group Minutes

4.2 Community Development Grant Aid Programme – Small Grants Funding Recommendations 2024/25

4.3 Rathenraw Community Centre – Summer Scheme Free Use Request

4.4 Multi Agency Support Hub

4.5 Armed Forces Day 2024

4.6 Ballyclare May Fair

4.7 Irish Language Bursary Grant Programme

4.8 Anti-Poverty Steering Group

4.9 Northern Ireland Centenary Community Centre, Ballyduff – Polling Station Request

4.10 Good Relations Week 2024

4.11 Community Festival Fund Grant Aid

4.12 Capital Premises and Equipment Grant Fund Recommendations 2024

4.13 Community Development Grant Aid Programme Recommendations 2024/2027

4.14 Free Use of Mossley Mill Meeting Room

4.15 Belfast Tradfest Bursary

4.16 Department for Communities Funding Position Update 2024/2025

**5 ITEMS FOR NOTING**

- 5.1 Performance and Improvement Plan 2023/24 Performance Progress Report (Community Planning) Quarter 4
- 5.2 Hardship Scheme 2023/2024
- 5.3 The Period Products (Free Provision) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022
- 5.4 Social Media Performance 2023/24
- 5.5 Community Planning Section - Partnership Minutes

**6 ITEMS IN CONFIDENCE**

- 6.1 Community Facilities Tenancy Charges Review

**7 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS**

**REPORT ON BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING ON  
WEDNESDAY 12 JUNE 2024**

**3 PRESENTATION**

**3.1 CP/CD/386 INTEGRATED EDUCATION FUND – FUTURE SCHOOL'S PROJECT**

**1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the attendance at Committee of Integrated Education Fund who will be making a presentation to Members.**

**2. Previous Decision of Council**

Members are reminded that in response to a request from Integrated Education Fund at the February Committee it was agreed to invite the Integrated Education Fund to a future meeting of the Committee to make a presentation.

Representatives will provide a presentation to the Committee, a copy of which is **enclosed** for Members' information.

**3. Recommendation**

**It is recommended that the presentation be noted.**

Prepared by: Joanne Hamilton-Whyte, PA Director of Community Planning

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Planning

## 4 ITEMS FOR DECISION

### 4.1 CP/GR/055 Voi 2 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY WORKING GROUP MINUTES

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval for the minutes of the meeting of the Equality and Diversity Working Group held on 9 May 2024.**

#### 2. Background

The Equality and Diversity Working Group was established in 2018 to replace the previous Good Relations Working Group with the objective of bringing together relevant Officers and Elected Members to focus on accessible services.

The focus of the Group has evolved to include all aspects of equality and diversity including but not limited to:

- Accessible Services
- Good Relations
- Inclusive Services
- Newcomer Issues
- Supporting the Vulnerable

#### 3. Previous Decision of Council

Members are reminded that arrangements for the re-establishment of the Equality and Diversity Working Group, including membership, were approved at the September 2023 Community Planning Committee meeting. The Working Group reports to the Community Development Committee.

#### 4. Working Group Meeting

A copy of the minutes of the Equality and Diversity Working Group meeting held on 9 May 2024 are **enclosed** for Members' information.

#### 5. Recommendation

**It is recommended that the minutes of the Equality and Diversity Working Group held on 9 May 2024 be approved as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.**

Prepared by: Lynda Kennedy, Community Programmes Manager

Agreed by: Ronan McKenna, Head of Community Planning

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Planning

## 4.2 CP/CD/476 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANT AID PROGRAMME - SMALL GRANTS FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS 2024/25

### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval in relation to the Community Development Small Grants Funding Programme awards being recommended.**

### 2. Background

The Small Grants Programme provides financial assistance to groups with the Borough of up to £1,000 towards seeding costs, public and employer's liability insurance, small items of equipment or an activity.

### 3. Previous Decision of Council

The Small Grants Programme, was approved by the Council in October 2014 as part of the Council's new Community Development Grant Aid Programme. Members are advised that groups who apply for a small grant are not permitted to apply for any other funding available under the wider Community Development Grant Aid Programme during the course of the 2024/25 financial year.

In December 2019 Members agreed that from 1 April 2020 all Small Grants be assessed on the basis of Pass/Fail against eligibility criteria and not subjected to a scored assessment process. All proposed awards are subject to a signed disclosure from the group confirming that all appropriate supporting documentation is in place and can be provided on request or the offer of funding will be withdrawn.

### 4. Financial Implication

Members are advised provision of £15,000 financial support for the Small Grants Programme has been provided for in the 2024/25 Community Development budgets. Following previous awards there is a budget of £10,181.45 remaining.

During the month of May 5 applications were received and assessed by Officers. 3 applications were deemed ineligible with 2 applications totalling £2,000 recommended for approval, details are **enclosed** for Members' information.

### 5. Summary

It is proposed to award 2 Small Grant funding awards to the successful applicants as outlined. If the awards are approved, there will be a budget of £8,181.45 remaining for Small Grant awards in 2024/25.

Community Development Small Grants will remain open as a rolling programme with applications being reported to the Community Planning Committee on a monthly basis until the allocated budget is maximised.

**6. Recommendation**

**It is recommended that the 2 Small Grant applications requesting a total of £2,000 be approved.**

Prepared by: Jonathan Henderson, Community Services Co-ordinator

Agreed by: Ronan McKenna, Head of Community Planning

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Planning

#### **4.3 CP/CC/012 RATHENRAW COMMUNITY CENTRE – SUMMER SCHEME FREE USE REQUEST**

##### **1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report is to recommend to Members that Rathenraw Youth Scheme in Antrim is given permission to use Rathenraw Community Centre free of charge for their two week Summer Scheme from 22 July – 2 August 2024 including keyholder status.**

##### **2. Introduction/Background**

Rathenraw Youth Scheme makes regular bookings at Rathenraw Community Centre on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday evenings.

Rathenraw Youth Scheme also deliver an annual Summer Scheme, established over 25 years ago. This year the scheme is scheduled to take place over two weeks from 22 July to 2 August, delivered Monday to Friday 9am-3:30pm.

The Summer Scheme will accommodate 100 Juniors and 80 Seniors. The Youth Scheme has requested free use of Rathenraw Community Centre, as a keyholder, for the delivery of the two week Summer Scheme.

##### **3. Previous Decision of Council**

Members are reminded that permission for free use of Rathenraw Community Centre for the delivery of the 2023 Summer Scheme was previously provided to Rathenraw Youth Scheme at the June 2023 Council Meeting.

Members are also reminded that free use requests for one off bookings continue to be accommodated under the relevant policy with any requests which are outside of the policy brought to the Community Development Committee for approval.

##### **4. Financial Position/Implication**

The waiver of community hire charges for the two weeks scheme represents potential lost income of £1,170. However, provision of keyholder status to the Scheme alleviates the need for any staff expenditure.

##### **5. Recommendation**

**It is recommended that Rathenraw Youth Scheme is given permission to use Rathenraw Community Centre free of charge, as a keyholder, for their two week Summer Scheme from 22 July – 2 August 2024.**



Prepared by: Paul Townsend, Community Facilities Coordinator

Agreed by: Ronan McKenna, Head of Community Planning

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Planning

#### 4.4 CP/CP/074 MULTI AGENCY SUPPORT HUB

##### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is to advise Members that financial assistance of up to £3,600 from the Department of Justice towards administration of the Multi Agency Support Hub.**

##### 2. Introduction/Background

Members are reminded of the ongoing work of the Multi-Agency Support Hub (MASH) that was established within the Borough in July 2017. The Hub is a multi-agency partnership of statutory agencies all working together and sharing information and resources in order to improve the lives of the most vulnerable individuals within our Borough.

The Antrim and Newtownabbey MASH, is led by the Council and includes representation from a range of key statutory organisations including;

- Policing and Community Safety Partnership
- Police Service of Northern Ireland
- Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive
- Youth Justice Agency
- Northern Health & Social Care Trust
- Northern Ireland Ambulance Service
- Northern Ireland Probation Board

Since its inception the MASH has received 186 referrals, of these 93 were accepted. The MASH currently has 17 live cases, where service users are receiving continual support and 2 review cases (service users who have already benefitted but are monitored for a period of time).

The Department of Justice has provided an annual financial contribution towards administration costs associated with the Multi Agency Support Hub, since 2017, which the Council has accepted.

##### 3. Previous Decision of Council

Members are reminded that the provision of funding from the Department of Justice of up to £3,600 for the 2023-2024 financial year was approved at the June 2023 Council meeting.

##### 4. Financial implication

Following the launch of the Support Hub, the Department for Justice provided an annual financial contribution of up to a maximum of £3,600 per annum, towards administration costs of the Hub this was initially for 3 years until 2021, which has been extended at the same funding rate in the ensuing periods.

Members are advised correspondence **enclosed** has been received from the Department of Justice to confirm funding of up to £3,600 is being provided for the 2024-2025 financial year.

#### 5. Governance

The Multi-Agency Support Hub is led and managed by Council Officers with representation from a range of key statutory organisations and oversight from a Regional Steering Group.

#### 6. Recommendation

**It is recommended that the financial assistance up to £3,600 from the Department of Justice towards administration of the Multi Agency Support Hub, be accepted.**

Prepared by: Lynda Kennedy, Community Programmes Manager

Agreed by: Ronan McKenna, Head of Community Planning

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Planning

## 4.5 CP/CP/214 ARMED FORCES DAY 2024

### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval for the minutes of the Armed Forces Day Working Group meeting of 22 May 2024.**

### 2. Background

Armed Forces Day 2024 will take place at Jordanstown Loughshore Park on Saturday 22 June. This will be the first time that the event has been held in the Borough since 2016, when it took place in Antrim Castle Gardens.

The theme of Armed Forces Day will be Veterans and the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D-Day, and the event will be filled with entertainment, military displays, stalls, live demonstrations and family fun.

A Military Working Group meets monthly to co-ordinate the specific military aspects of the event, and a Council Working Group also meets monthly to oversee the delivery of Armed Forces Day in its entirety.

### 3. Previous Decision of Council

The delivery of Armed Forces Day 2024 on Saturday 22 June was approved at the June 2023 Council meeting when it was agreed to establish a Working Group.

### 4. Working Group Meeting

Members are advised that the Armed Forces Day 2024 Working Group met on 22 May 2024 in Mossley Mill. The minutes of the meeting are **enclosed**.

### 5. Recommendation

**It is recommended that the minutes of the Armed Forces Day Working Group meeting of 22 May 2024 be approved as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.**

Prepared by: Joanne Hamilton-Whyte, PA to Director of Community Planning

Agreed by: Simon Goldrick, Head of Arts, Culture, Tourism and Events

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Planning

#### 4.6 AC/EV/025 BALLYCLARE MAY FAIR

##### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval for the minutes of the Ballyclare May Fair Working Group meeting of 15 May 2024.**

##### 2. Background

Members are reminded that the role of the Ballyclare May Fair Working Group is to promote, develop and organise the annual Ballyclare May Fair. The specific role of the May Fair Working Group is set out as follows:

- To advise the Council on the programme for the May Fair
- To organise delivery of the May Fair
- To promote participation in the May Fair by the Ballyclare Community and wider Borough Community
- To explore opportunities for sponsorship and additional funding for the May Fair
- To provide advocacy for the May Fair and achieve collaboration of a range of stakeholders into the design and delivery of the May Fair
- To contribute expertise, skills and knowledge from a range of sectors to the benefit and continuous improvement of this annual event so that Ballyclare DEA achieves maximum benefit from its delivery

The Working Group meets monthly from September to June each year and reports to the Community Development Committee. Membership consists of all Ballyclare DEA Elected Members, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, and up to five non-elected voluntary members who are actively involved in the local community.

##### 3. Previous Decision of the Council

The revised Working Group Terms of Reference were approved at the December 2023 Community Planning Committee.

##### 4. Working Group Meeting

Members are advised that the Ballyclare May Fair Working Group met on 15 May 2024 in Ballyclare Town Hall. The minutes of the meeting are **enclosed**.

## **5. Recommendation**

**It is recommended that the minutes of the Ballyclare May Fair Working Group meeting of 15 May 2024 be approved as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.**

Prepared by: Joanne Hamilton-Whyte, PA to Director of Community Planning

Agreed by: Simon Goldrick, Head of Arts, Culture, Tourism and Events

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Planning

## 4.7 AC/GEN/111 IRISH LANGUAGE BURSARY GRANT PROGRAMME

### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval to award ten bursaries from the Deputy Mayor Gaeltacht Bursary Programme 2024.**

### 2. Introduction / Background

For post primary school children learning the Irish Language Gaeltacht colleges in Donegal are popular and established summer activities, which focus on the development of Irish language skills, in particular conversation and vocabulary. Attendance at a Gaeltacht college is on a residential basis and course fees range from £300 to £500 per pupil.

### 3. Previous Decision of Council

Members are reminded that the delivery of the Deputy Mayor Gaeltacht Bursary Programme for 2024, with a maximum budget of £2,500, was approved at the April Community Planning Committee. It was agreed that the Bursary Programme would support 10 young people from the Borough with a bursary of £250 each to attend Gaeltacht colleges during the summer of 2024.

At the Policy and Governance Committee in April, it was agreed to establish a Grant Funding Hub, initiated by the recruitment of a Grant Funding Hub Manager, with a six-month progress report to be brought to a future meeting.

### 4. Gaeltacht Bursary Grant Programme 2024

Members are advised the bursary scheme opened for online applications on Friday 3 May and closed on Monday 13 May 2024.

Applicants had to meet the following criteria:

- Be a resident of the Borough.
- Have parental / guardian permission to attend if under 18.
- Be in post primary education.
- Be registered to attend a Gaeltacht course in Summer 2024.
- Not already be in receipt of a public fund scholarship such as Liofa.
- Complete the course by attending for the full duration.
- Provide proof of payment of fees and attendance in order to receive the bursary.
- In addition to demonstrating how they meet the criteria above applicants were asked to submit a paragraph on why they wish to attend the Gaeltacht.

Members are advised that 77 applications were received with 70 meeting the criteria above. The Assessment Panel made up of the Deputy Mayor and Officers met on 16 May to evaluate all applications and allocate the 10

bursary awards. Details of the successful applicants are **enclosed** for Members' information.

#### 5. Finance

Provision of £2,500 from the Deputy Mayor's budget will be used to fund 10 bursaries of £250.

#### 6. Governance

In order to receive the bursary successful recipients will be required to provide proof of payment and attendance in order to receive the bursary. They will also be required to write a short paragraph about their time in the Gaeltacht when they return with submissions reported to a future meeting of the Committee.

#### 7. Summary

It is proposed to award ten bursaries of £250 to the successful applicants as outlined for attendance at a Gaeltacht College over Summer 2024. Given the level of interest shown in this scheme the inclusion of an annual Gaeltacht Bursary Programme will be considered within the current review of grant funding. This is within the context of the establishment of the Grant Funding Hub as approved previously. Officers will report back to the Council on this project.

#### 8. Recommendation

**It is recommended that**

- (a) ten bursary awards of £250, as outlined, for attendance at Gaeltacht College over the Summer of 2024, be approved.**
- (b) an annual Gaeltacht Bursary programme be considered within the current review of grant funding. This is within the context of the establishment of the Grant Funding Hub in accordance with the April 2024 Council decision. Officers will report back to the Council on this project.**

Prepared by: Ronan McKenna, Head of Community Planning

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Planning



## 4.8 CP/CP/240 ANTI-POVERTY STEERING GROUP

### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval for the draft minutes of the Anti-Poverty Steering Group meeting held on 13 May 2024.**

### 2. Introduction/Background

The Anti-Poverty Steering Group seeks to bring together a group of Elected Members and Officers to create a more cohesive and coordinated response to tackling poverty within the Borough.

The establishment of the Anti-Poverty Steering Group aims to develop an Anti-Poverty Strategy creating a single guiding strategic framework that provides, but not limited to;

- Agency for residents
- Fostering of economic empowerment
- Maximising stakeholder partnership opportunities
- Enhancing social inclusion
- Improved access to essential services for residents

### 3. Previous Council decision

Members are reminded that it was approved at the Council Meeting in January 2024 that a cross party steering group be established to develop a coordinated, comprehensive Anti-Poverty Strategy for the Borough.

Members are reminded that the draft minutes of the Anti-Poverty Steering Group meeting held on 15 April 2024 were approved at the May Community Development Committee.

### 4. Governance

Members are advised the Steering Group elected a Chair and a Vice Chair from within the Elected Members at the first meeting held 15 April.

Officers will provide all secretarial and administrative services. The appropriate Officers from the relevant sections attend meetings and present reports to the Working Group.

Minutes of meetings will be reported at the earliest opportunity to the next available Community Development Committee.

### 5. Steering Group Minutes

Members are advised that the second meeting of the Steering Group was held in Mossley Mill on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May. The draft minutes of the meeting are **enclosed** for Members' approval.

**6. Recommendation**

**It is recommended that the draft minutes of the Anti-Poverty Steering Group meeting held on 13 May 2024 be approved as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.**

Prepared by: Conor Cuning DEA Engagement Manager

Agreed by: Ronan McKenna Head of Service Community Planning

Approved by: Ursula Fay Director Community Planning

#### 4.9 CP/CF/006 NORTHERN IRELAND CENTENARY COMMUNITY CENTRE, BALLYDUFF – POLLING STATION REQUEST

##### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval for the Electoral Office Northern Ireland to use the Northern Ireland Centenary Community Centre Ballyduff on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2024 as a polling station.**

##### 2. Introduction/Background

Members are reminded that the next UK General Election will take place on Thursday **4<sup>th</sup> July 2024**.

The Electoral Office for Northern Ireland have previously requested the use of the Northern Ireland Centenary Community Centre Ballyduff as a polling station for Local Council, NI Assembly and UK General Elections.

Ballyduff Community Redevelopment Group currently operate the Northern Ireland Centenary Community Centre Ballyduff under a Service Management Agreement with the Council.

##### 3. Previous Decision of Council

Members are reminded it was approved at the February 2023 Community Planning Committee that the Northern Ireland Centenary Community Centre Ballyduff was used as a polling station for the 2023 Local Council Elections on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

##### 4. Key Issues

Members are advised that correspondence has been received **enclosed** from The Electoral Office for Northern Ireland regarding the UK Parliamentary Election, which will be held on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2024.

The Electoral Office for Northern Ireland has requested the use of the Northern Ireland Centenary Community Centre Ballyduff as a polling station on Thursday **4<sup>th</sup> July 2024**.

##### Financial Position/Implication

There is no financial impact upon the Council.

##### 5. Recommendation

**It is recommended that the request from Electoral Office Northern Ireland to use the Northern Ireland Centenary Community Centre Ballyduff on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2024 as a polling station be approved.**

Prepared by: Paul Townsend, Community Facilities Coordinator

Agreed by: Ronan McKenna, Head of Community Planning

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Planning

#### 4.10 CP/GR/190 GOOD RELATIONS WEEK 2024

##### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval for the 2024 Good Relations Week programme.**

##### 2. Introduction/Background

Members are advised Good Relations Week 2024 will run from Monday 16 to Sunday 22 September 2024. The initiative is co-ordinated regionally by the Community Relations Council and supported by the Northern Ireland Executive's, Together Building a United Community Strategy.

The 2024 theme is 'OpportUNITY' – a call to action to create a brighter, inclusive future for all. 'OpportUNITY' is a collective moment to UNITE and be architects of change in helping build a region where every voice matters.

Good Relations Week provides an opportunity to showcase the dynamism, creativity and dedication of local groups, organisations and individuals and to spotlight the transformative power of collaboration to address challenges such as sectarianism, racism, inequality, health and well-being, poverty and education.

Groups and organisations are invited to host a variety of activity that promotes diversity and inclusion across Northern Ireland.

##### 3. Previous Decision of Council

Members are reminded that the Good Relations Action Plan 2024/25 was approved at the January Community Planning Committee.

##### 4. Good Relations Week

It is proposed that The Council's Good Relations Team will deliver activities across the Borough to include:

- A Good Relations Week social media campaign
- The launch of Hate Crime Awareness Programme developed in partnership with PCSP
- A Let's Connect Football Championship Tournament
- Cultural music and storytelling workshops in partnership with Libraries NI
- Asylum and Refugee Awareness Sessions
- A Peace Dialogue Workshop for community leaders
- Good Relations Workshops for staff

All activities will be free of charge to participants. Further information on dates, times and venues will follow when finalised and be shared with Elected Members.

## 5. Financial Position/Implication

Members are advised provision of £2,500 for Good Relations Week activity has been made in the 2024/25 Good Relations Action Plan and budget.

An amount of £144,871.25, equating to 75% of the Good Relations Action Plan budget has been requested from The Executive Office. Provision of the remaining 25% has been included in the 2024/25 Council estimates towards the delivery of the plan.

## 6. Summary

Good Relations Week 2024 will run from Monday 16 to Sunday 22 September 2024. The 2024 theme is 'OpportUNITY' a call to action to create a brighter, inclusive future for all.

Officers have developed a programme that promotes diversity and inclusion across the Borough.

Further information about all the activities planned for Good Relations Week can be found at [www.goodrelationsweek.com](http://www.goodrelationsweek.com)

## 7. Recommendation

**It is recommended that the 2024 Good Relations Week programme, as outlined, be approved.**

Prepared by: Jen Cole, Good Relations Coordinator

Agreed by: Ronan McKenna, Head of Community Planning

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Planning

#### 4.11 AC/GEN/085 COMMUNITY FESTIVAL FUND GRANT AID

##### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval to reopen the Community Festival Fund Grant Aid Programme and make a further call for applications to this programme in 2024/25.**

##### 2. Background

As part of the Council's Community Development Grant Aid Programme, community and voluntary organisations can apply for community festival funding to support the delivery of community events.

A community festival is defined as a series of events with a common theme and delivered within a defined time period. It is developed from within a community and should celebrate and positively promote what the community represents. Community festivals are about participation, involvement, inclusion and the creation of a sense of identity and are important in contributing to the social well-being of a community. The fund is available to properly constituted community, voluntary and charitable groups based in the Borough.

A budget of £80,000 is included in the 2024/25 Arts and Culture budgets for community festival grant funding. In addition, a contribution of £27,700 is anticipated from the Department for Communities (DfC) Community Festival Programme but is yet to be confirmed. If this contribution is realised the total budget available for the Community Festival Fund category of the Community Development Grant Aid programme in 2024/25 will be £107,700.

##### 3. Previous Decision of Council

Members are reminded that the revised Community Development Grant Aid Programme was approved by the Community Planning Committee in September 2022. As part of this, groups were able to seek funding for up to three years for festivals funded through the Community Festival Fund. Of the 22 applications approved for funding in 2023/24 17 organisations are eligible for year 2 funding of £97,000.

At the Community Planning Committee in April 2024, it was agreed that successful community festival applications for funding of £8,750 in 2024/25 were approved and it was agreed that there were no further calls to the grant programme in 2024/25 as there was insufficient budget remaining.

Within this report, Members were advised that the total cost of funding all year 2 festival grants in 2024/25 plus the additional two approved awards would be £105,570 with an available budget of £107,700.

At the Council meeting in April 2024, an amendment to the Community Planning minutes was approved resulting in the removal of the agreement to make no further calls to the programme in 2024/25. In addition, officers were

asked to look at other budgets for potential underspends to enable a further call to the Community Festival Fund to be made.

#### 4. Community Festival Funding – Additional Call 2024/25

Officers have identified a potential underspend of £15,000 in the tourism budgets, which relates to the cancellation of the Irish Game Fair, usually held in Shanes Castle in June, by the event organisers. It is proposed to transfer this underspend to the Community Festival Fund budget to enable an additional call to the Community Festival Fund to be reopened. If approved then any additional requests for funding support for tourism events in 2024/25 cannot be supported, as this budget will now be fully committed. It is proposed to open a second call for applications to the Community Festival Fund on Friday 28 June, closing on Monday 15 July 2024.

It is also proposed that funding through this call is only available for one year for events to be delivered in 2024/25 pending the ongoing review of grant funding being carried out as part of the establishment of a Grant Funding Hub.

#### 5. Financial Position

In order to fund additional grant awards from this programme £15,000 will be transferred from the tourism event budget to the Community Festival Fund budget.

#### 6. Governance

The Community Festival Fund will reopen on Friday 28 June and close on Monday 15 July 2024 following which applications will be evaluated and any funding recommendations brought to the July Council Meeting if applications are time sensitive and require a prompt decision.

#### 7. Summary

In response to an amendment to the April Community Planning minutes, it was proposed to make another call to the Community Festival Fund for one year of funding only for 2024/25. A transfer of £15,000 from the tourism budget will be used to fund this. The future provision for community festival funding will be addressed in the ongoing review of grant funding being carried out as part of the establishment of the Grant Funding Hub. Further reports on this will be brought back to future Committee Meetings.

#### 8. Recommendation

**It is recommended that a further call for applications to the Community Festival Fund for one year funding in 2024/25 only be opened on Friday 28 June and close on Monday 15 July 2024, the outcome of which will be brought to the July meeting of the Council if applications are time sensitive.**



Prepared and Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Planning

## 4.12 CP/CD/468 CAPITAL PREMISES AND EQUIPMENT GRANT FUND RECOMMENDATIONS 2024

### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval in relation to proposed financial awards under the Capital Premises and Equipment Grant Fund.**

### 2. Background

The Capital Premises and Equipment Grant Fund provides financial assistance to support groups within the Borough that have been established for at least 10 years to update, enhance and improve their community facilities or equipment, providing they can clearly evidence need, particularly where financial need is limited from other funding sources.

The First Call for applications to the Capital Premises and Equipment Grant Fund opened on Monday 8 April 2024 and closed on Monday 13 May 2024. To support applications to this programme, Officers delivered five grant workshops and offered one-to-one support to all groups upon request. The opportunity was promoted on the Councils social media channels.

A pass threshold of 50% applies to applications to the Programme and groups are not required to demonstrate match funding. Members should also note that proposed awards are subject to the receipt of all relevant supporting documentation, or the offer of funding will be withdrawn.

### 3. Previous Decision of Council

Members are reminded that the Capital Premises and Equipment Grant Fund was approved by Council in October 2023 with a further update including the outcome of the Section 75 Equality Screening and Rural Proofing exercises approved at the March 2024 Community Planning Committee.

Details of this funding programme as reported to the October 2023 meeting are outlined below:

#### **Capital Premises Grant Fund**

The aim of this programme will be to support long established community organisations based in the Borough and providing community support to update and enhance their facilities.

It is proposed that organisations may apply for up to £25,000 for eligible projects which might include refurbishment of existing facilities and external ground enhancements.

## Equipment Grant Fund

The aim of this programme is to support long established community organisations based in the Borough and providing community support to update and purchase essential equipment.

It is proposed that organisations may apply for up to £5,000 for equipment that they can demonstrate will deliver benefit to their community activity.

Principles of these new grant funding programmes will include:

- Grants will only be awarded to constituted groups based in the Borough who have been operational for at least ten years.
- All applicants must provide robust information on grant purposes.
- Applications must be accompanied by core supporting documentation including (but not limited to) copies of the organisation's constitution, the organisation's most recent accounts, confirmation of insurance and the organisation's safeguarding policy (if relevant).
- All applications will be scored by officers against defined criteria relevant to the scheme and recommendations presented to the Community Planning Committee.
- Evidence of match funding will not be an essential requirement for grant aid however where an organisation can demonstrate match funding, this will be positively reflected in the scoring process.
- Awards will be made up to 100% of the funding requested (subject to consideration of the financial viability of the proposed project as part of the assessment process), up to a maximum of the specific grant category ceiling.
- All awards will be 100% vouched.
- Groups applying must be able to demonstrate clear financial need.
- Payment will be 50% in advance upon receipt of the signed acceptance form and 50% upon satisfactory vouching of the first payment.
- Risk assessments and insurances must be in place, where relevant, for all planned activities before payments are issued.
- Retrospective funding will not be considered.
- Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council support must be acknowledged in all publicity material. The Council logo must be used on all material relating to the funding awards.
- Applicants must participate in post event evaluations if required. Failure to do so may result in awards having to be re-paid.

### 3. Financial Implication

Members are reminded the total budget available for the Capital Premises and Equipment Grant Fund for 2024 is £150,000 with an indicative allocation of £100,000 for premises and £50,000 for equipment.

Under the First Call a total of 9 applications were received and assessed by a panel of Officers with 6 applications (1 Capital Premises and 5 Equipment) totalling £49,850 achieving the required 50% pass threshold, details of which

are **enclosed** for Members' information. A business case as submitted for the Capital Premises application is also **enclosed** for Members' information.

Should Members approve these awards it is proposed that the remaining budget of £100,150 be used to fund a further call for applications to this fund, it is propose the second call for applications will open on Monday 17 June and close on Monday 12 August 2024.

#### 4. Summary

In the First Call for applications, it is proposed to award 1 Capital Premises and 5 Equipment Grant Fund awards to the successful applicants totalling £49,850 as outlined. If the awards are approved, there will be a budget of £100,150 remaining for awards in 2024/25.

It is proposed a second call for the Capital Premises and Equipment Grant Fund will open on Monday 17 June and close on Monday 12 August 2024 with applications being reported to the September Community Development Committee.

#### 5. Recommendation

**It is recommended that:**

- (a) the 6 successful applications for funding under the Capital Premises and Equipment Grant Fund totalling £49,850 be approved.**
- (b) a Second Call for applications be opened on Monday 17 June and close on Monday 12 August 2024.**

Prepared by: Jonathan Henderson, Community Services Co-ordinator

Agreed by: Ronan McKenna, Head of Community Planning

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Planning

#### 4.13 CP/GEN/048 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANT AID PROGRAMME RECOMMENDATIONS 2024/2027

##### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval in relation to proposed financial awards under the Community Development Grant Aid Programme.**

##### 2. Background

The Community Development Grant Aid Programme provides financial assistance for a three year period to groups within the Borough towards the costs associated with their Community Facility, Programmes and Activities.

A second call for applications under the Community Development Grant Aid Programme for the 3-year period 1st April 2024 – 31st March 2027 opened on Monday 8 April 2024 and closed on Monday 13 May 2024. To support applications to this programme, Officers delivered five grant workshops and offered one-to-one support to all groups upon request.

##### 3. Previous Decision of Council

Members are reminded that it was approved at the Community Planning Committee in September 2022 that the new Community Development Grant Aid Programme awards would be made for up to three years. A pass threshold of 50% applies to applications to the Programme and groups are not required to demonstrate match funding. Members should also note that proposed awards are subject to the receipt of all relevant supporting documentation, or the offer of funding will be withdrawn.

##### 4. Financial Implication

The total budget for the 2024/25 Community Facilities, Programmes and Activities under the 2024/25 Community Development Grant Aid Programme is £578,448 as provided for in the 2024/25 estimates. Following previous awards there is a budget of £44,800 remaining.

Members are advised £50,428 (similar to the amount awarded in 2023/24) is anticipated from the Department for Communities (DFC) under its Community Support Programme for 2024/25 and the remaining £528,020 from the Council.

Under the second call a total of 5 applications were received and assessed by a panel of Officers with 3 applications totalling £12,020 achieving the required 50% pass threshold, details of which are **enclosed** for Members' information.

Members are reminded that Year 2 and Year 3 funding is subject to satisfactory monitoring and evaluation. All successful applications under this call are being awarded financial assistance for a 3-year period.

A summary of the successful applications for the 2024/27 funding programme

<b>Summary of Community Development Grant Aid Requests 2024/27</b>				
<b>Grant Stream</b>	<b>Successful Applications (Scored 50% and above in 2024/25)</b>	<b>Total Requested Year 1 2024/25</b>	<b>Total Requested Year 2 2025/26</b>	<b>Total Requeste d Year 3 2026/27</b>
Community Facilities and Programmes	<b>1</b>	<b>£3,900</b>	<b>£4,300</b>	<b>£4,600</b>
Community Programmes and Activities	<b>2</b>	<b>£8,120</b>	<b>£8,120</b>	<b>£8,120</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>£12,020</b>	<b>£12,420</b>	<b>£12,720</b>

are shown below:

Officers will arrange to meet with any unsuccessful groups to provide feedback on their applications and to signpost to other relevant funders.

Community Development Small Grants will remain open on a rolling programme with applications being reported to the Community Planning Committee on a monthly basis until the allocated budget is maximised.

#### **5. Recommendation**

**It is recommended that the 3 successful applications for funding under the Community Development Grant Aid Programme totalling £12,020 of Year 1 funding in 2024/25 be approved.**

Prepared by: Jonathan Henderson, Community Services Co-ordinator

Agreed by: Ronan McKenna, Head of Community Planning

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Planning

#### 4.14 AC/GEN/008 FREE USE OF MOSSLEY MILL MEETING ROOM

##### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is to recommend to Members that an application from the North of Ireland Family History Society for the free use of the Spinning Room, Mossley Mill, every month from September 2024 until June 2025 is not approved.**

##### 2. Introduction/Background

The North of Ireland Family History Society is a registered charity with particular reference to the province of Ulster and the six counties of Northern Ireland as well as the three other border counties of Ulster. It has, for 40 years, promoted and encouraged private and public study of family history, genealogy, heraldry and local history.

The Antrim and Newtownabbey Branch of the society is based in Newtownabbey, and draws membership from the local area. There are currently 88 members of this branch, of which around 35 attend monthly branch meetings in person.

##### 3. Previous Decision of Council

In September 2017 the Operations Committee approved an amendment to the Arts and Culture Pricing Policy clause relating to Requests for Free Use as follows:

Only one request per organisation/group within any one year period can be considered under this Policy.

In September 2023 the Committee approved a request from the North of Ireland Family History Society to use the Spinning Room, Mossley Mill, for its monthly meetings from October 2023 to May 2024, on condition that a donation would be made to the Mayor's charities. A donation of £250 was made in February 2024.

##### 4. Request for further free use

Officers have received correspondence from the group requesting the free use of the Spinning Room, Mossley Mill, for ten further monthly meetings from September 2024 to June 2025.

##### 5. Financial Position/Implication

The evening community rate for hiring the Spinning Room is £185. If this request is approved, the potential lost revenue from room hire would be £1,850.

Given that the Council supported this request in 2023/24 and that a relatively small number of branch members attend monthly meetings in person, it is

proposed that the community rate for hire of the Spinning Room be applied and that free use is not approved.

**6. Recommendation**

**It is recommended that the application from the North of Ireland Family History Society for the free use of the Spinning Room, Mossley Mill, every month from September 2024 until June 2025 is not approved.**

Prepared by: Simon Goldrick, Head of Arts, Culture, Tourism and Events

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Planning



#### 4.15 AC/GEN/111 BELFAST TRADFEST BURSARY

##### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is to seek Members approval to issue eight (8) bursary awards of £125 to young musicians to enable their participation in Belfast TradFest by attending this year's Belfast Summer School of Traditional Music from 22<sup>nd</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> July. Funding is available from the 2023/2024 Office of the Deputy Mayor.**

##### 2. Introduction

Belfast TradFest acknowledges and celebrates the cultural diversity of different traditions in Northern Ireland bringing people together in a shared celebration of traditional music.

The festival of music will be taking place in Ulster University from 22-26 July 2024. Bursaries would secure places for young musicians to attend and experience a week-long intensive and immersive summertime learning course of traditional music, song and dance.

Beneficiaries of bursaries attend over five days and the course includes:

- Three-hour long Music Masterclass in their chosen instrument, taught by world-class traditional musicians.
- Access to a programme of afternoon events, demonstrations, talks and workshops in traditional music technique, history and other aspects of traditional music that are generally unavailable outside of higher education programmes.
- The opportunity to play alongside top class traditional musicians in daily learner's slow session which will enhance their musical skills.
- Access to full programme of open sessions alongside the best traditional musicians in the world.
- A performance opportunity at an end of Summer School concert in Belfast Cathedral.

##### 3. Bursary Support for Belfast TradFest

The Office of the Deputy Mayor comes with a budget allocation of £5,000 to meet expenses of the Office. The 2023/2024 Deputy Mayor has requested that £1,000 of this budget be used to issue eight (8) bursaries of £125 to young people resident in the Borough who plan to attend the Belfast TradFest in 2024. The cost of a bursary place at Belfast TradFest is £150 per young person.

Given the timescales involved, it is proposed that officers have delegated authority to design and deliver an application process and award the eight bursaries of £125.

##### 4. Summary

It is proposed that eight (8) bursaries of £125 be awarded to young musicians resident in the Borough who wish to participate in the Belfast TradFest Bursary Programme. Given the timescales involved officers will design and deliver an application process and select the successful eight bursary recipients.

## **5. Recommendation**

**Members are requested to consider the recommendation that eight bursaries of £125 be awarded to young musicians from the Borough to participate in the 2024 Belfast TradFest Bursary Programme, using funding of £1000 from the office of the Deputy Mayor in 2023/24 and that officers have delegated authority to design and deliver an application process to select successful bursary recipients.**

Prepared by: Member Services

Agreed by: Liz Johnston, Deputy Director of Governance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

#### 4.16 CP/TD/096, CP/TD/100, CP/TD/002, CP/CD/477 - DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES FUNDING POSITION UPDATE 2024/2025

##### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is to update Members regarding the Department for Communities Equality Impact Assessment consultation on the initial budget allocations for 2024-25**

##### 2. Introduction

DfC recognises the important role that the voluntary and community Sector has in delivering support and services to people and local communities. Members are reminded that the Council manages a range of DfC funded contracts that financially support a number of voluntary and community sector organisations. These include the;

- Areas at Risk Programme
- Community Support Programme
- Neighbourhood Renewal Programme
- Social Supermarket

The Finance Minister announced the 2024-25 Budget for Northern Ireland on 25 April 2024.

##### 3. Previous Decision of Council

Members are reminded it was agreed at the April 2024 Community Development Committee that in the absence of the 2024-25 budget settlement interim funding awards for DfC programmes to the end June 2024 will be retained at 2023/24 levels.

Members are further reminded it was agreed that an update on the DfC current budget position be communicated to those groups and organisations anticipating funding from the Department in 2024/25.

##### 4. Key Issues

Members are advised that correspondence **enclosed** has been received from DfC outlining 2024/25 initial budget allocations.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) consultation on The Department's initial budget 2024-25 allocations will launch on 11 June 2024 and run until 3 September 2024. The EQIA consultation and further information on this is available on the website; <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/news/minister-launch-budget-consultation>

It is proposed that the Councils response to the EQIA will be brought to a future meeting.

##### 5. Financial implications

Members are advised that the NI Executive 2024-25 budget allocations result in the Department facing a resources funding gap of £115.8m (17%) and a £167.3m (48.5%) shortfall in Capital against bids submitted.

Members are advised that the DfC have indicated that Voluntary and Community sector groups receiving funding support from the Community Empowerment Division (CED) and the Voluntary and Community Division (VCD) will have an additional Resource funding of £1.45 million in 2024-2025.

The Council have in place an interim funding award until 30 June 2024 and are waiting on an update from the Department for Community to advise on the funding position from 30 June 2024.

## 1. Summary

DfC initial budget allocations for 2024/25 have been announced. An EQIA consultation on the initial budget will be launched on 11 June 2024.

The Councils response to the EQIA and funding awards will be brought to a future meeting.

## 2. Recommendation

**It is recommended that the Councils response to the Department for Communities Equality and Impact Assessment consultation on the initial budget allocations for 2024-25 be reported to a future meeting.**

Prepared by: Stefanie Buchanan, Community Development Manager

Agreed by: Ronan McKenna, Head of Community Planning

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Planning

## 5 ITEMS FOR NOTING

### 5.1 PT/CI/049 PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2023/24 PERFORMANCE PROGRESS REPORT (COMMUNITY PLANNING) QUARTER 4

#### 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. Key Points

A fourth quarter performance progress report for Arts, Culture, Heritage, Tourism and Events and Community Planning is **enclosed** for Members' information.

#### 5. Recommendation

**It is recommended that the Performance and Improvement Plan 2023/24 Performance Progress Report (Community Planning) Quarter 4 be noted.**

Prepared by: Allen Templeton Performance Improvement Officer

Agreed by: Katherine Young, Organisation Development & Employee Engagement Manager.

Approved by: Helen Hall Director of Corporate Strategy

## 5.2 CP/CP/223 HARDSHIP SCHEME 2023/2024

### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the outcomes of the 2023/24 Hardship Scheme.**

### 2. Introduction/Background

The Department for Communities (DfC) provided Hardship Funding to the Council to support the most vulnerable in the 2023/24 financial year. The purpose of the funding is intended to support those experiencing both food and fuel poverty and should be used to support and sustain projects and organisations who offer support with food and fuel to those who are experiencing financial difficulties including food and fuel distress.

### 3. Previous Decision of Council

Members are reminded that the proposed delivery model for the Hardship Scheme was approved at the August 2023 Council Meeting. The total amount of funding made available from the Department was £4 million with a Council allocation, based on population, of £306,432.

It was agreed to deliver the funding by two means:

- Direct Awards to established community partners delivering food relief;
- An open funding call to constituted community groups who can contribute to providing additional food relief.

### 4. Key Issues

Members are advised the Department's monitoring and evaluation requirements for the Fund included the development and completion of a Benefits Realisation Plan, based on Outcome Based Accountability (OBA) reporting, a copy of which is **enclosed** for Members' information.

Key outcomes include:

- 19,749 vulnerable people supported
- 2070 vulnerable households supported with food relief
- 604 Households supported with fuel relief
- 332 young families supported by Baby Banks
- 82 Community and voluntary organisations supported
- 14 organisations supported by Fareshare NI with 101 food orders
- 6 Community Fridges and Network established in the Borough

### 5. Financial Implication

The Council was awarded £306,432 in funding for the Hardship Scheme which was fully committed by 31 March 2024.

DfC has advised that this funding is non recurrent, will may not be available in future years.

## 6. Summary

The 2023/24 Hardship Scheme has extensively supported individuals and families experiencing both food and fuel poverty in the Borough, whilst helping to support and sustain projects and organisations who offer support with food and fuel to those who are experiencing financial difficulties including food and fuel distress.

The outcomes of the Scheme have been reported in the Benefits Realisation Plan.

## 7. Recommendation

**It is recommended that the outcomes of the 2023/24 Hardship Scheme be noted.**

Prepared by: Claire McAuley, Tackling Deprivation Co-ordinator

Agreed by: Ronan McKenna, Head of Community Planning

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Planning

### 5.3 CP/TD/023 THE PERIOD PRODUCTS (FREE PROVISION) ACT (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2022

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is to update Members on the implementation and launch of the Period Products (Free Provision) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022.**

#### 2. Introduction/Background

Members are advised that the Period Products (Free Provision) Act (NI) was made by the Northern Ireland Assembly in 2022 and requires that period products will be available from May 2024 free of charge to those that need them.

Period inequality contributes to the mental health and well-being experience of those who are unable to access the basic health essentials of period products. This has become a growing issue particularly in light of the increased cost of living.

The Act came about as a result of the recognition that period products are essential items of personal care to address a biological need and should therefore be available to everyone who needs them regardless of economic status.

The Executive Office (TEO) has been tasked with the responsibility for implementing the Act in particular the Section 1 duty which is:

- to ensure that period products are available free of charge on a 'universal basis' in appropriate locations from 12 May 2024

-

TEO has been engaging with various stakeholders across a wide range of sectors to establish how to implement Section 1 of the Act. Local Councils have been represented through SOLACE, who were asked by TEO to nominate three representatives to participate in the engagement and sit with TEO on a working group, with one of these representatives the Councils Director of Community Planning.

#### 3. Previous Decision of Council

Members are reminded that an update on the implementation of the Provision of Free Period Products across Northern Ireland was noted at the October 2023 Community Planning Committee with a further report to be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee.

Members were advised in this report that TEO wished to engage with Councils to reach agreement to work in partnership to support TEO deliver its Section 1 duty.



#### 4. Key Issues

Members are advised correspondence **enclosed** has been received from TEO advising that Libraries NI have agreed to act as a primary delivery partner to ensure universal free period products will be made available from all public library locations, including mobile libraries, from Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May. A local launch of the scheme was held at Antrim Library on 20 May 2024.

Free period products will be accessible to anyone who needs them and can be picked up by another person on their behalf. This makes Northern Ireland only the second place in the world to legislate for the provision of free period products.

From Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May, the existing PickupMyPeriod app (which can be downloaded from the Apple or Android store) will include the location of all public libraries, including the routes covered by the mobile libraries, the opening times of each library and the range of products available. Information will also be available on nidirect, the TEO website and the Libraries NI website.

#### 5. Financial Position/Implication

There is no financial implication for the Council.

#### 6. Summary

TEO have advised that Libraries NI have agreed to act as a primary delivery partner to ensure universal free period products from all public library locations, including mobile libraries, from Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May.

Engagement between TEO and Councils through SOLACE is ongoing. The opportunity to learn from the Libraries NI experience as a delivery partner will be used to inform design of future potential partner arrangements with TEO and the Councils in relation to this legislation.

#### 7. Recommendation

**It is recommended that the update on the implementation and launch of the Period Products (Free Provision) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 be noted.**

Prepared by: Stefanie Buchanan, Community Development Manager

Agreed by: Ronan McKenna, Head of Community Planning

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Planning

## 5.4 CE/CA/003 SOCIAL MEDIA PERFORMANCE 2023/24

### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the Council's Social Media Performance for 2023/24.**

### 2. Introduction/Background

The Council currently has 26 active social media accounts across Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube (see Appendix 1 and 2 enclosed). The social media channels are used to promote, educate, inform and engage with users and to communicate key corporate messages.

### 3. Main Report

The Council's Social Media Performance April 23 - March 24 is enclosed for Members' information. Key statistics for the Council's Social Media performance are as follows:

- Followers: 105k
- Audience growth rate from previous year: 19%
- Number of posts published: 5k
- Number of views: 33 million
- Average engagement rate: 9.9% (industry average 1.3%)
- % video content: 23%

### **Benchmarking**

A recent benchmarking exercise with five other NI Councils\* has identified that the Council's corporate Facebook account is the best performing with:

- the highest engagement rate
- the highest number of followers per population (*the third highest number followers (after Belfast and ABC)*)

\* *Belfast City, Lisburn and Castlereagh, Ards and North Down, Armagh Banbridge Craigavon, Mid and East Antrim.*

Accounts for the Flagship Events Garden Show Ireland and Enchanted Winter Garden also had a substantial increase in followers and engagement rate as shown below:

### **Garden Show Ireland**

- Followers: 9,473
- Audience growth rate on previous year: 23%
- Number of posts published: 342
- Number of views: ~2m
- Average engagement rate: 4.8% (**industry average 1.2%**)
- % video content: 21%

Last year we ran the social media campaign internally (ASG did this previously) which resulted in an 928% increase on reach and 138% on engagement, proving that our in-house talent promoted this event more effectively than outsourcing to an agency.

### **Enchanted Winter Garden**

- Followers: 9,128
- Audience growth rate on previous year: 59%
- Number of posts published : 277
- Number of views: ~1.4
- Average engagement rate: 5.1% **(industry average 1.2%)**
- % video content: 43%

#### 4. Summary

Building on the 2023/2024 performance the Communications, Marketing and PR Section will continue to develop plans to ensure growth and engagement rate remains high and the Council's social media strategy continues to deliver key messaging and engagement with residents, businesses and visitors to the Borough.

#### 5. Recommendation

**It is recommended that the Social Media Performance Report for 2023/24 be noted.**

Prepared by: Emma McConville Digital Marketing Manager

Agreed by: Jeanette McIntyre Head of Corporate Affairs

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Planning

## 5.5 CP/GEN/019 COMMUNITY PLANNING SECTION - PARTNERSHIP MINUTES

### 1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the various minutes of the Partnership Meetings led by the Community Planning Section which have been held in recent months.

Members are advised that the quarterly update Partnership Minutes as listed below can be viewed in the electronic folder called "**Partnership Minutes for Members Information**" on the I pads.

<b>Community Development</b>		
<b>File Ref</b>	<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Name of Partnership</b>
D/Gen/91	11/09/22 18/12/23	Community Advice Antrim and Newtownabbey
D/CSP/48	13/12/23	Antrim and Newtownabbey Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP)
D/DP/67	-	Rathcoole Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership
D/DP/67	-	Grange Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership
CP/GR/43	23/02/24	Traveller Issues Local Government Partnership

### 2. Recommendation

**It is recommended that the Partnership Minutes be noted.**

Prepared by: Wendy Donaldson, Clerical Officer

Agreed and Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Planning