



**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE HELD
AT ANTRIM CIVIC CENTRE ON MONDAY 6 NOVEMBER 2023 AT 6.30 PM**

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

CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

By way of a reminder, the Chairperson asked that specific constituency related queries should be submitted prior to the meeting to enable detailed responses by the relevant Officer at the meeting.

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

1 APOLOGIES

None

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Item 4.5 – Councillor A McAuley – non-pecuniary interest

3 INTRODUCTION OF NEW STAFF

None

4 ITEMS FOR DECISION

4.1 L/LEI/AP/008 DEVELOPMENT OF A CRICKET PITCH AT ALLEN PARK

Members were reminded that in 2021, the Council approved £[REDACTED] in financial support for Muckamore Cricket Club to extend the height of the ball stop fence on the secondary cricket pitch at their facility in Antrim. The proposed work was estimated to cost £[REDACTED] and aimed to mitigate a health and safety risk to the new neighbouring housing development, ensuring that matches for all age groups could be played with no restrictions applied to the game. Further assessments from structural engineers stated that, due to ground conditions, the budget should be increased to an estimated £[REDACTED] with no guarantee of success.

Currently, the Club has six senior mens' teams, a ladies' section, and several youth teams. The inability to use the secondary cricket pitch significantly impacts the Club's ongoing development. Measures put in place by the Club include bowling to only one end of the wicket, and also relocating matches to other, less suitable venues.

Local DEA Members and Officers had been liaising closely with the Club on the matter, and had found a possible solution through unused land at Allen Park. It was proposed that the area seen on the plan (circulated) be developed into a cricket pitch at a cost of £[REDACTED], which would include the creation of an artificial wicket, purchase of sight screens, a portable scoreboard, and a small shelter for the teams to congregate. The pitch would be maintained by the Parks team based at Allen Park and available for the Club or any other group to book in the normal manner through the leisure booking team, with the Club given priority booking rights. It was also proposed that a match rate of £90 and a training rate of £30 be applied to bookings.

Proposed by Councillor Smyth
Seconded by Alderman Smyth and agreed that

approval be given to

- i. **develop a cricket pitch at Allen Park at a cost of £[REDACTED]; and**
- ii. **include the booking rates as set out above within the Leisure Pricing Schedule**

ACTION BY: Deaglan O'Hagan, Head of Leisure Operations

4.2 PK/GEN/212 PEACE PLUS: 'WALKING FOR ALL' PROGRAMME

Correspondence (circulated) had been received from Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland (ORNI) requesting that the Council agreed in principle to become a partner in a Peace Plus application for the "Walking for All" programme. ORNI is a not-for-profit organisation that facilitates responsible outdoor enjoyment, making it easier for people to embrace the outdoors responsibly.

The aim of the Walking for All programme was to develop a coordinated approach to walking programmes across Northern Ireland, led by a steering group consisting of relevant stakeholders including Public Health Agency, Sport Northern Ireland, Councils, and Health Trusts. The programme would train and support volunteers, enabling them to become walk leaders and organise regular group walks in rural communities with populations of 18,000 or less. This would benefit participants by increasing physical activity, promoting social interaction, and enhancing mental well-being, ultimately complementing the Council's other health intervention programmes.

ORNI had identified Peace Plus as a potential funding source, and intended to apply under Theme 4: Healthy and Inclusive Communities – Rural Regeneration and Social Inclusion. This funding was expected to sustain the programme for three years.

The proposal was to assign a 'Walking Coordinator' to each Council area in Northern Ireland. ORNI would fund the salary and other administrative costs, while the Council would act as the employing authority and provide office space and administrative support. The Coordinators' role would be a temporary position for the duration of the funding, with its main function to recruit potential 'Walk Leaders' and provide training and support, enabling the Leaders to conduct walks in their rural communities.

Proposed by Councillor McAuley
Seconded by Alderman Smyth and agreed that

approval be given, in principle, to be a named partner in Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland's application to Peace Plus for the "Walking for All" programme and, if successful, to act as the employing authority for the member of staff funded to deliver the programme, alongside office space and

admin support as an 'in kind' cost.

ACTION BY: Elaine Upton, Parks Development Officer

4.3 PK/GEN/035/VOL4 URBAN GRASS CUTTING

Members were reminded that since 2016, the Council had annually approved an arrangement with the Department for Infrastructure to provide additional urban grass cuts in high-traffic areas throughout the Borough. In addition to the two cuts that were the agreed responsibility of the Department, an additional five cuts were provided with the costs incurred by the Council. For Members' reference, the specific locations included in the arrangement were set out in the circulated enclosure.

The Department had recently contacted Officers and advised that, due to an increase in costs within their new Environmental Contract, costs for the 2024 grass cutting season had increased from £10,000 per cut to £16,000 per cut, resulting in the total payable to the Department increasing from £50,000 to £80,000.

In response to queries from Members, the Director of Parks and Leisure Operations agreed to provide a map of the locations and types of cut carried out by Department across the Borough.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed that

the arrangement with the Department for Infrastructure to provide an additional five urban grass cuts in 2024 at a total cost of £80,000 be approved.

ACTION BY: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

4.4 PK/GEN/035/VOL4 PARKS AND OPEN SPACES SUB GROUP

At the most recent Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Group meeting on 3 October 2023, Members considered a detailed report. Arising from the meeting a series of recommendations were made for consideration by the Operations Committee. The minutes of the meeting were circulated for Members' consideration.

Councillor Logue requested that the minutes be amended to reflect her attendance at the meeting.

Proposed by Councillor Logue
Seconded by Alderman Clarke and agreed that

the minutes of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Group meeting held on 3 October 2023 be approved.

ACTION BY: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

Councillor McAuley declared an interest in Item 4.5 but did not leave the Chamber.

4.5 PK/GEN/177 BELFAST HILLS PARTNERSHIP

Members were aware that the Council was a key partner in the Belfast Hills Partnership. This partnership was initially formed with the legacy Newtownabbey Council and later continued with Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council following its establishment in 2015. The Partnership undertakes a wide range of programmes including habitat and species surveys, environmental improvement schemes, native tree propagation, tree planting, and community engagement.

Within the Borough, recent projects had included infrastructure works on Carnmoney Hill, tree-planting at Glas-Na-Braden Wood, outreach with local schools, and events held at the Valley Park and Glas-Na-Braden Glen. The Partnership's Annual Report was circulated for Members' reference. Council provided practical and financial assistance to the Partnership, most recently. In November 2022, an annual contribution of £14,463 was approved for a three-year period.

Correspondence had been received from the Partnership (circulated) requesting that the Council consider an increase in funding of £4,393 per annum due to significant cost increases. If approved, the annual amount payable to the Partnership for the next two years would be £19,036.

A Member commended the work of the Partnership and asked if they could be invited to meet with Rathfern Regeneration Group to view the significant work the group have completed at Carnmoney Hill, and to discuss the potential for future collaboration.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Alderman Clarke and agreed that

an increase of £4,393 to the annual financial support provided to Belfast Hills Partnership, totalling £19,036 per annum for 2024/25 and 2025/26, be approved

ACTION BY: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

4.6 WM/WM/032 POLICY FORUM FOR NORTHERN IRELAND CONFERENCE

The Policy Forum for Northern Ireland had organised an Online Conference on "The next steps for the development of a circular economy in Northern Ireland" to be hosted on Friday 26 January 2024.

The Online Conference would be a timely opportunity for key stakeholders and policymakers to discuss priorities, strategies, challenges and opportunities for driving forward waste reduction, and overcoming barriers to the development of a circular economy.

A summary of the agenda was circulated for Members' information.

It was proposed that the Chair and Vice-Chair or their nominated substitutes attend along with one Officer at a rate of £260 per delegate.

Proposed by Councillor Foster

Seconded by Councillor Gilmore and agreed that

attendance of the Chair and Vice-Chair, or their nominated substitutes at the Policy Forum for Northern Ireland Conference, along with one officer, at a total cost of £780, be approved.

ACTION BY: Gillian McGrath, PA to the Director of Sustainability/Member Services

4.7 WM/S/002 MARINE LITTER GRANT APPLICATION

Members were reminded that the Council was previously successful in securing almost £75,000 grant funding from Live Here Love Here's Marine Litter Capital Grant funds. The funding was previously matched by the Council and was used to buy and install the following equipment:

- Litter pick action boards to assist public and community groups litter pick across Council Loughshore sites and Castle Gardens;
- 30 solar litter bins for Hazelbank, Jordanstown Loughshore and Antrim Loughshore Park;
- 8 contactless water fountains installed in sites across the Borough; and
- 2 portable contactless water fountains to be available for use at Council events, like Garden Show Ireland and Spooked Out at V36, to increase the sustainability of the events.

Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful had announced the release of further funding through the Marine Litter Capital Grants Scheme again up to £40,000 for 2023/2024, with applications closing on 9 November 2023. In line with the Council's Litter Action Plan and Plastic Pledge, it was proposed that the Council applies for further funding to deliver a period poverty reusable products scheme and reusable nappy scheme.

These schemes would not only tackle marine litter problems from sanitary waste, but would reduce the amount of plastic going to landfill. The application and delivery of the schemes would be in partnership with the Community Planning and Environmental Health teams. Similar to the terms and conditions of 2022/23 funding, the Council must match the funding awarded by 50%.

It was envisaged that the Council would apply for approximately £30,000 with £15,000 coming from existing Waste Management budgets.

The schemes were commended and in response to a Member, the Director of Sustainability confirmed that funding would extend to addressing litter problems in local rivers.

Proposed by Councillor Logue
 Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed that

an application for further Marine Capital Funding to tackle marine litter in the Borough be approved and, if successful, that match funding of £15,000 be provided by the Council.

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

4.8 WM/WM/037/VOL2 REFUSE AND RECYCLING PUBLIC HOLIDAY COLLECTIONS 2024/25

The arrangements for refuse and kerbside recycling collections for Public Holidays in 2024 were detailed for Members' consideration (see proposed alternative collection days for 2024 below).

Public Holiday	Legacy Antrim Households	Legacy Newtownabbey Households
St. Patrick's Day Monday 18 March 2024	No change 18 March 2024 (Monday)	No change 18 March 2024 (Monday)
Good Friday Friday 29 March 2024	No collection required	No change 29 March 2024 (Friday)
Easter Monday Monday 01 April 2024	No service. Collections rescheduled for this day and each successive day of this week to the following day, through to Friday to catch up. 02 April 2024 (Tuesday)	No service. Collections rescheduled for this day and each successive day of this week to the following day, through to Saturday to catch up. 02 April 2024 (Tuesday)
Easter Tuesday Tuesday 02 April 2024	As above (Wednesday)	As above (Wednesday)
May Day Monday 06 May 2024	No change 06 May 2024 (Monday)	No change 06 May 2024 (Monday)
Spring Bank Holiday Monday 27 May 2024	No change 27 May 2024 (Monday)	No change 27 May 2024 (Monday)
12th July Friday 12 July 2024	No collection required	No service. Collection rescheduled for this day to 13 July 2024 (Saturday)
13th July Monday 15 July 2024	No change 15 July 2024 (Monday)	No change 15 July 2024 (Monday)
Summer Bank Holiday Monday 26 August 2024	No change 26 August 2024 (Monday)	No change 26 August 2024 (Monday)
Christmas Day Wednesday 25 December 2024	No Service. Collections rescheduled for this day and each successive day of this week to later in the week, through to Friday	No Service. Collections rescheduled for this day and each successive day of this week to later in the week.

	to catch up. 27 December 2024 (Friday)	27 December 2024 (Friday)
Boxing Day Thursday 26 December 2024	As above (Saturday)	As above (Saturday)
Friday 27 December 2024	No collection required	As above (Monday)
Monday 30 December 2024	No change 30 December 2024 (Monday)	As above (Tuesday)
Tuesday 31 December 2024	No change 31 December 2024 (Tuesday)	As above (Thursday)
New Year's Day Wednesday 01 January 2025	No service. Collections rescheduled for this day and each successive day of this week to the following day, through to Friday 3 January 2025 to catch up. 02 January 2025 (Thursday)	No service. Collections rescheduled for this day and each successive day of this week to the following day, through to Saturday 11 January 2025 to catch up. 03 January 2025 (Friday)

* Legacy Antrim collections were Monday-Thursday, legacy Newtownabbey collections were Monday-Friday.

In order to simplify the communication message from the Council to the public regarding alternative collection dates, all affected bin collections, in both legacy Antrim and Newtownabbey, would be moved to the next available collection day until catch up was achieved on a free day e.g. Friday or Saturday.

For information, the previously agreed arrangements for the 2023 Christmas holiday period were provided (see below).

Public Holiday	Legacy Antrim Households	Legacy Newtownabbey Households
APPROVED November 2022		
Monday 25 December (Christmas Day) 2023	No service. Collections rescheduled for this day and each successive day of this week to later in the week. 27 December 2023 (Wednesday)	No service. Collections rescheduled for this day and each successive day of this week to later in the week. 27 December 2023 (Wednesday)
Tuesday 26 December	No service. As above. 28 December 2023	No service. As above. 28 December 2023

(Boxing Day) 2023	(Thursday)	(Thursday)
Wednesday 27 December 2023	As above (Friday)	As above (Friday)
Thursday 28 December 2023	As above (Saturday)	As above (Saturday)
Friday 29 December 2023	No collection required.	As above 02 January 2024 (Tuesday)
Monday 01 January 2024 (New Year's Day)	No service. Collections rescheduled for this day and each successive day of this week to later in the week, through to Friday 05 January 2024. 02 January 2024 (Tuesday)	No service. Collections rescheduled for this day and each successive day of this week to later in the week, through to Saturday 13 January 2024. 03 January 2024 (Wednesday)

Residents in the Borough would be advised of these alternate arrangements via the usual means of the Borough Life, bin stickers and leaflets, social media, and via the Council's website.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Alderman Clarke and agreed that

the collection arrangements for refuse and recycling bin collections for Public Holidays in 2024, as set out above, be approved.

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

4.9 EH/EHS/002 ANIMAL WELFARE – SERVICE DELIVERY UPDATE

Members were reminded that since April 2015, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council (MEA) had 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) with 100% funding from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).

At the September Operations meeting, Members were advised that the Permanent Secretary of DAERA had informed Northern Ireland Councils that due to budgetary constraints, they would no longer be able to provide funding as they had done for the past 11 years, highlighting that Councils had the statutory responsibility for the welfare of non-farmed animals.

Consequently, there would be no allocation of funds (formally £1.25 million) to Northern Ireland Councils in this current financial year. Fermanagh and Omagh District Council was currently reviewing the Department's decision on behalf of

the 11 Councils including the option of a Judicial Review.

While Fermanagh and Omagh's legal challenge was ongoing, MEA was continuing to deliver the joint service and was content to do so until at least March 2024 with Council and Causeway Coast and Glens paying their allocation of costs. This would equate to approximately £140,000 for Council. MEA had sought confirmation from Council and Causeway Coast and Glens that the necessary funds would be transferred to them if DAERA did not provide the required funding. As this animal welfare service to non-farmed animals was a statutory requirement, it was proposed to acknowledge MEA's request and confirm that the Council would pay this contribution if required.

As Members would be aware, Officers had been reviewing annual expenditure 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 outturn projection.

In response to a Member, the Director of Sustainability confirmed that the cost stated was for the provision of the service this year only.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Councillor Smyth and agreed that

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 be approved, and that Mid and East Antrim Council be notified of this decision.

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

4.10 PK/BIO/012 NORTHERN IRELAND FOREST SCHOOL ASSOCIATION – FOREST SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

Members were reminded that the Council contributed annually to the Northern Ireland Forest Schools Programme. The Northern Ireland Forest School Association (NIFSA) was a charity that promoted, developed and delivered sustainable environmental education programmes. The Programme was an innovative educational approach to outdoor play and learning, with a philosophy to encourage and inspire individuals of any age through positive outdoor experiences. In 2022-2023, NIFSA successfully delivered a training programme across seven schools and nurseries in the Borough.

Correspondence had been received from NIFSA (circulated), requesting a contribution of £7,000 to support the Programme for the 2023/2024 academic year. All schools and nurseries within the Borough had been invited to register their interest by completing an online form, with one from each District Electoral Area then selected to participate.

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Alderman Bradley and agreed that

a contribution of £7,000 to support the delivery of the Northern Ireland Forest

Schools Programme within the Borough be approved.

ACTION BY: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

5 ITEMS FOR NOTING

5.1 PK/PG/005 ACCESS AND INCLUSION FUNDING PROGRAMME 2023/24

Members were reminded that at the October Operations Committee, approval was granted to submit applications for the Department for Communities Access and Inclusion Funding Programme. The Department expressed a particular interest in receiving applications for sensory gardens and accessible equipment for play parks, as well as projects that would positively impact sustainability and address climate change. Two Council-led projects were submitted for consideration and had been subsequently approved for funding by the Department.

1. Installation of a sensory garden at Memorial Park, Ballyclare
2. Purchase and installation of additional accessible equipment for play parks

In addition, Officers collaborated closely with the external organisation 'All About Us - ASD Teens,' but unfortunately, their application was unsuccessful as it did not align with the scope of the funding objectives for this year. Parkview Hockey Club had also expressed an interest in applying to the fund but opted not to complete an application at this time.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmore
Seconded by Councillor McWilliam and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

5.2 PBS/PS/2 & PK/PG/005 PLAY-PARK AUDIT 2023

Members were advised that in 2016, following the convergence of the two legacy Councils, an audit of play-park provision was undertaken. Based on the information from the audit, Council's 35 play-parks were ranked in terms of their condition and the value of works required to improve the facilities as necessary. A workshop for Members was subsequently facilitated to discuss the options to proceed.

Since the 2016 audit, the Council had developed a new play-park at Antrim Loughshore, with a further new development scheduled to be completed at Belfast City Playing Fields, Mallusk, in spring 2024. Members were also reminded of the potential to develop a play-park in the Mayfield area of Glengormley, although no further detail was available at this time.

A similar audit of play-parks had been conducted over the past number of months with the aim of providing an updated position and recommendations

for action. The audit surveyed the condition of every piece of equipment, surface, and ancillary items such as fencing and gates, etc. Each play park had been categorised, then ranked according to its current condition and the value of works required to improve the facilities as necessary. It was intended to again schedule a workshop in the coming weeks for Members to discuss options on how to deliver on the recommendations made from the audit, before a final report was brought forward to Committee for approval.

In response to a Member, the Director of Parks and Leisure Operations agreed to provide details of areas where property developer contributions had been made.

Proposed by Councillor McAuley
Seconded by Councillor Smyth and agreed that

the report be noted.

ACTION BY: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

5.3 PK/GEN/021 & PK/GEN/022 & PK/GEN/030 ULSTER IN BLOOM/NI AMENITY COUNCIL BEST KEPT/BITAIN IN BLOOM

Members were advised that the Council submits nominations annually to the Ulster in Bloom and the Northern Ireland Amenity Council Best Kept Competitions. Ulster in Bloom was coordinated by the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) and aimed to showcase partnership working between local community groups and Councils in relation to horticulture and 'in bloom' displays.

In addition to horticulture, the other two scoring criteria included environment and community, which aimed to instil local pride, create awareness of the environment, and attract involvement from a range of ages and abilities.

Ulster in Bloom

In 2023, the Council submitted nominations for 16 towns and villages from across the Borough, and in what was the most successful year to date, achieved the following results:

- Ballynure: Winner Best Small Village
- Randalstown: Winner Best Small Town
- Antrim: 2nd place in Best Town
- Ballyeaston and Toome: 3rd place Best Small Village

Additionally, Antrim was nominated for a special award in the "Most Improved" category, while Richard Wallace from Ballynure and District Friendship Group won the "Community Champion Award".

Northern Ireland Amenity Council Best Kept Awards

The Northern Ireland Amenity Council had hosted the Best Kept Awards for over 60 years. As a charitable organisation, they collaborated with local Councils, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, and their corporate sponsors, George

Best City Airport, to enhance the appearance of towns, villages, housing areas, schools, and healthcare facilities.

In 2023, the Council submitted 17 nominations for these awards, achieving the following results at the awards ceremony that was recently held at Mossley Mill:

- Antrim – Winner of the Best Kept Large Town
- Randalstown – Winner of the Best Kept Small Town
- Ballynure – Winner of the Best Kept Small Village
- Neillsbrook - Best Kept Large Housing Area

In addition, Mallusk was the winner of The Welcome Award category, which was open to first-time entrants and those towns or villages that had been absent for 5 years. The Best Kept Community Achiever Award was won by Una Johnston from TIDAL (Toome).

Randalstown won the award for the "Best of the Best" / Best Overall, achieving the highest overall score in all sections of the competition."

Britain in Bloom

Members were reminded that the Council recently approved the nomination of Ballynure and District Friendship Group to represent NILGA in the 2023 Britain in Bloom Finals. At the recent award ceremony held in London, which was attended by Chair of Operations, Head of Parks Operations and members of the Group, Ballynure were awarded a Silver Gilt Medal. In addition to this achievement, Richard Wallace from the Group received a Community Champion Award.

Congratulations were extended to all those groups who had participated.

In response to a Members' query, the Director of Parks and Leisure Operations agreed to provide details of submissions to the Ulster in Bloom Awards alongside feedback from judges. He confirmed that new additional submissions for towns and villages in the Borough could be made, and this is best raised through the Parks and Open Spaces Sub Group.

A Member requested that the work of Doreen Muskett from Northern Ireland Amenity Council be recognised by the Council following her recent retirement.

Proposed by Alderman Clarke
Seconded by Councillor Magjill and agreed that

the report be noted.

ACTION BY: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

5.4 EH/PHWB/017 ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH – HEALTH AND WELLBEING ANIMATION

The Environmental Health team had created an animated presentation designed to showcase and highlight the main areas of work undertaken by the Health and Wellbeing section.

The animation highlighted the “Making a Difference” branding that the Health and Wellbeing section used across all areas of its work. The focus of the animation was to increase awareness of the five core areas of work undertaken by the section. These areas encompassed Age Friendly, Supporting the Most Vulnerable, Home Accident Prevention, Nutrition, and Tackling Poverty and Improving Energy Efficiency.

The animation would be used at community events and would prove an informative tool to residents, stakeholders and community groups about the work of the section. It had been created to allow small sections to be clipped and put out on social media channels.

The animation was shown to Members and can be accessed at the following link:

<https://youtu.be/sq0XubbQTLg>

Members congratulated staff on the animation and the Head of Environmental Health and Wellbeing undertook to correct some inaccuracies before circulation to all Members.

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Alderman Smyth and agreed that

the report be noted and the animation circulated to all Members.

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

5.5 WM/WG/002 WINTER OPERATIONS

Winter Operations Plan

From November to April, the Council maintained a Winter Operations Plan to assist staff in delivering Council services as safely and efficiently as possible during the winter months. The Plan also included provision for gritting services at all Council facilities and designated areas like town centres and car parks, the delivery of the waste collection services during adverse weather, and snow clearance operations.

The Plan was reviewed on an annual basis in order to improve the delivery of the service. A copy of the updated Plan was circulated for Members' information and included an outline of the areas which would be gritted and when this would occur.

The Plan outlined the notification procedure for gritting operations which would

be activated if the designated officer believed there was a strong possibility of ice occurring based on Met Office warnings and media weather reports.

The procedure took into account micro climatic differences across the Borough, for example, areas may be gritted in Glengormley due to sub-zero temperatures but there would be no requirement to do so in Crumlin as the temperature is above freezing.

The Plan aimed to have Council facilities gritted before staff arrive at work, and the main town centres to be serviced before shops and businesses open at 9am, although Members were aware that gritting operations could not take place during periods of heavy rain or snow and were dependent on available resources.

The Plan also addressed the possible impact of adverse weather on the waste collection services. In the event of severe weather, road conditions would be assessed and operations revised to reflect the increased risks to staff and public safety.

Community Winter Resilience Kits

The Council also had three Community Winter Resilience Kits, including salt spreader, salt, grit box, snow shovels, ice grippers, gloves, and hi-vis vests for each DEA. The contact details of the community groups or individuals would be kept on a database in case resources needed to be shared across the Borough if ice coverage was patchy. Community groups or individuals receiving the Kits would also be supplied with health and safety guidance notes.

Community Grit Piles

Following Members' requests last year, it was proposed to maintain the community grit piles this winter. A list of the locations had been included in the Plan and grit would be supplied in the event of prolonged periods of adverse weather.

A Member's request to ensure that pathways at Ballyearl Arts and Leisure Centre were cleared for accessibility for the Forget Me Not choir members on Friday mornings was noted.

Proposed by Councillor Logue
Seconded by Alderman Bradley and agreed that

the report be noted.

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

5.6 L/LEI/001 UK ACTIVE AWARDS 2023

Members were reminded that Ballyearl Arts & Leisure Centre and Valley Leisure Centre were both shortlisted as finalists for the UK Active Awards 2023 in the category of Regional and National Leisure Centre of the Year. The Council was also shortlisted as a finalist for the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Award in recognition of the standard of inclusive programming that takes place across the Council's leisure centres.

Elected Members and Officers attended the Awards Ceremony on Thursday 26 October 2023 in Leeds, where Ballyearl Arts & Leisure Centre was announced as the winner in the category of both Regional and National Leisure Centre of the Year.

Proposed by Councillor McWilliam
Seconded by Alderman Bradley and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

In response to a Member query, the Director of Parks and Leisure Operations undertook to investigate the possibility of extending further the recently installed river safety barriers in Glas-na-Braden Glen.

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

Following a query from a Member, the Director of Sustainability provided details of Council's grit provision and undertook to provide further details of the location of additional community grit supplies to Members.

ACTION BY: Michael Laverty, Director of Sustainability

In response to a Member, the Head of Environmental Health and Wellbeing undertook to provide details of the requirements used in determining support to residents in respect to the SEFA Scheme.

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

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED 'IN CONFIDENCE'

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Alderman Smyth and agreed that

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

Councillor Gilmore left the Chamber during Item 6.1.

6 ITEMS IN CONFIDENCE

6.1 IN CONFIDENCE L/LEI/00/008 MOSSLEY PARK 3G PITCH

Members were reminded that in April 2023, the Council approved the development of a 3G pitch and refurbishment of changing facilities at Mossley Park, subject to a successful application to the IFA fund. An Economic Appraisal was circulated which considered a number of options and recommended option 3: development of a 3G pitch with floodlighting, fencing, and refurbishment of changing facilities at an estimated cost of £ [REDACTED]. The funding for the project was proposed to be a contribution of £ [REDACTED] from the Council and £ [REDACTED] from the IFA.

Members were further reminded that Council's Pitch Strategy highlighted the need for additional 3G pitch provision in the urban Newtownabbey area, with Mossley Park recommended as a key location. The Strategy also emphasised the need to improve ancillary facilities at the location, including refurbishment of changing rooms.

Members were advised that a recent application to the Irish Football Association (IFA) Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Investment Fund for the amount of £400,000 to assist with the development of a 3G pitch at Mossley Park was not successful, having reached the final selection stage.

In this context, it was proposed that Council progressed with the previously approved option by contributing to the full costs for the project. The difference in the Minimum Revenue Provision relating the additional funding is £ [REDACTED] per annum over a 20 year period.

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Alderman Bradley that

approval be given to progress with the development of a 3G pitch with floodlighting and the refurbishment of ancillary changing facilities at Mossley Park, at an estimated cost of £ [REDACTED].

Some Members were opposed to the recommendation and also raised concerns relating to the previously approved Pitch Strategy. The Director of Parks and Leisure Operations addressed Members' queries.

AMENDMENT

Proposed by Councillor McLaughlin
Seconded by Councillor Ní Chonghaile that the item be deferred for consideration at a future meeting.

On the amendment being put to the meeting, 6 Members voted in favour, 8 against and 0 abstentions.

The amendment was declared not carried.

The substantive proposal was then put to the meeting, and a recorded vote having been requested by Alderman Smyth, Members voted as follows:

In favour of the Proposal Members viz 8	Against the Proposal Members viz 6	Abstentions Members viz 0
Aldermen – Bradley, Clarke, Smyth Councillors – Foster, Magill, McWilliam, Smyth, Stewart	Councillors – Burbank Logue, McAuley, McLaughlin, Ní Chonghaile and O’Hagan	

On the substantive proposal being put to the Committee, 8 Members voted in favour, 6 against and 0 abstentions and it was agreed that

the substantive proposal be declared carried.

ACTION BY: Deaglan O’Hagan, Head of Leisure Operations

Councillor Gilmore returned to the Chamber.

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

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

- 26 October 2023

Members were reminded that these documents were confidential and were 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.

Members' budgetary concerns were addressed by the Director of Sustainability and Members requested that a further report should be presented to Full Council.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed that

the papers be noted and that a further report is brought to an upcoming meeting of Council on arc21.

ACTION BY: Michael Laverty, Director of Sustainability

6.3 IN CONFIDENCE PK/PG/011 STEEPLE PLAY PARK

Members were reminded of the major vandalism incident that had occurred at Steeple Play-Park in early 2023, which had caused significant damage to the Park's main play structure and had also resulted in a large section of the Park being closed to the public.

In order to expedite this matter, Officers had worked closely with the Council's insurance providers and had recently finalised the insurance claim of £[REDACTED], which was proposed to be used as budget for the refurbishment works. Additionally, Officers had engaged with local DEA Members in relation to the redesign of the Park with the aim of reducing future occurrences of vandalism.

A concept design was circulated for Members' reference, with the works anticipated to be completed by late Spring 2024.

At a Member's request, the Director of Parks and Leisure Operations agreed to look at potential lighting solutions for play-parks.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Councillor Smyth and agreed that

approval be given for the design of Steeple Play-Park and refurbishment works at an estimated cost of £[REDACTED]

ACTION BY: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED OUT OF 'IN CONFIDENCE'

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor McAuley and agreed

that the remainder of Committee business be taken in Open Session.

The Chairperson advised that audio-recording would recommence at this point.

There being no further Committee business, the Chairperson thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting concluded at 7.41 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.