



24 September 2025

To: Each Member of the Council

Dear Member

MEETING OF ANTRIM AND NEWTOWNABBAY BOROUGH COUNCIL

A meeting of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council will be held in the **Council Chamber, Mossley Mill** on **Monday 29 September 2025** 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

For any queries please contact Member Services:

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AGENDA

- 1 Bible Reading and Prayer (In accordance with Standing Orders, Members are not required to attend for this part of the meeting and, following this part of the meeting, Members outside the Chamber will be called to the meeting).
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Declarations of Interest
- 4 To take as read and confirm the minutes of the proceedings of the Council Meeting of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council held on Tuesday 26 August 2025, a copy of which is **enclosed**.
- 5 To approve the minutes of the proceedings of the Operation Committee Meeting of Monday 1 September 2025, a copy of which is **enclosed**.
- 6 To approve the minutes of the proceedings of the Policy and Governance of Tuesday 2 September 2025, a copy of which is **enclosed**.
- 7 To approve the minutes of the proceedings of the Community Development Committee Meeting of Monday 8 September 2025, a copy of which is **enclosed**.
- 8 To approve the minutes of the proceedings of the Economic Development Committee of Tuesday 9 September 2025, a copy of which is **enclosed**.
- 9(a) To take as read and confirm the Part 1 of the minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee Meeting held on Monday 15 September 2025, a copy of which is **enclosed**.
- 9(b) To approve Part 2 of the minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee Meeting held on Monday 15 September 2025, a copy of which is **enclosed**.
- 10 To approve the minutes of the proceedings of the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting of Tuesday 16 September 2025, a copy of which is **enclosed**.
- 11 PRESENTATION
 - 11.1 Northern Ireland Water
- 12 NOTICE OF MOTION
- 13 ITEMS FOR DECISION
 - 13.1 Christmas Festivity Programme 2025
 - 13.2 Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Dilapidation Bill Consultation

13.3 Northern Ireland Social Media Awards 2025

13.4 NI Economic Conference 2025

14 ITEM FOR NOTING

14.1 NILGA – Executive Summary of August 2025 NILGA Executive Meeting

15 ITEMS IN COMMITTEE

15.1 On-Street Residential Charge Point Scheme (ORCS) Update

15.2 Framework for the Servicing and Maintenance of Automatic Doors

15.3 Belfast Region City Deal Annual Report

11 PRESENTATION

11.1 G/MSMO/7 NORTHERN IRELAND WATER UPDATE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this presentation is to provide Members with an update on the on the works of Northern Ireland Water across the Borough.

2. Introduction

Members are advised that Dr Stephen Blockwell, Head of Investment Management, Engineering and Sustainability Director and Mr Roy Mooney, Developers Services, Pre-Development Manager, will be in attendance to provide an update on the works of Northern Ireland Water.

3. Recommendation

It is recommended that the presentation be noted.

Prepared by: Member Services

Approved by: Richard Baker, Chief Executive

12 NOTICE OF MOTION

Proposed by Alderman Magill
Seconded by Councillor Archibald-Brown

"This council notes with grave concern recent politically motivated violence and attacks on free speech.

Acknowledges that free speech and expression, within the law, are foundational to any democratic system and that violence can never be justified.

Reaffirms this Council's commitment to upholding such fundamental human rights and commits this Borough to be a welcoming place for open debate and the free exchange of opinion across the political and social spectrum, inclusive of views that may be considered by the majority as contentious, unsettling or otherwise unpopular."

13.1 ITEMS FOR DECISIONS

13.1 COMD/CD/009 CHRISTMAS FESTIVITY PROGRAMME 2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Members approval for the delivery of the 2025 Christmas Festivity Programme and Spirit of Christmas Awards.

2. Background

Since November 2018, the Council has been delivering Christmas Lights Switch On Events in each District Electoral Area across the Borough.

The programme at each event encompasses a range of family entertainment to include: Christmas Fun Rides, The Santa Express, Street Entertainment, Festive Food Stalls, Arts and Crafts and a short programme of Christmas Readings, Carols and Music following which the Mayor accompanied by the Schools Competition Winner and Santa switch on the Christmas Tree Lights.

Local School Choirs, Traditional Music Groups, Dance Academies and other local artistes participate in the ninety-minute programme the theme for which changes on an annual basis.

3. Previous Decision of Council

Members are reminded that the "Step into the Season" themed Christmas Switch On Programme inspired by the 2024 Olympics and Paralympics was approved by the Community Development Committee in October 2024.

The programme was delivered live in each DEA and streamed online. In total the programme attracted in excess of 12,000 attendees.

4. Proposal for 2025

Since November 2018 Council has delivered 7 Christmas Light Switch On Events across the Borough. In 2024, the "Switch On" programme was delivered at a cost of £101,222.

Attendance at the events in 2024 is detailed below:

DEA	Date & Time	Attendees (approximate)
Airport DEA Crumlin Leisure Centre	Thursday 21 November 2024, 6.00pm - 7.30pm	800
Dunsilly DEA Randalstown - John Street Car Park	Friday 22 November 2024, 6.00pm - 7.30pm	2000
Glengormley DEA Lilian Bland Park	Saturday 23 November 2024, 4.30pm - 6.00pm	2000

Macedon DEA Hazelbank Park	Tuesday 26 November 2024, 7.00pm - 8.30pm	2500
Threemilewater DEA Mossley Mill	Wednesday 27 November 2024, 6.00pm - 7.30pm	300
Antrim DEA Railway Street Car Park	Thursday 28 November 2024, 6.00pm - 7.30pm	2000
Ballyclare DEA The Square Car Park	Saturday 30 November 2024, 4.30pm - 6.00pm	2500
Total		12,100

Online live streaming of each event was introduced in 2020 during the COVID pandemic; however, in 2024 the numbers viewing had dwindled from 78,483 at its peak in 2020 to only 9,580. This element of the events takes up £10,000 of the overall budget and is hugely time intensive. However, detailed analysis shows that average watch time is just 2.7 minutes. It is therefore proposed to stop this element of the switch on events.

Analysis of Other Council Areas and Timeframes

An analysis of similar arrangements across the other ten Council areas indicates that the vast majority of other Council's deliver Christmas switch-on events within their respective legacy Council areas, rather than extending these events to each individual District Electoral Area.

The Council does not begin town centre illuminations or Christmas switch-on events until after 11 November, in respect of the Remembrance period. This creates a narrow timeframe to deliver the seven existing events, which are ideally completed in November to support retail and precede the Enchanted Winter Garden, traditionally starting the last weekend of November. The Council also supports around 12 community led Christmas Switch on events over the same period. As a result, community events often clash with Council Switch-Ons. The tight schedule also increases the risk of weather-related cancellations, with limited opportunity for rescheduling. In addition, some of the locations present capacity, safety and logistical challenges.

Delivering seven large-scale switch-on events over a 7–10 day period requires substantial staff resources, absorbing the Community Development officers from early September to late November. The online elements are particularly resource-intensive, and additional staff support results in significant time off in lieu post-Christmas. This places considerable pressure on the team and limits their capacity to undertake other vital community development work during this period.

Following a review and online evaluation of the 2024 Programme, which provided valuable feedback for future event planning, it is proposed that the existing 7 DEA Christmas Light Switch On Events be reduced to 3 major flagship events in 2025 as follows:

- Antrim Town Centre

- Newtownabbey (V36 at the Valley)
- Ballyclare Town Centre

The **enclosed** map illustrates that the proposed locations above provide access for the vast majority of Borough residents within a 20-minute drive time and are balanced geographically covering both urban and rural areas.

The proposed locations, Antrim Town Centre, Newtownabbey (V36) and Ballyclare Town Centre have been chosen based on the following factors:

Proven Attendance

All three locations consistently achieve high audience numbers: Antrim Town Centre (2,000), Newtownabbey – Spooked Out Event at V36 (8,000+) and Ballyclare Town Centre (2,500) representing the largest and most engaged festive audiences across the Borough.

V36 at The Valley entertains annually 8,500 at the very successful Spooked Out at The Valley Halloween Event and as a purpose-built event space with parking, a range of accessible facilities and hospitality offer surrounding is seen as having the potential for an enhanced Newtownabbey flagship Switch On event.

Balanced Geographic Coverage & Venue Suitability

These venues ensure fair representation across the Borough, preventing any one area from being overlooked and maintains equitable access for all residents. Each site offers an established, safe, and accessible event space capable of hosting large crowds while supporting local business activity during the key pre-Christmas trading period.

Community Integration

The chosen locations complement, rather than duplicate community led switch ons, providing flagship events that bring together surrounding towns and villages while allowing smaller communities to continue with their own celebrations.

The proposal to reduce the number of events from 7 to 3 will bring about the following benefits:

- Streamlining of Resources – Reducing the number of events allows officers to streamline resources and focus on the logistics of fewer locations. This leads to better planning and organisation, enhanced safety measures and less time commitment from officers, on call events assistants and volunteers at this challenging time of the year.
- Enhanced Experience and Impact – By reducing the number of events from 7 to 3 will result in the remaining 3 events becoming larger and more spectacular, particularly the event proposed for V36 which could be seen as a "Big Unified Celebration" with much larger crowds similar in scale to those witnessed at the Annual Halloween Celebrations.

- Increased Publicity and Social Media Coverage – Larger events such as that proposed for V36 attract more media coverage and social media buzz.
- Environmental Benefits – Reduced environmental impact, less energy consumption and waste produced. Reduced Carbon Footprint due to less travel by Event Promoters, Performers and Attendees.
- Economic Impact and Focus – A concentrated impact on 3 events as opposed to 7 will provide the opportunity to establish more strategic partnerships and stronger collaborative links between local businesses, sponsors and the wider community.
- Cost Savings – With fewer events resources can be concentrated on ensuring that the remaining events are larger, more inclusive, have a significantly greater impact and are of a higher quality.

Festive Lit Trees

Under this proposal existing festive and illuminated trees in Antrim Town Centre, Ballyclare Town Centre, Crumlin, Randalstown, Hazelbank Park, Monkstown and Glengormley Town Centre will remain with an additional tree being erected for the flagship event at V36.

5. 2025 Programme Delivery

Officers have started planning for this year's events and having taken into consideration feedback from 2024 the following is proposed for 2025:

- Delivery of the Consolidated Programme of 3 Christmas Light Switch On Events over the period: Thursday 20 – Saturday 22 November 2025. If the existing programme of 7 events continues to be delivered, then the events will take place over the period: Thursday 20 – Saturday 29 November 2025.
- Times will facilitate traffic management arrangements and ensure young families can enjoy the full experience of the events.
- The switching on of the Christmas Lights will once again take place at the mid-point of the proposed ninety-minute programme as opposed to the end in order to facilitate those attending with very young children.
- A programme of family fun entertainment to include: A Children's Pantomime, Live Festive Music, Carols, Switching on of the Christmas Tree Lights, Fun Fair Rides, Festive Food Stalls, Arts and Crafts Activities and Street Entertainment will be delivered at each venue.
- The end of online streaming of the switch on events which will achieve a cost savings of approximately £10,000.

The theme for this year's programme has yet to be decided but will be communicated to Members in advance of the events taking place.

All events will be advertised and promoted through an electronic and direct marketing campaign to encourage residents' participation.

6. Community Switch On Events

As part of the Community Development Grant Aid Programme Council operates a Christmas Celebration Events Fund to assist groups, in legacy locations across the Borough, that may wish to develop and deliver Christmas Celebration events in the absence of a Council installed tree and associated switch on ceremony.

At present financial assistance of up to £1,000 is available to each of the following 15 legacy sites across the Borough detailed as follows: Ballyduff, Ballynure, Ballyrobert, Bawnmore, Burnside, Doagh, Mallusk, Monkstown, New Mossley, Parkgate, Straid, Templepatrick, Tildarg, Toome and Whiteabbey.

Under the new proposal it is recommended that Crumlin and Randalstown be included.

If the Council reduces to three Christmas Light Switch On Events, it is proposed that the maximum grant award for the community led switch on events be increased to £2,000. This reflects the continued popularity of these events and their positive contribution to fostering local community spirit. Groups who avail of this funding are required to cover the cost of their tree and lighting if this is a requirement of their event.

7. The Spirit of Christmas Awards

In addition, Members are also reminded of the "Spirit of Christmas Awards" which were launched in October 2021 and continue to prove popular with in excess of 78 nominations received in 2024.

This year it is proposed that a similar competition is delivered with awards being presented under the following 7 categories:

- Light Up Award - The wider community working together to create the most outstanding Christmas display or the best lit street, village or town in the Borough.
- Rocking Around the Christmas Tree Award - Best programme of festive entertainment within a business or community setting.
- The Reason for the Season Award - The most festive school, church or community facility.
- The Making an Entrance Award - The best dressed entrance feature or shop front.
- Traditional Christmas Award - Recognising acts of goodwill during the festive season.
- Themed Award – To be confirmed once the theme for the events has been agreed.

- Mayors Award - Most outstanding Christmas Display or Event in the Borough - Chosen by the Mayor

Nominations for this year's competition will open on Wednesday 12 November and close on Monday 8 December at 4pm. Awards will be presented at a Christmas themed Celebration Event to be held in the Oriel Gallery, Antrim Castle Gardens on Wednesday 17 December 2025.

8. Financial Implication

Members are advised that provision of £100,000 for the 2025 Christmas Festivity Programme, The Spirit of Christmas Awards and £15,000 for the Christmas Celebration Events Fund has been included in the 2025/26 Community Development budgets.

Under the Consolidated Programme (3 events) it is proposed that the budget be allocated as follows:

Switch On Events	Amount
Antrim	£ 20,000
Newtownabbey (V36)	£ 20,000
Ballyclare Town Centre	£ 20,000
Christmas Celebration Events Fund	
17 Legacy Areas x £2,000	£ 34,000
Spirit of Christmas Awards	
Awards and Celebration Event	£ 2,000
Total Programme Cost	£ 96,000

9. Summary

It is proposed that the number of Christmas Light Switch On Events, to be delivered across the Borough in November 2025, be reduced to 3 with events to be held in Antrim Town Centre, Newtownabbey (V36) and Ballyclare Town Centre. If this proposal is approved the events will take place from Thursday 20 – Saturday 22 November 2025.

Lit Christmas trees will be provided in Antrim Town Centre, Ballyclare Town Centre, Crumlin, Randalstown, Hazelbank Park, Monkstown and Glengormley Town Centre will remain with an additional tree being erected for the flagship event at V36.

Should the Consolidated Christmas Light Switch On Events Programme be approved It is proposed that the Upper Grant Threshold for the Christmas Celebration Events Fund be increased from £1,000 - £2,000 per area in 2025.

Nominations for the "Spirit of Christmas Awards" competition will open on Wednesday 12 November and close on Monday 8 December 2025.

10. Recommendation

It is recommended that:

- (a) the delivery of 3 flagship Christmas Light Switch On Events in in Antrim Town Centre, Newtownabbey (V36 at The Valley) and Ballyclare Town Centre be approved.**
- (b) the maximum award available for the Christmas Celebration Events Fund be increased from £1,000 to £2,000 per applicant and that Crumlin and Randalstown be included.**
- (c) the 2025 Christmas Festivity Programme and proposals for the “Spirit of Christmas Awards” be approved.**

Prepared by: Jonathan Henderson, Community Services Co-ordinator

Agreed by: Ronan McKenna, Head of Community Development

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Development

13.2 EH/EHS/EP/003 DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL AFFAIRS (DAERA) DILAPIDATION BILL CONSULTATION

1. Purpose

This report seeks Member approval for a consultation response to the revised Dilapidation Bill introduced to the Assembly by the Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs. The Bill aims to address the growing problem of dilapidated buildings and neglected sites across Northern Ireland.

2. Introduction

Reports of dangerous structures, neglected sites and derelict buildings have increased significantly in recent years across Northern Ireland. Such sites negatively affect community safety, local economies and overall quality of life.

Work on a Dilapidation Bill began in 2012 following substantial engagement between government officials, councils and stakeholders, including two "Blight Summits," a DOE discussion paper (2014), and a DOE public consultation (2016).

The latest Dilapidation Bill, introduced on 23 June 2025, builds on the 2016 consultation. It is designed to give councils a modern, consistent enforcement framework across Northern Ireland to address dangerous or neglected buildings. The Bill proposes new offences, stronger enforcement powers and mechanisms for cost recovery. These measures would enable councils either to compel owners/occupiers to carry out remedial works or to undertake works themselves and recover costs.

As part of the Assembly's normal legislative processes, the Dilapidation Bill has been referred to the Assembly's Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (AERA) for scrutiny and evaluation. The Committee is seeking views from stakeholders on the objectives, proposals and potential consequences of the Bill.

A link to the consultation can be found at:

<https://consult.nia-yourassembly.org.uk/agrienvra/dilapidation-bill/>

Members should note that Building Control Northern Ireland (BCNI), the voluntary umbrella body representing the Building Control departments of all 11 councils, will also submit its own consultation response. While this draft response (**enclosed**) has been prepared by Environmental Health, it reflects the shared views of the Council's Environmental Health, Planning and Building Control services.

3. Key Issues

Councils currently lack consistent and effective powers to address neglected and dilapidated buildings. Existing legislation is fragmented, with

limited provisions spread across planning legislation, nuisance legislation under environmental health and building control, outdated local authority statutes and ancillary powers held by other bodies such as the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

The main legislation presently used by Planning, Building Control and Environmental Health to address dangerous or neglected structures includes:

- Public Health Acts Amendment Act 1907
- Pollution Control and Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 1978
- Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847
- Towns Improvement (Ireland) Act 1854
- Sections 64, 73 and 161 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 as it relates to the power to serve an 'Urgent Works Notice' on a Listed Building or a building within a Conservation Area as directed by the Department.

In addition, the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (NI) 2011 does not apply to listed buildings and cannot be used to deal with untidy or dilapidated premises.

While these statutes have been used to some effect, their narrow scope, age (some dating back to the 19th century) and enforcement challenges make them increasingly unfit for purpose. In particular, they provide inadequate powers to:

- Identify ownership
- Recover costs incurred by councils
- Respond to dangerous structures in emergencies
- Address abandoned buildings and building sites
- Provide clear legal definitions
- Set out council responsibilities for default works

Experience has shown that reliance on these outdated provisions often results in limited success, owing to unclear criteria, lack of guidance and overlapping responsibilities across different statutory agencies. This has prevented a consistent and strategic approach to tackling dilapidation.

The revised Dilapidation Bill, reflecting feedback from the 2016 consultation, seeks to modernise this framework and align Northern Ireland more closely with arrangements in England and Wales. It proposes:

1. Extending council powers to remedy, or recover costs for remedying, dangerous or nuisance premises.
2. Allowing cost recovery from those with a financial interest in a property, including mortgage lenders.
3. Empowering councils to take urgent action without court approval and to recover associated costs.

4. Enabling councils to require owners to tidy, demolish, or rebuild premises adversely affecting neighbourhood amenity.

The Bill is expected to give councils more effective tools to address dilapidation in towns and villages, allowing enforcement, works in default and cost recovery across a wider range of problematic sites.

The Consultation document includes a series of questions, and a draft Council response is enclosed. The draft response raises the following concerns:

- Cost Recovery - Councils may be left carrying significant financial risk where costs are unrecoverable, or recovery requires lengthy legal proceedings.
- Clarity of Definitions- Terms such as "*detriment to local amenity*" require further definition to avoid ambiguity in implementation.
- Agency Roles- The Bill should explicitly reference other statutory bodies, including the Police Service of Northern Ireland and DfI Roads Service, to ensure clarity of roles and responsibilities.

Subject to Council approval, the draft response will be submitted by the 10 October 2025 deadline.

5. Financial Position/Implication

At this stage, no departmental guidance has been issued on financial implications. However, officers anticipate significant resource pressures on councils, both in staffing and in cases where councils must carry out works in default. Recovery of costs may be delayed, particularly where statutory charges are placed against properties.

The Department's Regulatory Impact Assessment acknowledges potential costs for property owners, developers, and financial institutions, but highlights offsetting benefits such as:

- Increased property values
- Greater construction activity
- Reduced anti-social behaviour
- Economic regeneration and job creation
- Improved built environment and tourism potential
- Potential increases in local and regional rate revenues

6. Equality and/or Rural Screening Requirements

The Department completed a Rural Needs Impact Assessment of the policy proposals and concluded that they do not reveal any significant adverse differential impact on people in rural areas.

7. Summary

The revised Dilapidation Bill offers a significant opportunity to modernise outdated legislation and equip councils with stronger, clearer and more consistent powers to tackle dilapidated and dangerous buildings across Northern Ireland. The proposals are broadly welcomed; however, concerns remain around cost recovery, the need for clearer definitions and stronger collaboration with other statutory agencies. Members are therefore asked to approve the Council's draft consultation response, which highlights these issues to help ensure the legislation is both effective and practical in implementation.

8. Recommendation

It is recommended that Members approve the draft response to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) consultation on the new Dilapidation Bill.

Prepared by: Liam Nicholas, Environmental Health Manager

Agreed by: Colin Kelly, Environmental Health Manager

Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Environment and Sustainability /
Majella McAlister, Director of Economic Development and Planning

13.3 CE/CA/003 NORTHERN IRELAND SOCIAL MEDIA AWARDS 2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval for attendance at the 2025 Northern Ireland Social Media Awards in the Europa Hotel on Saturday 18 October 2025.

2. Introduction/Background

The Northern Ireland Social Media Awards (NISMA) honours and recognises organisations, freelancers, individuals, teams, agencies, and businesses delivering social media marketing and demonstrating excellence in their work as well as resilience in the face of adversity on social media. These awards recognise the power of social media in the context of navigating the challenges of the digital world.

3. Northern Ireland Social Media Awards Best Campaign Public Sector

The Marketing Communications and PR team submitted an entry to the 2025 awards for the Best Campaign – Public Sector category for the "It Starts With You" campaign. This campaign was delivered in March as part of the Councils Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) work and was designed to raise awareness and drive action on this vital subject. A multi-agency social media initiative combined bold messaging with platform-specific content to engage over one million people.

By transforming online engagement into tangible community impact, the campaign redefined how public-sector social media can deliver meaningful results highlighted below:

- A total of 1,165,307 impressions across social media platforms
- A 4.9% engagement rate – five times higher than standard industry norms (0.5-1%)
- Campaign assets (videos, graphics, toolkits) shared by The Executive Office as best practice for other councils.
- Engagement insights of this campaign now shaping a regional EVAWG social media framework.

The "It Starts With You!" campaign demonstrated the transformative power of social media in tackling one of society's most urgent issues. By blending creative storytelling, multi-platform strategy, and community-centred content, the Council turned online engagement into real-world change — from increased helpline awareness to greater community confidence and inter-agency collaboration.

With reach exceeding one million, engagement rates five times industry standards, and resources now adopted regionally as best practice, this campaign shows how public sector social media can drive meaningful social good.

4. The Northern Ireland Social Media Awards Shortlist

Correspondence, **enclosed**, has been received confirming that the Council has been shortlisted as one of the finalists in the Best Campaign Public Sector category for its 'It Starts With You' EVAWG campaign. There were a total of 842 submissions to the awards in 2025 and the Council is one of 8 finalists in this category.

5. The Northern Ireland Social Media Awards Ceremony

Members are advised the awards ceremony will take place from 6pm on Saturday 18 October at the Europa Hotel, Belfast.

It is proposed that the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Chair of the Community Development Committee (or their nominees), the Director of Community Development and up to 3 officers attend the 2025 Northern Ireland Social Awards.

6. Financial Position/Implication

Members are advised that the cost of attendance at the awards ceremony is £135 per person, therefore £945 in total, provision for which exists within the Community Development Directorate budget.

7. Summary

The Councils 'It Starts With You' social media campaign delivered as part of the EVAWG initiative has been shortlisted as a finalist in the 2025 Northern Ireland Social Media Awards. It is proposed that the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Chair of the Community Development Committee (or their nominees), Director of Community Development and up to 3 officers attend the awards ceremony in the Europa Hotel on Saturday 18 October 2025 at a cost of £945.

8. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Chair of the Community Development Committee (or their nominees), Director of Community Development and up to 3 officers attend the Northern Ireland Social Media Awards ceremony on Saturday 18 October 2025 at the Europa Hotel Belfast, at a cost of £945.

Prepared by: Jeanette McIntyre, Head of Marketing Communications and PR

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

13.4 ED/ED/298 NI ECONOMIC CONFERENCE 2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval for attendance at the Northern Ireland Economic Conference 2025 for Members of the Economic Development Committee and relevant Council Officers.

2. Introduction/Background

Members will recall that Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council was the principal sponsor for the 2022 and 2023 Agenda NI Northern Ireland Economic Conferences that took place at the Kingfisher Hotel. The 2024 Northern Ireland Economic Conference was hosted in the Titanic Hotel in Belfast with a theme of "Creating good jobs, promoting regional balance, raising productivity and achieving net zero by 2050".

The Northern Ireland Economic Conference is Northern Ireland's premier economic analysis event and is unique in being the only forum which takes a high-level look at the performance of and prospects for the local economy.

3. Previous Decision of Council

It was agreed at Economic Development Committee in September 2024 that Members of the Committee and relevant Council Officers attend the Northern Ireland Economic Conference, the cost of which would be met through the existing Economic Development Budget.

4. Overview

The 2025 Northern Ireland Economic Conference is being hosted in the Titanic Hotel in Belfast on Wednesday 19th November. The theme of this year's conference is:

"Creating good jobs, promoting regional balance, raising productivity and reducing carbon emissions"

Key issues to be addressed at the conference include:

- Global and UK economic outlook;
- Medium term economic outlook for NI;
- A comparative analysis of economies, North and South;
- Narrowing the productivity gap;
- Creating good jobs and tackling economic inactivity;
- Assessing the impact of trade tariffs;
- Addressing regional balance; and
- Achieving net zero by 2050.

The programme is still being finalised but will include keynote addresses from:

- a. Minister for the Economy – Caoimhe Archibald MLA
- b. Financial Times Commentator – Chris Giles

- c. Professor of Applied Economics – Mary O'Mahony
- d. Utilities Regulator - Rosamund Blomfield-Smith
- e. Innovation Commissioner – Adrian Johnston

5. Financial Implications

Tickets for the event are £195+VAT each, which is a special discounted rate for local government. It is proposed that Members of the Committee and relevant Officers attend the event.

The total anticipated cost can be met from existing Economic Development budgets.

6. Equality and/or Rural Screening Requirements

None.

7. Recommendation

It is recommended that Members of the Economic Development Committee and relevant Council Officers attend the Northern Ireland Economic Conference 2025, the cost of which will be met through the existing Economic Development Budget.

Prepared by: Jill Murray, Executive Officer, Economic Development

Agreed and Approved by: Majella McAlister, Director of Economic Development and Planning

14 ITEMS FOR NOTING

14.1 G/MSMO/14 NILGA – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF AUGUST 2025 NILGA EXECUTIVE MEETING

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is for Members to note the Executive Summary of the NILGA Executive meeting held in August.

2. Key Points

Members are advised that the summary (**enclosed**) provides an overview of the matters discussed at the meeting in August.

Members are encouraged to review the summary for further insight into NILGA's current focus and direction.

3. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Executive Summary of the NILGA Executive meeting held in August 2025 be noted.

Prepared by: Member Services

Agreed by: Liz Johnston, Deputy Director of Governance

Approved by: Richard Baker, Chief Executive