



31 December 2024

Committee Chair: Councillor V McWilliam

Committee Vice-Chair: Councillor A McAuley

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

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

Dear Member

MEETING OF THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Operations Committee will be held in the **Round Tower Chamber, Antrim Civic Centre on Monday 6 January 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

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

For any queries please contact Member Services:
Tel: 028 9448 1301

memberservices@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk

A G E N D A

1 APOLOGIES

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3 PRESENTATION

3.1 Estimates Update Presentation

4 ITEMS FOR DECISION

4.1 Request for Eco-Schools Support 2025/26

4.2 Application for Grant of Amusement Permit – Glengormley Sportsbowl

4.3 Review of Recycling Centre Opening Hours

4.4 Facility Closures and Opening Hours – Parks and Leisure

4.5 Northern Ireland Forest School Association – Forest Schools Programme

4.6 Correspondence from DfI – Active Travel Delivery Plan Consultation

4.7 Nappy Collection Scheme

4.8 Schedule of Charges and Pricing Policies, Parks and Leisure 2025-2026

4.9 Correspondence from Northern Ireland Water – For Essential Site Investigations Works at Sandyknowes Park

5 ITEMS FOR NOTING

5.1 Winter Woollies Update

5.2 Tobacco Test Purchase Exercise – November 2024

5.3 Take a Seat Initiative

5.4 Waste Performance Annual Update 2023 - 2024

5.5 Performance and Improvement Plan 2024/25 Performance Progress Report Quarter 2

5.6 National Football Training Centre – Update

6 ITEMS IN CONFIDENCE

6.1 Update on the Implementation of XL Bully Safeguarding Measures

6.2 arc21 Joint Committee Papers

7 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

3 PRESENTATION

3.1 FI/FIN/11 ESTIMATES UPDATE PRESENTATION

1. Purpose

An update on the 2025/26 Estimates for the Operations Committee will be presented at the meeting.

2. Recommendation

It is recommended that the presentation be noted.

Prepared by: Richard Murray, Head of Finance

Agreed by: John Balmer, Deputy Director of Finance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

4 ITEMS FOR DECISION

4.1 WM/WM/033 REQUEST FOR ECO-SCHOOLS SUPPORT 2025/26

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for funding to continue the Eco-Schools Programme for the 2025/2026 academic year.

2. Background

Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful co-ordinates the Eco-Schools Programme which aims to combine pupils' learning with action on improving the environmental performance of the school. The Eco-Schools Programme is extremely popular across the Borough with 74 schools now registered and 36 of these schools achieving the highest level, Green Flag accreditation. Ballyclare, Ballycraigy and Fairview Primary Schools are also recognised as Ambassador Schools for the Borough.

3. Previous Decision of Council

Last year, £10,942 in financial support was agreed for the 2024/25 academic year. The funding provides a vital environmental education role for Council and includes a dedicated Field Officer who supports schools through the Eco-Schools Programme and delivers workshops on waste and recycling, biodiversity and climate change.

A summary of the Eco-Schools engagement for the 2023-24 academic year is included (enclosed) which shows that as of June 2024, Antrim and Newtownabbey had the second highest percentage of Green Flags across Northern Ireland.

Council has received this year's funding request (enclosed) from KNIB for the Eco-Schools Programme 2025/26 with two options available.

4. Financial Implication

The funding request for 2025/26 includes two funding options:

Option 1: Support of the Programme at a cost of £10,942, which includes Wheelie Big Challenge, Eco Schools and core running costs of the programme including a Field Officer in our Council area and allows schools to access additional funding provided through Eco-Schools for projects such as Wrigley Litter Less campaign;

Option 2: Support from the Eco-Schools Programme at a cost of £2,975, which includes Eco-Schools communication, training and development to all schools in the Borough.

As Members will be aware, our funding is matched by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs and therefore the local schools will be benefiting from approximately £22,000 worth of assistance with environmental issues.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that Council approves funding in the amount of £10,942 for the Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful Eco-Schools Programme 2025/26.

Prepared by: Claire Evans, Climate, Waste and Sustainability Officer

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

Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Waste Operations

4.2 EH/EHS/LS/004 LS.AP.7 APPLICATION FOR GRANT OF AN AMUSEMENT PERMIT FOR MR HENRY CROWE - GLENGORMLEY SPORTS BOWL & SCRAPYARD GOLF 3-9, 11 GLENWELL ROAD, GLENGORMLEY, NEWTOWNABBEY, BT36 7RF

1. Purpose

The purpose of the report is to seek Members approval for grant of an Amusement Permit for Mr Henry Crowe for 3-9, 11 Glenwell Road, Glengormley, Newtownabbey, BT36 7RF

2. Introduction

An application has been received for the grant of an Amusement Permit

Amusement Permit	Location of Premises	Type(s)and hours of Amusement Permit	File Number	New Application or Renewal
Mr Henry Crowe	3-9, 11 Glenwell Road, Glengormley, Newtownabbey BT36 7RF	Authorising Gaming, by means of gaming machines Monday to Sunday 10:00hrs to 24:00hrs	LS.AP.7	New Application

In line with Council protocol for the hearing of Amusement Permits applications, approved in February 2017, the application must be considered at the Operations Committee meeting.

The Committee can decide the following:

- i. Grant the licence
- ii. Grant the licence with specific additional terms, conditions and restrictions
- iii. Refuse the licence
- iv. Defer an application for further consideration or to obtain further information.

If the Committee makes a decision against an Officer's recommendation, then members must state their reasons for doing so. In such circumstances, a recorded vote will be taken.

3. Main Report

An application has been received for the Grant of an Amusement Permit for Mr Henry Crowe. This permit issuance is a change of operator. The application process involves public consultation in a local newspaper for a period of 28

days from the date of 12 December 2024, to date no objections have been received. Statutory consultation with Police Service of Northern Ireland sub-divisional commander was served by the applicant on 9 December 2024.

Appropriate character and financial standing of Mr Henry Crowe has been demonstrated by references submitted to Council. The premises at 3-9, 11 Glenwell Road, Glengormley, to which the Amusement Permit applies, has previously been permitted and licensed by Council for gaming use over several years. There are no concerns regarding the suitability of its location.

The operating hours for the premises as detailed below;

Monday to Sunday 10:00hrs to 24:00hrs

Following a review of the Amusement permit protocol, Council approval is now required in advance of granting a permit.

4. Summary

Mr Henry Crowe has submitted an application for the grant of an Amusement Permit for 3-9, 11 Glenwell Road, Glengormley, BT36 7RF. As per the Council protocol for the granting of an Amusement permit, a decision by Members is required regarding the approval of the permit.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that an Amusement Permit is granted to the applicant, Mr Henry Crowe, 3-9, 11 Glenwell Road, Glengormley, Newtownabbey, BT36 7RF

with the following conditions;

- **That all relevant licensing requirements are met**
- **That statutory consultees have no objections to approval**

Prepared by: Kelly Squance, Environmental Health Officer

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

Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Sustainability

4.3 WM/RC/001 REVIEW OF HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING CENTRES OPENING HOURS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend to Members an amendment to the opening hours at the Household Recycling Centres.

2. Background

As Members will be aware, Household Recycling Centres are extensively used by residents within the Borough. There are five sites strategically positioned to optimise coverage within the Borough where residents of Antrim and Newtownabbey can recycle additional waste.

The Centres will only accept waste from residents in the Borough, with all five of the sites open six days per week and Bruslee and Newpark open on Sunday to provide 7 day provision across the Borough.

The table below shows the total number of visitors through five sites from 01 January 2024 to 30 November 2024 and an estimated annual figure.

Year	Number of visits (Predicted annual usage)
2024/25	608,226 (~665,000 visits)

3. Key Issues

While Council is keen to keep the service accessible to all residents, there are irregularities in Council's current Household Recycling Centre opening hours i.e Bruslee is open on Sunday 9am to 5pm and Newpark is open on Sunday 12noon to 5pm etc.

Each of the Centres is fitted with a vehicle counter and analysis of this data has illustrated that the opening hours could be amended with limited impact on users and result in improved overall service provision with enhanced management of customer service and better segregation of the waste with potential cost savings.

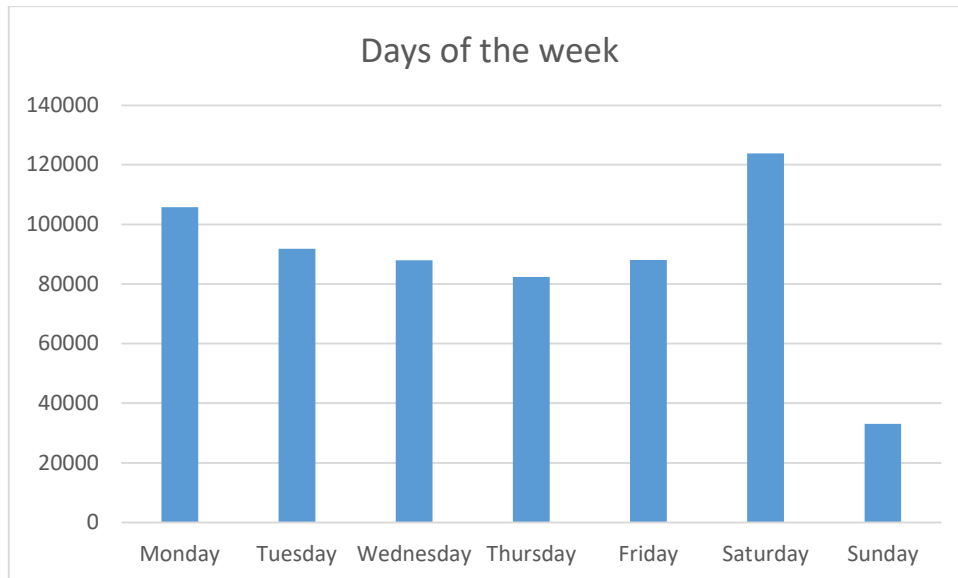
The data from vehicle counters at the Recycling Centres indicate low usage at the start and at the end of days as shown in the traffic counter data in the table below.

Hourly Usage Across 5 Sites

Hour	Approx no of vehicles per site	% of Usage
09:00 - 10:00	20	5%
10:00 - 11:00	32	8%
17:00 - 18:00	32	8%
18:00 - 19:00	18	5%
19:00 - 20:00	19	2%

In addition, the data indicates that Monday and Saturday are the busiest days of the week at the Household Recycling Centres.

Day of the Week Usage



Neighbouring Council Recycling Centre Opening Hours

Council operates our Household Recycling Centres significantly longer than our neighbouring councils, as indicated on the table below. This creates opportunities for waste tourism with ratepayers from other council areas using Antrim and Newtownabbey sites when their own council sites are closed.

	Antrim & Newtownabbey	Belfast	Lisburn & Castlereagh	Mid & East Antrim
Total Annual Recycling Centre Operating Hours	16,276	12,584	6,708	11,570

A number of different combinations of opening hours was considered but following analysis of the data from the vehicle counters and consultation and feedback from staff's on-the-ground experience, it proposed to open the Household Recycling Centres as follows throughout the year:

- Monday – Saturday 10am - 6pm (throughout the year)
- Sunday 12pm-5pm (Newpark & Bruslee only)

The benefits of the proposed opening hours would be:

- greater staff coverage on site with enhanced health & safety controls;
- reduction in overtime costs;
- improved customer service for residents;
- possible reduction in waste arisings;
- possible increasing recycling;
- greater service provision to ratepayers than neighbouring councils.

4. Financial Implications

If the new proposed Household Recycling Centre hours were approved, Council could achieve a reduction in staffing costs of approximately £30,000 per annum. In addition, it is envisaged that there would be a reduction in overall waste collected at the Centres, with a 1% reduction equating to an annual saving of approximately £40,000.

5. Summary

The current Household Recycling Centre opening hours are significantly longer than our neighbouring councils and this places financial pressure on Council due to operating costs and quantities of waste handled.

Following a review of the opening hours and analysis of the data from the vehicle counters at the five Household Recycling Centres, it is proposed to amend the opening hours. The proposed opening hours should result in enhanced health and safety controls, better customer service and possible revenue savings. If approved, it is proposed to introduce the new opening times from April 2025 following all necessary staff consultation.

6. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Council amends the opening hours of the Household Recycling Centres to the following:

Monday – Saturday 10am-6pm (All 5 Centres) throughout the year

Sunday 12pm-5pm (Newpark & Bruslee only)

Prepared by: Leanne Smits, Waste Operations Manager

Agreed by: Darren Purdy, Head of Waste Operations

Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Sustainability

4.4 L/GEN/056, PK/GEN/205 FACILITY CLOSURES AND OPENING HOURS – PARKS AND LEISURE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the proposed operating hours and closure schedule for the Parks and Leisure Department for the 2025/26 period.

2. Introduction/Background

Members are reminded that annually, in the last quarter of the year, proposed schedules of closure arrangements on Bank and Public Holidays for Council facilities are brought to the relevant committees for approval. A draft schedule of bank and public holiday closures is **enclosed** for Members' reference.

3. Proposed Changes

For the 2025/26 period, it is proposed that the opening hours of leisure centres without golf facilities on bank and public holidays be adjusted to match their standard weekend hours, as these holidays typically see a usage decrease of up to 30%, particularly before 8 a.m. and after 7 p.m. Meanwhile, it is proposed that the operating hours for leisure centres with golf courses, Ballyearl and Allen Park, remain unchanged.

4. Financial Implications

Public and bank holidays incur significantly higher operational costs, with employee wages on these days reaching up to triple the standard rate. By consolidating operations into a single shift on these holidays, staffing costs can be reduced from approximately £105,000 to £45,000, resulting in a cost saving of £60,000. Additional savings are anticipated through reduced energy consumption; however, these have not been factored into the current estimate.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that approval be granted for the proposed operating hours and closure schedule for the Parks and Leisure Department for the 2025/26 period.

Prepared by: Conor McCallion, Leisure Development Manager

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

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

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

1. Purpose

This purpose of the report is to inform Members about the Northern Ireland Forest School Association's activities within the borough and seek approval for a £7,000 funding allocation for the 2025/26 financial year.

2. Introduction/Background

Members are reminded that the Council has contributed annually to the Northern Ireland Forest Schools Programme. The Northern Ireland Forest School Association is a charity dedicated to promoting, developing, and delivering sustainable environmental education programmes. The Forest Schools Programme is an innovative educational approach that emphasises outdoor play and learning, encouraging and inspiring individuals of all ages through positive outdoor experiences.

Last year, the Council approved a contribution of £7,000 to enable the selection of one school from each District Electoral Area (DEA) to participate in the programme.

Officers are now inviting all schools and nurseries within the Borough that have not previously participated in the programme to register their interest by completing an online form. Efforts will be made to select one school or nursery from each DEA to participate in this initiative.

3. Financial Position/Implication

Budget provision has been included in the estimated 2025/26 budget.

4. Summary

The Northern Ireland Forest School Association serves as an effective mechanism for fostering environmental awareness and strengthening connections among children, young people. By providing engaging and impactful programmes, Northern Ireland Forest School Association plays a pivotal role in promoting sustainability and encouraging outdoor learning. Its initiatives are not only cost-effective but also create a lasting legacy of environmental consciousness.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that Members approve a contribution of £7,000 to support the delivery of the Northern Ireland Forest Schools Programme within the Borough, enabling one Forest School per District Electoral Area.

Prepared by: Ian McCurley, Parks Development Manager

Agreed by: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

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

4.6 PK/BIO/019/VOL4 CORRESPONDENCE FROM DFI – ACTIVE TRAVEL DELIVERY PLAN CONSULTATION

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Department for Infrastructure's Active Travel Delivery Plan. Members are invited to provide feedback to inform the response to the ongoing consultation on the Plan.

2. Background

Dfi's **Active Travel Delivery Plan** outlines a 10-year strategy to promote walking, wheeling, and cycling for shorter, everyday journeys across Northern Ireland. The **Plan (enclosed)** identifies priorities for Council areas across Northern Ireland, focusing on delivering safe and accessible active travel routes. The key priorities include:

1. **Connections to Schools:** Improving infrastructure around schools to encourage active travel for students and parents, reducing congestion and enhancing safety.
2. **Connections to Public Transport:** Developing routes that integrate walking, wheeling, and cycling with public transport hubs to promote multi-modal travel and reduce car dependency.
3. **Connections to Town and City Centres:** Creating better access to local amenities, boosting footfall, and supporting economic vibrancy in urban centres.

3. Priority Routes

Each Council area (based on populations over 5,000) has been provided with detailed **Active Travel Network Maps** outlining:

- **Priority Routes** (0-10 years): Immediate delivery of key infrastructure.
- **Future Routes** (10+ years): Expansion to build a fully interconnected network.
- **Enhancement of Existing Routes:** Upgrades to current active travel infrastructure.

Rural areas will receive tailored improvements focusing on key links to schools, public transport, and village centres.

The identified areas and priority routes for Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council include:

Antrim Town – Three priority routes:

Castle Way to Stiles Way/B518 via Fountain Hill.

Greystone Roundabout along Greystone Road (B95) to Fountain Hill.

Hill Street along Railway Street to Stiles Way.

Ballyclare – One main priority route:

Ballyclare Western Relief Road/B95 Roundabout to the Square via Doagh Road.

Crumlin – One main priority route:

Lurgan Road to Main Street/Ballydonagh Road.

Metropolitan Newtownabbey – Two main priority routes:

Carnmoney Road North/Mossley West to Church Road/Valley Retail Park via Prince Charles Way, Church Road, and Longwood Road.

Randalstown – One main priority route:

Randalstown Viaduct to Castle Road via Shanes Street and Station Road.

Maps detailing the priority routes for each settlement are **enclosed** for Members' reference. These maps also show future and existing routes for potential enhancements.

4. Consultation

The Department is hosting several public consultation events to provide opportunity for discussion before the consultation ends on 28 February. It is proposed that Members' feedback is provided via email and collated within a corporate response.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that Members provide feedback on DfI's Active Travel Delivery Plan to support the submission of a corporate response.

Prepared by: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

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

4.7 WM/WM/040 NAPPY COLLECTION SCHEME

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to request Members approval for Officers to write to DAERA in support of Ards and North Down Borough Council's proposal for the Department to work towards the establishment of a disposable nappy collection and recycling service in Northern Ireland.

2. Introduction

Officers have received correspondence from Ards and North Down Borough Council (ANDBC) (enclosed) which asks the Council to support ANDBC's request for Department of Agriculture, Environment, and Rural Affairs (DAERA) to investigate the possible establishment of a disposable nappy collection and recycling service in Northern Ireland.

3. Key Issues

Approximately 4% of residual waste is made up of disposable nappies and other absorbent hygiene products and this could equate to as much as 4,000 tonnes per annum. At present, this waste is landfilled or recovered for energy production.

While there are no current recycling collection services for used nappies in Northern Ireland, other parts of the UK and Europe do have successful schemes in operation. These schemes can achieve 100% landfill diversion for these materials with the cellulose fibres and plastics separated for recycling. The cellulose fibres can be used for the production of fibre boards, acoustic panelling, and spill kits and the plastics sent to secondary re-processors for recycling.

As the cost and volumes of waste would be prohibitive for a single Council to develop the collection and processing infrastructure, ANDBC has written to the DAERA Minister expressing its view that there is a need for a nappy collection scheme in Northern Ireland. In addition, ANDBC has also contacted all other Northern Ireland Councils asking that they also write to the DAERA Minister requesting the same. The Council also received a similar correspondence from Michelle McIlveen MLA.

As the proposal is in line with Council's sustainability and climate change aims, it is proposed that the Chief Executive also writes to the Minister in support of ANDBC's call for DAERA to work towards the establishment of a disposable nappy collection and recycling service in Northern Ireland.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that Council writes to DAERA Minister in support of Ards and North Down Borough Council's call for the Department to work towards the establishment of a disposable nappy collection and recycling service in Northern Ireland.

Prepared and Approved by: Michael Lavery, Director of Sustainability

4.8 L/GEN/5, PK/GEN/180 SCHEDULE OF CHARGES AND PRICING POLICIES, PARKS AND LEISURE 2025-2026

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the Parks and Leisure Schedule of Charges and Pricing Policies for 2025/2026.

2. Introduction/Background

Members are advised that an annual review of pricing for Parks & Leisure Services (incl. Bereavement Services) is completed in advance of each new financial year.

Members agreed in December 2024, to implement an inflationary increase in Leisure memberships and all other Leisure pricing within the schedule.

Members also agreed changes to Bereavement Services charges for 2025/26.

3. Pricing Changes

An inflationary rise of 2.5% has been applied across all prices with a rounding up to the nearest pound.

The full Schedule of Charges, Pricing Policies, and a summary of proposed changes are **enclosed** for Members' reference.

The EQIA screening document has been reviewed and does not need to be changed.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that approval be granted for the changes to the Schedule of Charges and Pricing Policies for Parks and Leisure 2025/2026.

Prepared by: Conor McCallion, Leisure Development Manager

Agreed by: Deaglan O'Hagan, Head of Leisure Operations and Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

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

4.9 PK/GEN/220 CORRESPONDENCE FROM NORTHERN IRELAND WATER – FOR ESSENTIAL SITE INVESTIGATIONS WORKS AT SANDYKNOWES PARK

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to request approval for Northern Ireland Water to conduct initial site investigations and subsequent construction works at Sandyknowes Park as part of the Whitehouse Drainage Area Plan.

2. Introduction

Correspondence has been received (**enclosed** for Members' reference) from Northern Ireland (NI) Water, formally requesting access to Sandyknowes Park to undertake essential site and ground investigation works as part of the Whitehouse Drainage Area Plan (DAP). The DAP, developed by NI Water and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), aims to reduce the risk of sewer flooding and unsatisfactory intermittent discharges within the Whitehouse catchment, including high-risk areas such as Sandyknowes Wastewater Pumping Station. This project is expected to bring significant environmental benefits, particularly in terms of improving the water quality in the Blackwater River.

3. Initial Site Investigation

As part of the pre-construction process, access to the park is required to carry out the following ground investigations:

Trial Pits: Five trial pits, approximately 3 meters deep

Boreholes: Three boreholes, approximately 10 meters deep

NI Water has provided assurances that the initial site investigations will be carried out in such a way as to minimise disturbance to the park. The total land area required for the works will be kept to a minimum, and temporary ground protection measures will be implemented to safeguard the park's surface.

4. Proposed Works

The proposed works involve the construction of three 1.8m diameter tank sewers within the grass area of the park. These tanks will address capacity issues and ensure compliance with NIEA requirements. Additional improvements include raising the level of the existing sewer, retrofitting a screen and standby generator at the pumping station and restoring all impacted areas to their original or improved condition. A copy of the presentation and maps from NI Water are **enclosed** for Members' reference. These maps show the specific locations for the planned ground investigations, and also provide details on the construction of three 1.8m diameter tank sewers, which will be integrated into the Sandyknowes Wastewater Pumping Station.

5. Key Issues

NIW holds statutory rights under the Water & Sewage (NI) Order 2006 to enter land for necessary works, but are also seeking formal Council consent to proceed with the required investigation ensuring transparency and collaboration with Council.

The wider proposed works including the construction of the tank sewers will significantly impact the park's landscape and its normal usage. Excavation and construction activities will result in disruption, including temporary closures or restricted access to certain areas of the park during the construction phase lasting 6-9 months. NI Water has committed to minimising these inconveniences and ensuring that the public can still enjoy the park as much as possible. While the full extent of the impact is yet to be finalised, NI Water is dedicated to restoring the park to its original state or better once the works are completed, thus ensuring long-term benefits for both the local community and the environment.

6. Recommendation

It is recommended that approval be granted for NI Water to complete initial site investigations and subsequent construction works at Sandyknowes Park as part of the Whitehouse Drainage Area Plan.

Prepared by: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

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

5. ITEMS FOR NOTING

5.1 EH/PHWB/012 WINTER WOOLLIES UPDATE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the recent Winter Woollies Campaign.

2. Background

Members are reminded that the Winter Woollies Campaign 2024 provides hand-knitted and crocheted items, supplied by volunteers, to support the most vulnerable members of the community during the colder months.

3. Key Issues

Now in its third year, the Winter Woollies campaign became more sustainable with the introduction of a Wool Drive, held from 1 July to 31 August 2024. Organised by the Environmental Health, the drive diverted over 1,000 balls of wool, knitting needles, and crochet hooks from landfill. These materials were distributed to local community groups to encourage people of all ages to create warm clothing and combat social isolation.

Winter Woollies collections were held at Mossley Mill and Antrim Civic Centre from 16 September to 14 November, gathering 1,662 items that were distributed to 22 partner organisations. Donors could include their contact details to participate in the Mayor's selection of favourite items, and many attached heartfelt messages to their creations for recipients.

On 19 November, a Winter Woollies event at Mossley Mill celebrated the campaign's success, featuring the Mayor's selection and a Q&A session where donors and partner organizations discussed its positive impact. With a 40% increase in donations and eight additional partner organisations this year, Winter Woollies 2024 was a resounding success. A video and photo gallery showcasing the generosity of Antrim and Newtownabbey residents can be viewed; <https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/residents/initiatives-for-our-community/winter-woollies/>)

Winter Woollies is promoted through knitting and crocheting groups, community organisations, Council social media, and local press, and the campaign is set to return in 2025.

4. Summary

The Winter Woollies Campaign inspires residents to knit and crochet warm clothing for vulnerable members of the community. This year, 1,662 items were collected and distributed to 22 partner organisations.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that the report be noted.

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

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

Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Sustainability

5.2 EH/EHS/CP/004 TOBACCO TEST PURCHASE EXERCISE – NOVEMBER 2024

1. Purpose

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

2. Background

Members are reminded that local authorities in Northern Ireland have a statutory duty to enforce the legislation relating to the sale of certain age-restricted products such as cigarettes and tobacco products. Under current legislation, it is illegal to sell cigarettes or tobacco or nicotine inhaling products (e-cigarettes and e-liquids) to anyone under 18.

The Public Health Agency fund the employment of Tobacco Control Officers (TCO's) who work on behalf of District Councils in Northern Ireland to promote compliance with tobacco control legislation and to provide advice on compliance.

TCOs must conduct at least 100 advisory visits annually to retailers, including 70 test purchases, to ensure compliance with age-restricted sale legislation. In April 2024 and July 2024, advisory letters were sent to 141 retailers, and TCOs conducted 201 advisory visits from April to December 2024. Test purchase exercises have been completed in April, August, and October of this year and reported to Members in June, November, and December 2024.

2. Key Issues

In November 2024, TCOs conducted another test purchase exercise involving 15 retailers, accompanied by a young person under the age of 18. The young person attempted to purchase tobacco products or nicotine inhaling products. Fourteen premises fully complied with the law. However, one retailer displayed tobacco products to the young person when a staff member scanned a packet of cigarettes at the till before requesting identification. When the young person failed to provide ID, the sale was refused. Under The Tobacco Advertising and Promotion (Display) Regulations (NI) 2012, displaying cigarettes to anyone under 18 is an offence. The retailer was notified of the offence and was issued a written warning.

3. Summary

This was the fourth phase of planned test purchase exercises for 2024/2025, to be conducted on 70 retailers. On this occasion a written warning was issued to the owners of the retail shop that displayed tobacco products (cigarettes) to a person under the age of 18.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that the report be noted.

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

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

Approved by: Michael Lavery - Director of Sustainability

5.3 EH/PWHB/012 TAKE A SEAT INITIATIVE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to inform Members of a new Age Friendly pilot initiative called 'Take a Seat'. The initiative encourages businesses and community facilities to provide a seat for members of the public to sit and rest when in our local towns.

2. Background

Members are reminded that the Environmental Health continues to lead the Age Friendly agenda to make the Borough a better place to age. Accessible buildings and sufficient seating can greatly enhance the lives of older residents especially those with mobility challenges. By increasing their confidence and mobility, these improvements allow older adults greater freedom to navigate their local communities.

Collaborating with local businesses is a key aspect of making the Borough more Age Friendly. The 'Take a Seat' initiative encourages businesses to publicly signal their willingness to offer seating to older individuals or those with reduced mobility. This provides people with the opportunity to rest for a few minutes while shopping or passing by. The initiative has already shown success in addressing social isolation and fostering community engagement in other towns and cities in UK. Notably, we will be the first Council in Northern Ireland to introduce this initiative.

3. Key Issues

In November 2024, the 'Take a Seat' initiative was piloted in the Ballyclare and Crumlin town areas. Officers visited local businesses to introduce the programme and encourage their involvement. Businesses were informed that participation is free of charge, individuals using the seats would not be obligated to make purchases, and shop participants would receive a display sticker to demonstrate their involvement. Local shops who display sticker will then offer people the chance to sit down and a warm welcome.

Following officer visits 4 businesses in Crumlin and 10 in Ballyclare signed up to the initiative. The initiative will be launched in January 2025 and will be promoted through, the Council website, (www.antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/take-a-seat), social media channels, the Age Friendly magazine "News For You" and local press. Interested businesses can contact Environmental Health at any time to register their interest.

The pilot phase will help refine the initiative and gather feedback to ensure its success as it is rolled out across the Borough in 2025.

4. Summary

The 'Take a Seat' initiative encourages businesses to provide a seat to anyone who may need to rest while shopping or passing by. The scheme is being piloted in Ballyclare and Crumlin with plans to expand across the Borough throughout 2025.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that the report be noted.

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

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

Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Sustainability

5.4 WM/WM/040 WASTE MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE ANNUAL UPDATE 2023-24

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to advise Members of Council's waste management performance 2023-24.

2. Background

Under the Landfill Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003, Council is required to submit waste data returns to the Northern Ireland Environment Agency. These are completed on a quarterly basis throughout the year and are used by the NIEA to calculate Council's recycling rate and compliance with the relevant legislation.

The new legislative targets for Council under the Circular Economy Package are:

1. Recycle 65% of municipal waste by 2035
2. Interim targets of 55% recycling rate by 2025 and 60% by 2030;
3. Maximum of 10% of municipal waste to be landfilled by 2035.

The annual waste data submission for 2023-24 has been verified and sets out Council's performance for the year for both Household and Municipal waste.

3. Key Issues

A summary of the recently published results for Council for 2023/2024 together with the results from 2022/2023 are set out below. The results include the performance of all 11 Northern Ireland Local Authorities for reference.

	2022-23		2023-24		Ranking
	Tonnes	%	Tonnes	%	
Total Household Waste Arisings	75,843		79,663	Up 5%	3 rd largest tonnage
Household Waste Arisings to Recycling	45,763	60.3	47,330	59.4	1 st household recycling rate (%) in Northern Ireland
Household Waste Arisings to Recovery	11,784	15.6	14,060	17.7	7 th largest % of household waste sent to recovery
Household Waste Arisings to Landfill	18,296	24.1	18,273	22.9	5 th largest % of household waste sent to landfill

Total Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Arisings	100,076		106,040	Up 6%	3 rd largest tonnage
Municipal Waste Arisings to Recycling	62,329	62.3	66,006	62.2	1 st % of waste recycled in Northern Ireland.
Municipal Waste Arisings to Recovery	13,218	13.2	15,679	14.8	7 th largest % of waste sent to recovery.
Municipal Waste Arisings to Landfill	23,545	23.5	23,451	22.1	6 th largest % of waste sent to landfill.

* Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste (LACMW) is ALL the waste that the Council collects i.e. commercial, street sweepings, recycling centres as well as household waste.

The table above shows the following:

- Antrim and Newtownabbey achieved the highest recycling rates for Councils in Northern Ireland;
- Overall waste arisings increased across the recycling and recovery waste streams, however there was a decrease in waste arisings being sent to Landfill. This indicates that residents are continuing to manage their waste correctly, however waste production across the Borough is rising slightly.

The data demonstrates that the residents of Antrim and Newtownabbey continue to participate in Council's recycling services and Officers will continue to explore new initiatives to improve performance.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Claire Evans, Climate, Waste and Sustainability Officer

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

Approved by: Michael Laverty, Director of Sustainability

5.5 PT/CI/060 PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2024/25 PERFORMANCE PROGRESS REPORT QUARTER 2

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend to Members that the Performance and Improvement Plan 2024/25 Performance Progress Report Quarter 2 Parks, Leisure & Estate Services and Sustainability 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 2024/25 was approved in June 2024. This set out a range of robust performance targets, along with 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.

4. Key Points

Second Quarter performance progress reports for Parks, Leisure & Estate Services, and Sustainability are **enclosed** for Members' information.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Performance and Improvement Plan 2024/25 Performance Progress Report Quarter 2 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

5.6 L/LEI/00/008 NATIONAL FOOTBALL TRAINING CENTRE – UPDATE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Council's role as the sponsor body in facilitating the land transaction between the Education Authority (EA) and the Irish Football Association (FA) for the development of a National Football Training Centre at Birch Hill Road, Antrim.

2. Background

The Department for Communities (DfC) previously requested the Council, due to its statutory powers to purchase land for recreational purposes, act as sponsor body for a land transaction between the Education Authority (EA) and the Irish Football Association (IFA) to facilitate the development of a National Football Training Centre.

The proposed Centre, located on approximately 60 acres at Birch Hill Road, Antrim, was intended to support the National Football Teams' training needs while providing wider community benefits. Council officers participated in the Department's Steering Group alongside key stakeholders to progress the project.

3. Update

Correspondence has recently been received from the Department formally advising that the IFA has officially withdrawn interest in the site at Birch Hill Road and that an alternative preferred site is now in development with a private owner. The correspondence is **enclosed** for Members' reference.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that the report be noted.

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