



**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
COMMITTEE HELD IN THE CHAMBER, MOSSLEY MILL  
ON 10 NOVEMBER 2025 6.30 PM**

<b>In the Chair</b>	:	Councillor S Wilson
<b>Committee Members (In person)</b>	:	Alderman S Ross Councillors – S Cosgrove, P Dunlop, J Gilmour, R Lynch, H Magill and V McWilliam
<b>Committee Members (Remote)</b>	:	Alderman J McGrath Councillors - M Brady, J Burbank, T McGrann, M Ní Chonghaile and A O'Lone
<b>Non-Committee Members (In Person)</b>	:	Councillors – M Cooper and B Webb
<b>Non-Committee Members (Remote)</b>	:	Alderman L Clarke
<b>Officers Present</b>	:	Director of Community and Culture – U Fay Head of Community Development – R McKenna Head of Corporate Affairs – J McIntyre IT Systems Support Officer – C Bell ICT Support Assistant - D Graham Member Services Officer – C McGrandle

**CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

The Chairperson welcomed Members to the November meeting of the Community Development Committee and reminded all present of the audio recording procedures.

## **1 APOLOGIES**

Councillor M Stewart

## **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

## **3 ITEMS FOR DECISION**

### **3.1 CP/CP/113 BARNARDO'S - THE THRIVE PROJECT**

#### **1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval of the THRiVE 2025/2026 Q2 Performance Report.**

#### **2. Introduction**

The THRiVE Project was a collaboration of local parents, schools, community and voluntary organisations and statutory agencies working together to help children and young people in Macedon and Threemilewater DEAs to achieve their full potential and have the best start in life.

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

It was agreed at the March 2025 Community Development Committee, to provide £25,000 financial assistance for the 2025/26 Service Level Agreement between the Council and the Education Authority on behalf of the THRiVE Project with a quarterly performance report brought to future meetings of the Committee.

The provision of an additional £3,000 financial assistance for the 2025/26 Service Level Agreement between Council and the Education Authority on behalf of the THRiVE Project and the 2025/26 Quarter 1 Performance Report, based upon performance measures in the Service Level Agreement, were approved at the September 2025 Community Development Committee.

#### **4. Financial Position**

A budget of £28,000 was included in the 2025/26 Community Development budgets.

#### **5. Governance**

It was approved at the June 2025 Community Development Committee that the Head of Community Development replace the Elected Members nominated to serve on the THRiVE Project Board from both the Macedon DEA and the Threemilewater DEA with immediate effect.

Officers would continue to work with the THRiVE Project and Community Planning partners to manage the performance of the Project. Quarterly performance reports would continue to be reported to the Community Development Committee.

A presentation on the THRiVE Project was made to the October 2024 Community Development Committee.

## 6. Summary

The Quarter 2 Report was circulated for Members' information and was based upon performance measures in the Service Level Agreement. The Quarter 2 targets had been met.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour  
Seconded by Councillor Lynch and agreed that

**the THRiVE Project Quarter 2 2025-26 performance report be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Conor Cunning, DEA Engagement Manager*

## 3.2 CP/PP/006 PEACEPLUS PARTNERSHIP MINUTES

### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to provide Members with the minutes from the PEACEPLUS Full Partnership Meeting held on 14 October 2025 as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.**

### 2. Introduction/Background

The PEACEPLUS Partnership operated as a Working Group of Council.

As such, the minutes of the following PEACEPLUS Partnership meeting,  
- Full Partnership meeting minutes 14 October 2025 were circulated for Members' information.

### 3. Previous Decision of Council

The minutes of the PEACEPLUS Full Partnership Meeting on 17 June 2025 were approved as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting at the June 2025 Council meeting.

The draft PEACEPLUS Co-designed Local Community Action Plan, and the outcome of the Section 75 Equality Screening and Rural Proofing carried out for the Plan were approved at the March 2024 Community Development Committee.

#### 4. Governance

The PEACEPLUS Partnership oversaw the design and implementation of a co-designed process used to inform the development of an over-arching PEACEPLUS Local Community Action Plan.

It was agreed at the February 2022 Community Planning Committee that the Membership of the PEACEPLUS Partnership was as follows:

- 12 Elected Members nominated by D'Hondt and representative of each DEA;
- 4 Statutory Partners from Education Authority, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Police Service of Northern Ireland and Northern Health and Social Care Trust to be nominated by the Statutory Partners;
- 7 Social Partners with one from each DEA appointed by public advertisement and selection process.

The PEACEPLUS Partnership would continue to be governed by a constitution and a Partnership Agreement.

#### 5. Summary

The PEACEPLUS Partnership operated as a Working Group of Council. The draft minutes from the Full Partnership meeting held on 14 October 2025 were provided for Members' approval.

Proposed by Councillor Dunlop

Seconded by Councillor Cosgrove and agreed that

**the minutes of the PEACEPLUS Full Partnership Meeting held on 14 October 2025, be approved as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.**

*ACTION BY: Paula Kerr, Peace Programme - Project Support Officer*

### 3.3 CP/CD/343 STILES COMMUNITY CENTRE REQUEST

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to seek approval for the Heat Martial Arts and Fitness Club to apply for an alcohol licence to sell and consume alcohol in Stiles Community Centre on Saturday 7 March 2026.**

#### 2. Introduction/Background

Heat Martial Arts and Fitness Club made a request to hire Stiles Community Centre on Saturday 7 March 2026 for a charity fundraising event.

The Club requested permission to apply for a license to sell alcohol at their event. The consumption and sale of alcohol would be permitted with agreement by the Council if the relevant licence was obtained by the event organiser.

The Club was based in Antrim and ran a white-collar boxing and kickboxing fight night 3 times per year and had done so for the past 10 years. The club previously held similar events in local church halls, a hotel and a retail outlet.

The club promoted the event as a family friendly event with teenage and adult competitors. The club would provide their own SIA licenced security staff and medics along with a team of qualified referees.

The proceeds from the night would go towards two local charities – R House, a centre for adults with learning difficulties and Down's syndrome and ASD Teens, a charity who work with children and teens on the spectrum.

### 3. Previous Decision of Council

A number of previous similar requests to Council seeking permission to serve and sell alcohol at functions in community facilities had been approved.

### 4. Financial Position/Implication

There would be no financial implications to Council from the approval of this request.

### 5. Summary

A request was received by the Heat Martial Arts and Fitness Club to apply for an alcohol licence to sell and consume alcohol in Stiles Community Centre at a charity fundraising event on Saturday 7 March 2026.

A number of previous similar requests had been approved by the Committee, and it was proposed that permission was granted for this request.

Proposed by Councillor Lynch

Seconded by Councillor Dunlop and agreed that

**the request from the Heat Martial Arts and Fitness Club to apply for an alcohol licence to sell alcohol in Stiles Community Centre on Saturday 7 March 2026 be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Paul Townsend, Community Facilities Coordinator*

## 3.4 **CP/CD/444 ANTRIM AND NEWTOWNABBEY SENIORS FORUM**

### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to provide Members with an update on the Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors Forum Quarter 1 and 2 2025-26 performance report.**

## 2. Introduction/Background

Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors Forum aimed to relieve poverty, advance education and promote the preservation and protection of health among seniors (50+) in the Borough and its environs. They provide facilities and programmes in the interests of social welfare for the education, recreation and leisure time for senior citizens. Officers have continued to work with the Forum and Community Planning partners (NIHE, PHA, NHSCT) to manage the service level agreement which was approved at Committee in March 2025.

## 3. Previous Decision of Council

At the March 2025 Community Development Committee, it was agreed to provide funding of £15,000 through a service level agreement for the 2025/26 financial year to the Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors Forum. Officers had continued to work with the Forum and Community Planning partners (NIHE, PHA and NHSCT) to manage the service level agreement and performance of this Group.

It was agreed at the July 2022 Council Meeting that a quarterly performance report be provided to the Community Planning Committee, from September 2022 onwards.

The 2024/25 Quarter 4 Performance Report was approved at the May 2025 Community Development Committee and was based upon performance measures in the Service Level Agreement.

## 4. Financial Position/Implication

The provision of £15,000 in financial support for the Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors Forum had been provided for in the 2025/26 Community Planning budget. Other Community Planning partners had also confirmed their financial commitment to continue to support this group as outlined below.

<b>Community Planning Partner</b>	<b>Financial contribution to Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors Forum 2025/26</b>
Northern Health & Social Care Trust	£15,000
Public Health Agency	£15,000
Northern Ireland Housing Executive	£15,000

## 5. Governance

Officers would continue to work with the Forum and Community Planning partners to manage the Service Level Agreement and performance of this Group. A quarterly performance report would be provided to Officers for the purposes of performance management.

## 6. Summary

The Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors' Forum 2025-26 Quarter 1 and 2 Report was circulated for Members' information and was based upon performance measures in the Service Level Agreement. The Quarter 1 and 2 targets had been met.

In response to a Member's suggestion that Council reach out to seniors in the Antrim, Crumlin and Randalstown area, the Head of Community Development confirmed that officers would do this and bring a report back to a future committee.

Proposed by Councillor Cosgrove  
Seconded by Councillor Lynch and agreed that

**the Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors' Forum Quarter 1 and 2 2025-26 performance reports be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Conor Cunning, DEA Engagement Manager and Ronan McKenna, Head of Community Development*

### **3.5 CP/TD/107 ELEVATE – COMMUNITY RENEWAL AND RESILIENCE FUND**

#### **1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report was to update Members on the Elevate Community Renewal and Resilience Fund 2026/27.**

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

The Areas at Risk (AAR) programme was delivered across six Super Output Areas in the Borough. Historically the Newtownabbey AAR programme had been part funded by the Department for Communities (DfC), whilst the Antrim AAR programme fully funded by Council.

#### **3. Previous Decisions of Council**

At the November 2020 Community Planning Committee the move to an open competitive Areas at Risk programme was approved. However, this was placed on hold by Members in January 2021 due to ongoing impact of COVID-19 and the DfC People and Place review of Neighbourhood Renewal and Areas at Risk. It was agreed that a Council review of AAR be deferred until after the DfC review was completed.

The Areas at Risk Programme for 2025/2026, including total funding of £238,130, was approved at the March 2025 meeting of the Community Development Committee.

It was then approved at the September 2025 Committee that the Elevate Community Renewal and Resilience Fund would be launched as a competitive open grant call for in 2026/27 for organisations working within the identified areas of deprivation, excluding Neighbourhood Renewal areas which were already in receipt of monies through the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme. It was also agreed that Grant guidance notes would be developed and reported to a future meeting of the Community Development Committee.

Acceptance of the offer of funding of £76,395.38 which was an increase of £9,645.38, from DfC for the costs associated with the Areas at Risk Programme, for the period of 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026, was approved at the October 2025 Committee.

#### 4. 2026 to 2028 Elevate – Community Renewal & Resilience Fund Programme

- Duration: Awards would be made for a two-year period, with a formal Letter of Offer for Year 1 and indicative funding for Year 2 (subject to confirmation of Council budgets and DfC funding allocation).
- Administration: The programme would be managed by Council's Grant Funding Unit. Grant guidance notes had been developed, and a copy was circulated for Members' information.
- Eligibility: The programme would be limited to identified Super Output areas identified within the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measures (NINIS), excluding Neighbourhood Renewal Areas. Funding guidelines would reflect that core costs or specific projects which were clearly the responsibility of another statutory organisation would not be eligible.
- Funding Awards: Funding awards would range from £5,000 to £25,000
- Application Process: Applications would be made through the online grant platform, as in case with all Council Grant Funding.

The grant programme timeline was illustrated below for information purposes. This would be communicated on the Council website, social media channels and community databases with an Information workshop being held for all existing and new organisations week commencing 8 December 2025.

<b>Elevate – Community Renewal and Resilience Fund</b>	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Action</b>
10 November 25	Committee Approval
24 November 25	Council Approval
1 December 25	Grant Programme Opens
w/c 8 December 25	Grant Programme Information Session
16 January 26	Grant Programme Closes



w/c 26 January 26	Assessment/Scoring of applications
2 - 9 February 26	DfC Approval of recommendations
9 February 26	Committee Approval of recommendations
23 February 26	Council Approval
2 March – 31 March 26	Letter of Offer Issued (Payments Issued 50% upfront and 50% after vouching of the first 50% had been completed)
1 <sup>st</sup> April – 31 March 27	Delivery of projects

## 5. Financial Position

The contribution committed by Council in 2025/26 to the Newtownabbey Areas at Risk Projects was £60,170, a similar allocation would be included in the 2026/27 Community Development budget estimates.

The contribution committed by the Council in 2025/26 for Antrim AAR was £111,210, a similar allocation would be included in the 2026/27 Community Development budget estimates.

It was anticipated that DfC would provide £76,395.38 in 2026/27 which was the same as had been provided in 2025/26.

## 6. Equality Screening and Rural Needs

As part of Council's responsibilities to identify and address potential Section 75 implications and promote equality of opportunity and good relations as required by the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the policy had been subject to Section 75 Equality Screening had been screened out for the need of an Equality Impact Assessment. This was reported to the September 2025 Community Development Committee.

A Rural Needs screening exercise was completed and reported to September 2025 Community Development Committee.

## 7. Governance

The grant programme would be managed through the Council's Grant Funding Unit and would align with Council's Funding Policy and Financial Regulations.

Organisations who met the eligibility criteria based on their location and project proposals which met the grant criteria would proceed to be assessed and scored.

DfC funding would be ring-fenced to grant applications within the current agreed areas only and reported on in line with current processes and procedures.

## 8. Summary

The Elevate Community Renewal and Resilience programme would be launched in December 2025 as a competitive open grant call for organisations working within the identified areas of deprivation, excluding Neighbourhood Renewal areas which were already in receipt of monies through the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme.

Areas at Risk organisations who had historically been invited to apply for Areas at Risk Funding would be invited into the new grant call and supported with the application process by officers as part of a period of transition.

The Head of Community Development provided clarity on the process by which the various applications were identified and noted concerns in relation to the potential impact on the funding of existing groups.

In response to a Member's request that maps be provided in order to clearly identify boundaries, the Head of Community Development confirmed that these would be provided at December's meeting.

The Head of Community Development confirmed that DfC had previously highlighted three Newtownabbey areas eligible for funding within the programme, namely Carnmoney, Mossley and Monkstown.

Proposed by Councillor Cosgrove

Seconded by Councillor McWilliam and agreed that

**the update on the Elevate Community Renewal and Resilience Fund for 2026/27, as outlined be noted and the grant guidance notes be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Conor Cuning, DEA Manager, Stefanie Buchanan, Community Development Manager and Ronan McKenna, Head of Community Development*

*Councillor O'Lone joined the meeting remotely at this point.*

### **3.6 AC/ACG/012 ROYAL AIR FORCE AIR CADETS – USE OF ANTRIM CASTLE GARDENS**

#### **1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the Royal Air Force Air Cadets to use Antrim Castle Gardens for training and development purposes.**

#### **2. Background and Introduction**

The Royal Air Force Air Cadets (RAFAC) were a disciplined uniformed youth organisation sponsored by the Royal Air Force which aimed to:

- Promote and encourage among young people a practical interest in aviation and the Royal Air Force.
- Provide training which would be useful in the services and civilian life.
- Foster the spirit of adventure and develop qualities of leadership and good citizenship.

They had requested to use Antrim Castle Gardens for some time informally for training and development activities. However, recent guidance required them to obtain formal official authorisation to do this from Council, as the landowner.

### 3. Details of the Request

The RAFAC requested formal permission from Council to use Antrim Castle Gardens for a range of supervised activities including:

Team and Individual Sports – these activities promote physical fitness, teamwork and personal discipline among young people, whilst supporting Council's aims of positive use of outdoor spaces and promotion of health and wellbeing.

Orienteering and Wide Games – these exercises teach navigation, problem solving and situational awareness whilst teaching cadets how to respect shared spaces responsibly.

Leadership Training and Exercises – these structured challenges help cadets develop decision making skills and confidence building qualities which translate into good citizenship and community leadership.

Radio and Communications Exercises – these practical sessions would introduce cadets to communication technology, teamwork under pressure and the importance of clear and accurate information sharing.

Camp Craft Activities – this would include temporary erection of tents and use of portable radio systems. These exercises would promote self-reliance, safety awareness and practical outdoor skills. This activity would not include overnight stays.

Activities would be infrequent taking place every 6 to 8 weeks for periods of no more than 2 to 3 hours at a time often in the evening when there were generally less visitors to the Gardens. The RAFAC were indemnified by the Ministry of Defence.

It was proposed to grant formal permission to RAFAC to use Antrim Castle Gardens, at no charge, for their training and development activities as outlined.

### 4. Finance

There would be no financial implications resulting from this request.

## 5. Governance

Council, as the owner of Antrim Castle Gardens, was requested to give its formal approval to the RAFAC to use the Gardens for their training and development activities.

## 6. Summary

The RAFAC had requested the Council's formal official authorisation to use Antrim Castle Gardens at no charge for their ongoing training and development activities as outlined.

They advised that their activities would be fully supervised, covered by comprehensive risk assessments and indemnified by the Ministry of Defence. They also made a commitment to respect all areas used and to leave them in good order after every activity.

In response to a Member's request that repairs to the orienteering signage be carried out, the Director of Community and Culture confirmed that this would be followed up.

The Director of Community and Culture provided clarification as to why no charge was being sought by RAFAC to use Antrim Castle Gardens for training purposes.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour  
Seconded by Councillor Dunlop and agreed that

**formal official authorisation for the RAFAC to use Antrim Castle Gardens, at no charge, for their training and development activities, as outlined, be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Ursula Fay, Director of Community and Culture*

### 3.7 **CP/PCSP/143 and CP/CP/243 DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL ABUSE COMMUNITY TOOLKIT**

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to update Members on the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Community Toolkit.**

#### 2. Background

Ending Violence Against Women and Girls was a strategic priority from The Executive Office (TEO) and for the Council. Alongside this vital area of work the Police and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) deliver against the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy (2024- 2031) which was a joint strategy from Department of Health and Department of Justice. The PCSP work in partnership with the Antrim and Newtownabbey PSNI and held a Reference, Engagement and Learning (R.E.a.L) Event in September 2024 with a focus on

Domestic and Sexual Abuse. One of the actions arising from this initial event was a request for a community resource to allow community organisations responding to disclosures to have a reliable information tool and guide on how to do this.

The PCSP, PSNI and Council's Communications team worked together to create a Community Domestic and Sexual Abuse Toolkit, that would effectively allow people in the community dealing with disclosures to Recognise Domestic Abuse, Respond with empathy and Refer to the most appropriate support service. The Toolkit was launched by the PCSP in June 2025 as an online digital resource and a follow-on R.E.a.L event was held in October 2025 as a "You Said – We Did" event.

### 3. Community Toolkit

The development of the pioneering Community Toolkit as a resource to improve visibility, access, and understanding of support services across Northern Ireland following the R.E.a.L event in September 2024 was to address:

- Fragmented messaging and limited visibility of referral pathways.
- Lack of consistent, trauma-informed resources across councils and PCSP bodies.
- Barriers to accessing help, particularly in rural and under-represented communities
- Frontline community groups and volunteers often encountered individuals affected by domestic or sexual abuse but lacked confidence or training to respond appropriately

Within a condensed 12-week timeframe, the PCSP worked with the PSNI and Council's Communications team to develop, design and distribute a comprehensive toolkit, for use by all councils and PCSPs. It included:

- **Community Toolkit:** A digital and print resource outlining referral pathways, support services, and educational materials which had been accessed more than 23,000 times from June-October 2025
- **15,000 Helpline Cards:** Distributed across council buildings, community centres, and partner organisations.
- **A Marketing Plan to Promote the Toolkit:** a robust, multi-channel campaign plan focusing on multi-agency collaboration, bold and inclusive messaging, and creative public engagement, reaching 400,000 people across Northern Ireland.

The campaign was further supported by Council's wider EVAWG campaign which had reached more than 1 million since December 2024.

The toolkit was developed in partnership with other agencies including Women's Aid, the Northern Health Trust, White Ribbon, and the Men's Advisory Project, ensuring inclusive and trauma-informed content.

The Community Toolkit had been successfully launched with the following key milestones:

- **Promoted by The Executive Office (TEO)** as best practice and shared with other councils and statutory bodies.
- **Adopted by other PCSP's and Councils** as it was a scalable and replicable model for other councils and PCSPs.
- **Increased visibility** of support services and referral pathways.
- **Enhanced public confidence** in accessing help, with feedback indicating improved awareness and understanding.

The initial launch by PCSP in June 2025 was followed up by a further R.E.a.L event in October 2025 with a "You Said – We Did" theme. This brought back the organisations and individuals who had originally requested this resource in September 2024, with all relevant agencies to discuss next steps and provide training from the police on how to best use this valuable resource.

The event was attended by approximately 80 individuals and organisations and resulted in a number of additional community safety initiatives.

- **Posters promoting Toolkit with QR code** – to be printed for NHSCT & Community Facilities in the Borough
- **Posters promoting additional resources with QR codes** – to be printed for NHSCT & Community Facilities in the Borough
- **Maternity Units** – requested specialised intervention for sharing Toolkit information and this was to be progressed, with details withheld from report for safety and preventative reasons.

#### 4. Financial Implication

The costs for this initiative had been met through existing PCSP budgets for 2024- 2025.

#### 5. Equality and/or Rural Screening Requirements

The Domestic and Sexual Abuse Community Toolkit had been subject to Section 75 Equality Screening and had been screened out for the need of an Equality Impact Assessment, copy of which was circulated for Members' information.

In addition, a Rural Needs screening exercise had been completed, a copy of which was circulated for Members' information.

#### 6. Summary

The Domestic and Sexual Abuse Community Toolkit was launched in June 2025 as a response to a PCSP and PSNI R.E.a.L event on Domestic and Sexual Abuse. It had been accessed over 23,000 times, equating to 1000 access points per week. A total of 15,000 signposting cards and 6000 hard copies of the toolkit have been provided in key community facilities such as NHSCT locations, Libraries, Community Facilities and Schools. Further to this, the toolkit had been identified as a regional resource by TEO and adapted

for multiple other Councils across NI with brand awareness reach of over 400,000. Whilst the toolkit was for everyone it was closely aligned with the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls strategy and incorporated within the overall Council campaign in this area which had seen a reach of over 1 million since December 2024.

In response to a Member's request that the toolkit be provided to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's Patch Managers on duty at Antrim and Newtownabbey, the Director of Community and Culture confirmed that this would be done.

Councillor Ní Chonghaile requested that a commendation to Stef Buchanan and her team on behalf of herself and the Sinn Féin party be noted.

Various Members extended their congratulations to Stef and the team on their outstanding achievement.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour

Seconded by Councillor Lynch and agreed that

**the Community Domestic and Sexual Abuse Toolkit update be noted, and the outcome of the screening documents be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Stef Buchanan, Community Development Manager and Ursula Fay, Director of Community and Culture*

### **3.8 AC/GEN/010 BOROUGH ARTS AND CULTURAL ADVISORY PANEL**

#### **1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the minutes of the Borough Arts and Cultural Advisory Panel of 16 October 2025 and the Theatre Programmes approved at the meeting.**

#### **2. Background**

The role of the Arts and Cultural Advisory Panel was to provide advice, support and advocacy for the Borough's Arts and Cultural Service to enable it to deliver Council's Corporate Plan 2024-2030. The specific role of the Panel was set out in a Constitution, which included the following objectives:

- To advise Council on the programming of arts and cultural activity throughout the Borough
- To provide advocacy for the arts and cultural sector
- To provide the Council with an insight into current issues affecting arts and culture throughout Northern Ireland
- To represent the arts and cultural community both locally and regionally
- To contribute expertise, skills and knowledge from specific genres for the benefit of the ongoing development of arts and culture in the Borough

The Panel was made up of one Elected Member from each Political Party and up to 12 non-elected independent members who are actively involved in the arts and culture sector. The Panel meets four times each year, and reports to the Community Development Committee.

3. Previous Decision of Council

The establishment of the Borough Arts and Cultural Panel for the Council term was approved at the Council meeting in June 2023. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved at the September 2025 Community Development Committee meeting.

4. Advisory Panel Meeting

The Borough Arts and Culture Advisory Panel met on 16 October 2025 in Mossley Mill. The draft minutes of this meeting and the Theatre Programmes to May 2026, which were presented at the meeting were circulated for Members' information.

5. Financial Position

There would be no financial implications to the Council.

6. Equality and/or Rural Screening Requirements

A comprehensive review of all Council working groups was undertaken and Section 75 Equality Screening and Rural Proofing would be carried out as part of this review.

7. Governance

The specific role of the Panel was set out in a Constitution which included the above-mentioned objectives. The Panel was made up of one Elected Member from each Political Party and up to 12 non-elected independent members who were actively involved in the arts and culture sector. The Panel would meet four times each year, and report to the Community Development Committee.

8. Summary

The Borough Arts and Cultural Advisory Panel's role was to provide advice, support and advocacy for the Borough's Arts and Cultural Services to enable it to deliver the Council's Corporate Plan 2024-2030. The Panel would meet four times each year and report to the Community Development Committee.

Proposed by Councillor McWilliam  
Seconded by Councillor Lynch and agreed that

**the draft minutes of the Borough Arts and Culture Advisory Panel of 16 October 2025 be approved as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting, and the theatre programmes to May 2026 also be approved.**



*ACTION BY: Joanne Hamilton-Whyte, PA to Director of Community and Culture*

### **3.9 AC/GEN/068 THE JOYCE TORPEDO RETRIEVAL BOAT**

#### **1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the development of a partnership between the Council and local veterans group in relation to the ongoing restoration, presentation and interpretation of the Joyce Torpedo Boat which was located at The Gateway Visitor Centre, Antrim Loughshore Park.**

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

The Joyce was a torpedo retrieval boat that operated on Lough Neagh during the Second World War. Council acquired the boat from its private owner in 2021 and it was on display on land adjacent to The Gateway Visitor Centre, Antrim Loughshore Park.

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

It was approved by the Council at its April 2021 meeting to acquire this historic artefact and to make arrangements to have the boat on public display at The Gateway Visitor Centre, Lough Neagh.

At the Community Planning Committee in January 2022 it was agreed to carry out essential works to the Joyce prior to mooring in the Lough adjacent to The Gateway Visitor Centre.

Subsequently it was agreed that the Joyce would be better preserved and accessible to the public if located on land and it was agreed to place the Joyce on land adjacent to The Gateway Visitor Centre in 2023. The 2024/2025 Mayor Councillor Neil Kelly officially unveiled the Joyce as part of the Council's VE Day 80 programme in May 2025.

#### **4. Partnership with Veterans Group**

A local veterans group expressed an interest in supporting and collaborating with the Council in a way that combines practical involvement, educational outreach and commemorative activity around the boat.

The Joyce was a unique and significant piece of maritime and military history and its ongoing presentation and interpretation honours the legacy of veterans as well as the history of Lough Neagh and the Antrim area.

It was proposed that Council entered into a partnership with the veterans group to enable them to:

- Assist the ongoing physical restoration and maintenance of The Joyce;

- Provide historical input and oral histories to engage visitors;
- Support interpretation, signage and educational programming relating to The Joyce;
- Participate in events linked to the boat

As part of this it was proposed that Council establish a Working Group of officers, veterans and relevant experts to develop the project including terms of reference for the group and a partnership agreement.

#### 5. Finance

There would be no financial implications arising from this proposal.

#### 6. Governance

Terms of reference for the Working Group and a partnership agreement would be developed and brought back to a future meeting of the Committee for approval.

#### 7. Summary

The Joyce was a unique and important part of the Borough's history connected directly to the Second World War and the role played by Lough Neagh. A group of local veterans would like to work in partnership with the Council in relation to this heritage asset. It was proposed to establish an officer Working Group with the veterans to develop terms of reference of the group and a partnership agreement both of which would be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee.

Proposed by Councillor Dunlop

Seconded by Councillor McWilliam and agreed that

**an officer Working Group with local veterans in relation to The Joyce be established with the terms of reference for the group and a partnership agreement to be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee.**

*ACTION BY: Ursula Fay, Director of Community and Culture*

### 3.10 COMD/CP/001 INTERNATIONAL MEN'S DAY 2025

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to update Members on activity planned to mark International Men's Day on 19 November 2025.**

#### 2. Introduction/Background

International Men's Day was a global awareness day for many issues that men face including, abuse, homelessness, suicide and violence celebrated annually on 19 November.

It would celebrate worldwide the positive value men bring to society, their families and their communities. This day would highlight positive role models and raise awareness of men's well-being. The theme for 2025 was 'Celebrating Men and Boys'.

### 3. Previous Decision of Council

At the January 2025 Council meeting a notice of motion relating to International Men's Day was declared carried. The motion stated that the Council recognises the importance of highlighting men's mental health and well-being, aligned to International Men's Day on 19 November 2025. In this regard it was agreed that the Council deliver a workshop event to support male staff and Elected Members and also light up Antrim Civic Centre and Mossley Mill blue on 19 November 2025.

### 4. International Men's Day 2025

A workshop would be held in the Linen Suite, Mossley Mill on Wednesday 19 November 2025 between 9.30 am and 12 noon hosted by local BBC sports journalist, Thomas Niblock. The event would celebrate positive role models and special guests in attendance would be Daryl Clarke of Monkstown Boxing Club and Jonny Murphy, former international rugby star turned baker.

The event would recognise the difference that strong positive male role models make in sport, in community and in everyday life and the impact they could have on health and well-being.

The event would commence with breakfast at 9.30 am, followed by a live podcast from 10 am.

### 5. Finance

This event would be supported by funding from The Executive Office (TEO) as part of their regional commitment to the EAWG strategy which identifies the importance of positive male role models in communities.

### 6. Governance

Delivery of the event was agreed as part of the motion to Council in January 2025.

### 7. Summary

A motion to Council in January 2025 requested delivery of a workshop event to mark International Men's Day 2025. An event would be held in Mossley Mill on Wednesday 19 November 2025. The event was to be hosted by BBC sports presenter Thomas Niblock with special guests Daryl Clarke and Jonny Murphy and would take the form of a live podcast celebrating the contribution of men as positive role models through an open and honest discussion about the role of men and boys as positive influencers whilst

recognising the many challenges faced in particular to health and well-being.

It was proposed that this event be the first of an annual event to mark International Men's Day.

Proposed by Councillor Dunlop

Seconded by Alderman Ross and agreed that

**the update on International Men's Day 2025 was noted and that a further report on the delivery of an annual event to mark International Men's Day be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee.**

*ACTION BY: Ursula Fay, Director of Community and Culture*

### **3.11 ACTE/ED/ED/057 WORLD OF OWLS RANDALSTOWN**

#### **1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the provision of financial support to World of Owls in relation to a significant backdated rent expense being proposed by the Forest Service.**

#### **2. Background and Introduction**

In 2004, the legacy Antrim Borough Council entered into a 20 year lease with the Forestry Service for lands in Randalstown Forest. The lands were then sub-let to World of Owls, a registered charity, for 20 years to allow them to operate as a visitor attraction.

At the Community Planning and Regeneration Meeting in February 2018 a range of development options in relation to World of Owls, which had been prepared by Consultants appointed by Council, were considered. At this time the Forest Service had indicated that it would only renew any lease with the Council it was willing to take on responsibility for the development and management of the entire forest, which exceeded 172 hectares.

It was agreed at this meeting that Council did not wish to renew the lease with any part of the site at the end of the current lease period on 11 January 2024.

Officers were subsequently advised in 2022 of a change in the position of the Forest Service in relation to any lease to the Council. They had no objection to the Council continuing a separate lease arrangement with World of Owls, irrespective of any commitment to recreational or any other responsibility in the forest.

The building used by World of Owls was owned by the Forest Service and had been there since the 1950's. Prior to World of Owls arrival, the building was used by DAERA as an education centre. The cost of leasing the land and premises from the Forest Service was £1,600 per annum to the 11 January 2024 paid to the Council by World of Owls. This amount was subject

to a market valuation every five years as well as valuation at the end of the lease term.

World of Owls had approximately 40,000 visitors at its peak per annum prior to the pandemic and estimates an annual footfall of 20,000 currently. World of Owls had previously been voted best small visitor attraction in Northern Ireland by Trip Advisors Director of Destination Marketing, was a former recipient of the World Host Customer Service Award and past runner-up at the Tourism NI Awards in the small visitor attraction category.

### 3. Previous Decisions of the Council

At the Community Planning Committee in January 2023, it was agreed that the Council enter into a new lease with Forest Service NI for land at Randalstown Forest, which would be sub-let to World of Owls at no cost to the Council.

### 4. Land Valuation

Following the approval to renew the lease Forest Service were advised of the Councils intention, and they instructed Land and Property Services to carry out a valuation for the lease of the property in Randalstown Forest. Correspondance had been received from the Forest Service advising that the valuation for the rent for the period 12 January 2024 to 11 January 2029 was £2,900 per annum. This represented an annual increase of £1,300 or 45%. Forest Service also advised that they sought this amount to be fully backdated to the commencement of the new lease date of 12 January 2024. This would result in an immediate payment of £2,881 having to be made to bring payments up to date and an annual increase of £1,300 going forward.

### 5. Finance

Officers had contacted World of Owls to advise them of the valuation and new rental amount as well as rent owed. They indicated that they were not in a position to make such a back payment and have asked if the Council would consider a 'one off' payment in this regard. As a small charitable organisation, they have limited capacity to absorb such a significant backdated additional payment.

Given the amount of time that had passed since the agreement to renew the lease was given in January 2023 and the advice of the rent increase it, was proposed to make a one-off payment of £2,881 to cover the increased rent for the backdated period as well as the increase due to end March 2026. This would provide World of Owls with time to adjust their financial plans to accommodate the annual rent increase.

### 6. Governance

The Council was required to confirm with the Forest Service that the new rental value of £2,900 would be acceptable and would be in position to do

this should approval for this one-off financial contribution be approved. Once agreed Forest Service could proceed with finalising the new lease to 11 January 2034. As valuations would be carried out every 5 years, there would be a further valuation carried out in 2029 by Land and Property Services on behalf of Forest Service.

## 7. Summary

World of Owls was a small specialist tourism provider based in Randalstown, which operates as a registered charity. The charity was based in Randalstown Forest in premises owned by the Forest Service which the Council leases and then sub-lets to World of Owls for an annual rent, which had been £1,600 per annum to 11 January 2024.

The Committee agreed to renew the lease for a further ten years in January 2023. The Forest Service instructed Land and Property services to carry out a land valuation as part of the lease renewal and they have recently advised that the new rent value was £2,900 per annum, a 45% increase, which they were applying from 12 January 2024.

World of Owls, as a small charity had asked if the Council could support this unexpected additional expense with a one-off financial contribution of £2,881, which would cover the additional back dated rent owed and the additional rent required to 31 March 2026 which would enable them to make adjustments to their financial planning to accommodate the additional rental payments.

It was proposed to support this local tourism provider by making this financial contribution as a one-off payment in 2025/26, provision for which exists in the 2025/26 tourism budgets.

Proposed by Councillor O'Lone  
Seconded by Councillor Lynch and agreed that

**the request from World of Owls that the Council makes a one-off contribution of £2,881 to support a significant rent increase from renewal of the lease with Forest Service on 12 January 2024 to 31 March 2026 be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Ursula Fay, Director of Community and Culture*

### 3.12 CE/CA/003 CIPR NORTHERN IRELAND AWARDS 2025

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for attendance at the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) Northern Ireland Awards in the Europa Hotel on Friday 28 November 2025.**

## 2. Introduction/Background

The CIPR Northern Ireland Awards were the leading celebration of outstanding public relations and communications across Northern Ireland. Each year, the awards shine a spotlight on exceptional work, creativity, and professionalism that defines the industry. The awards would provide an opportunity to recognise excellent communications among the best in the business. The awards opened for entries in September 2025 and would take place on Friday 28 November 2025 in the Europa Hotel, when winners would be announced.

## 3. CIPR NI Awards Shortlist

In September the Marketing Communications and PR team submitted a number of entries to the awards and have been shortlisted as finalists in the following two categories –

- Healthcare/Wellbeing Campaign – Winter Woollies – Sharing Warmth, Stitching Connections
- Outstanding Young Communicator of the Year – Marketing Communications and PR Officer, Lauren Lown.

### **Healthcare/Wellbeing Campaign – Winter Woollies**

Winter Woollies was launched in response to the post-pandemic cost-of-living crisis and community wellbeing campaign led by Council in collaboration with community groups, schools, local businesses, and statutory partners. The campaign's mission was simple yet powerful: to inspire residents to knit or crochet warm items such as scarves, blankets, and hats for distribution to people in need across the Borough.

Winter Woollies stood out because it weaved together physical, emotional, and social wellbeing through creativity, kindness, and shared purpose. The campaign strategy was grounded around four pillars:

1. **Accessibility and Inclusion:** Open to everyone, regardless of age or skill level. Schools, care homes, knitting groups, and individuals would all take part.
2. **Wellbeing Through Making:** Promoting crafting as a tool for mental wellbeing, in line with the *Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing* model.
3. **Partnership-Driven Delivery:** Working with frontline organisations to identify those most in need and co-designing distribution.
4. **Sustainable Practices:** Encouraging wool recycling and resource sharing to reduce waste and support environmental wellbeing.

### **Outstanding Young Communicator of the Year – Lauren Lown**

Lauren joined the Council in 2023 and had been promoted from Social Media and Digital Content Officer to Marketing, Communications and PR Officer in under two years.

This role has given her the opportunity to contribute to some of Council's high-profile events including Enchanted Winter Garden, Garden Show Ireland, Coronation and Armed Forces Day 2024. Lauren led on digital advertising, video content creation, influencer engagement and media relations; delivering integrated, data-driven campaigns that have increased event attendance, social media engagement, and positive media coverage.

She also supported the broader industry by training local community groups on marketing and communications best practice. This work sought to help local organisations promote their initiatives more effectively and engage wider audiences.

Through combining traditional PR with modern digital tools, Lauren helped to modernise public sector communications, setting a standard for innovation and measurable impact.

#### 4. CIPR NI Awards Ceremony

The awards ceremony would take place from 6.30pm on Friday 28 November 2025 at the Europa Hotel, Belfast.

It was proposed that the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, the Chairperson of Community Development Committee (or their nominees) accompanied by 3 officers from the Marketing Communications and PR Team attend the Awards.

#### 5. Financial Position/Implication

The cost of a seat at the awards ceremony was £100. Therefore, attendance at the awards ceremony as proposed would cost an estimated £600, provision for which existed in the 2025/26 budget.

#### 6. Summary

The Marketing Communications and PR Team had successfully been shortlisted as a finalist at the CIPR Northern Ireland Awards 2025. It was proposed that the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, the Chairperson of Community Development Committee (or their nominees) accompanied by 3 officers from the Marketing Communications and PR Team attend the awards ceremony in the Europa Hotel on Friday 28 November 2025 at an estimated cost of £600.

Proposed by Councillor Lynch

Seconded by Councillor Cosgrove and agreed that

**the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, the Chairperson of Community Development Committee (or their nominees), accompanied by 3 officers attend the CIPR Northern Ireland Awards ceremony on Friday 28 November 2025 in Belfast.**

*ACTION BY: Jeanette McIntyre, Head of Marketing, Communications and PR*



### **3.13 CP/CD/449 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE GRANT PROGRAMMES – REVIEW 2025**

#### **1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the Community Development Directorate Grant Funding Programmes following a review.**

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

A vital role performed by the Community Development Directorate was the provision and dispersal of grant funding to the community and voluntary sector and individual residents to support a variety of worthwhile activity. The support provided by the Community Development grant funding provides a significant return for residents of the Borough and supports the Council to deliver its corporate objectives. As part of the establishment of a Grant Funding Unit a review of grant funding had been ongoing to ensure that the funding programmes operated by the Directorate meet the needs of the community and continue to enhance the quality of life of residents.

#### **3. Previous Decisions of Council**

In April 2024 the Policy and Governance Committee approved the establishment of a Grant Funding Unit including the appointment of a Grant Funding Unit Manager with the Grant Funding Policy was approved by the Policy and Governance Committee in January 2025.

The Tourism Event Grant Funding Programme and the Tourism Flagship Event Grant Funding Programme were approved by the Committee in January 2025.

The current Community Development Directorate grant funding programmes were approved by the Community Planning Committee in February 2025.

A grant funding corporate workshop was held on 18 September 2025 when the Funding Unit Manager outlined the progress towards the establishment of the Grant Funding Unit since it became operational on 1 April 2025.

#### **4. Community Development Grant Funding Programme Proposals**

All of Council's grant funding programmes had been reviewed as part of the establishment of a centralised approach to the administration of grant funding which would be delivered by the Grant Funding Unit.

The responsibility for grant funding programme design continued to be the responsibility of the relevant sections of each Directorate which operated funding programmes. Elected Member approval continued to be required for all grant funding programmes both in terms of the design of the programmes and funding awards.

The following Community Development Directorate Grant Funding Programmes had been reviewed, and some modifications were proposed for Members' consideration as follows:

**Table 1**

<b>Community Development</b>					
<b>Grant Programme</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Current Funding Award</b>	<b>Annual Budget</b>	<b>Proposed Change</b>	<b>Benefit of Change</b>
<b>Seniors Christmas Event Grant</b>	Financial assistance was provided to support local senior's Christmas activities	£500	£55,000	Seniors Christmas Festivity Grant  Exclude gifts  Groups and activities must be based in the Borough	Include more flexibility for activities rather than events only  Council do not fund gifts  This was not defined in Guidance
<b>Good Relations</b>	Financial Assistance was provided to support substantial good relations themes in keeping with the government's Together Building a United Community (T: BUC) Strategy		To be confirmed (subject to Letter of Offer from The Executive Office)	Would only fund projects with substantial delivery or impact within the Borough  Fixed opening/ closing date	Available budget  Align to priorities  To allow more efficient grant process
<b>ARTS, CULTURE, TOURISM AND EVENTS</b>					
<b>Grant Programme</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Current Funding Award</b>	<b>Annual Budget</b>	<b>Proposed Change</b>	<b>Benefit of Change</b>
<b>Cultural Grant Aid Programme</b>	Irish and Ulster Scots Cultural Bursaries	£250  £200*  *Deputy Mayor Pilot in 2025	£7,500*   *This sum would be ring-fenced within the	Irish and Ulster Scots Cultural Bursary Programme  £250 x 30 awards  Introduce an	A Grant Programme that includes both Irish and Ulster Scots   In the event of over-subscription, a competitive

			overall Cultural Grant Aid Programme annual budget of £25,000	assessment panel made up of a Member of each of the four main parties. It was recommended that these were the four Members who sat on the Arts Advisory Panel  Introduce a scoring method	process was in place to allocate awards within available budget
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### Summary of Proposed Changes

#### Seniors Christmas Event Grant

Rename to Seniors Christmas Festivity Grant to allow for a range of festive activities. Groups must be based in the Borough and Council would no longer fund gifts (as per Grant Funding Policy).

#### Good Relations

The Grant Programme would only fund projects with substantial delivery/impact with the Borough. Fixed opening and closing date.

#### Cultural Grant Aid Programme – Irish and Ulster Scots Language and Cultural Bursary

New Bursary Programme for the development and advancement of Irish and Ulster Scots Language/Culture.

To introduce an assessment panel made up of a Member of each of the four main political parties and a competitive assessment process instead of the previous pass/fail assessment method. This would ensure these awards were made within available budget.

### 5. Finance

Provision of £1.5m had been made in the Community Development Directorate 2025/2026 revenue estimates for the delivery of the Department's grant funding programmes.

The proposed changes to the programmes would have no impact upon the budget allocation.

## 6. Governance

Responsibility for the design and delivery of the Community Development grant funding programmes remains with the Community Development Directorate. The Grant Funding Unit would support relevant officers in relation to the significant administration required to operate all of the grant funding programmes.

Any new grant funding programmes or future modifications to existing grant funding programmes would continue to be reported to the Community Development Committee for approval. Application calls and proposed funding awards would also continue to be reported to the Committee for approval.

The proposed changes to the grant during programmes have been recommended in order to improve arrangements for the benefit of applicants and achieve a more consistent approach to grant funding across Directorates.

A Section 75 Equality Screening exercise, Rural Proofing and Data Processing Impact Assessment have been carried out in relation to the Grant Funding Policy.

Each grant funding programme had its own specific grant guidance document and copies were circulated for Members' information.

A grant funding workshop would be held for Elected Members on an annual basis to ensure the ongoing engagement of Elected Members in relation to grant funding programmes across the Council.

## 7. Summary

The Community Development Directorate operates a range of grant funding programmes which provide vital support to the community to deliver programmes, activities and events which enhance the quality of life for residents.

As part of the establishment of a centralised administrative approach to grant funding through the establishment of a grant funding unit community and culture grant funding programmes have been reviewed with some modifications proposed.

Proposed by Councillor Dunlop  
Seconded by Councillor Ní Chonghaile and agreed that

**the proposed modifications to the Community Development Directorate grant funding programmes be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Anna Boyle, Grant Funding Unit Manager*

### 3.14 CP/GEN/005/VOL3 COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval that the minutes of the Community Planning Partnership meeting held on 22 October 2025 be approved as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.**

#### 2. Introduction/Background

The Community Planning Partnership was responsible for leading the Community Planning process in the Borough. The Community Planning Partnership was established in 2015 and was made up of Elected Members and representatives of each of the Community Planning statutory partners. The Community Planning Partnership would meet twice annually.

The Council's Community Plan 'Love Living Here' for the Borough set out a shared vision and agreed outcomes for the area up to 2030. This was achieved by working collectively with other partners involved, through a Community Planning Partnership. The plan was first approved in 2017.

#### 3. Previous Decision of Council

The updated draft of the Council's Community Plan 'Love Living Here' was approved at the March 2024 Community Planning Committee.

The 'Love Living Here' Delivery Plan to 2030 and minutes of the Community Planning Partnership meeting of 02 April 2025 were approved at the May Community Development Committee Meeting.

#### 4. Partnership Minutes

The fifth Community Planning Partnership meeting of the Council term was held in the Yarn Suite, Mossley Mill on Wednesday 22 October. At the meeting, the minutes of the Partnership meeting of 2 April 2025 were approved and were circulated for Members' information. The draft minutes of the 22 October meeting were also circulated for Members' approval.

#### 5. Governance

At the Council's Annual Meeting in May 2023, it was agreed that Members be appointed to the Community Planning Partnership for the term of the Council to be allocated using d'Hondt and the Chair of the Community Planning Committee also be the Chair of the Community Planning Partnership.

Officers would report the performance against the updated Delivery Plan bi-annually at the Community Planning Partnership and a Statement of Progress would be completed every 2 years and reported to the Department for Communities.

## 6. Summary

The draft minutes of the Community Planning Partnership meeting held on 22 October were circulated as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting. The Head of Community Development confirmed that he would clarify the definition of 'gifts' within the grant guidelines at a future meeting and further confirmed that donations and hampers assisting residents through the Christmas period, would be allowed.

The Head of Community Development confirmed that letters of offer were currently being issued.

In response to a Member's question regarding how funding would be divided between both Irish and Ulster Scots groups, the Director clarified that that would depend upon the response to the opportunity and confirmed that proposals in relation to funding awards would come back to a future committee for approval.

Proposed by Councillor Dunlop

Seconded by Councillor Ní Chonghaile and agreed that

**the draft minutes of the Community Planning Partnership meeting held on 22 October 2025 be approved as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.**

*ACTION BY: Conor Cunning DEA Engagement Manager*

### 3.15 CP/CD/433 CENSUS 2031 CONSULTATION

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to inform Members of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency's (NISRA) Census User Needs Consultation for Census 2031.**

#### 2. Introduction

NISRA sought the views of individuals, organisations, and public bodies to help shape the content of Census 2031. This consultation provided an opportunity to influence what information the census would collect to support planning, policy, research, and service delivery across Northern Ireland.

Census 2031 would build upon the success of Census 2021, to ensure that it continued to reflect the evolving needs of society. Through the consultation, NISRA wished to understand:

- How Census 2021 data had been used by organisations and communities
- What topics and questions should be included in Census 2031

- Views on using alternative data sources to complement census information

Feedback gathered would help ensure that the Census remains relevant, efficient, and valuable for users across all sectors.

### 3. Key issues

Participation in the consultation would allow the Council to ensure that local data needs, particularly those relevant to community planning, equality monitoring, service design, and local policy development are reflected in the 2031 Census design.

Responses could help shape how future Census data supported:

- Local decision-making and planning for services
- Identification of demographic and social trends
- Targeting of resources and funding
- Monitoring of equality and inclusion outcomes

The consultation opened on 28 October 2025 and would close on 4 February 2026. NISRA wished to hear from a wide range of interested persons and organisations. The consultation documents and associated survey were available online via [Northern Ireland Census User Needs Consultation – Supporting documents | Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency](#). Members were advised that they may wish to respond on a corporate, individual or party-political basis.

### 4. Summary

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency's (NISRA) had launched a consultation for Census 2031. Input was welcomed from all interested parties. The consultation would close on 4 February 2026. Full details and documentation could be accessed via the NISRA website. Members were advised that they may wish to respond on a corporate, individual or party-political basis.

Proposed by Councillor Lynch

Seconded by Councillor Ní Chonghaile and agreed that

**Members would respond on an individual or party-political basis.**

*ACTION BY: Conor Cunning, DEA Engagement Manager*

## 4 ITEMS FOR NOTING

### 4.1 FI/FIN/4 BUDGET REPORT – Period 6 April 2025 to September 2025

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to provide an update on the financial performance of the Directorate for the Community Development Committee for Period 6 (April 2025 to September 2025).**

2. Introduction/Background

As agreed, quarterly budget reports for Departments would be presented to the relevant Committee with all financial reports available to all Members.

3. Summary

As at period 6:

The Community Development Directorate had a favourable variance of £206k, or 5.3%, against the budgeted financial performance for the period.

A report on the financial performance, employee costs, highest areas of expenditure and income, and the financial performance by Head of Service was circulated for Members' information.

The overall financial position of the Council would be presented to the Policy and Governance Committee.

Proposed by Councillor Lynch

Seconded by Councillor Ní Chonghaile and agreed that

**the report be noted.**

*NO ACTION*

**4.2 CP/GR/200 DISTRICT COUNCIL GOOD RELATIONS PROGRAMME 2025-26**

1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to update Members on the Letter of Variance that had been received from The Executive Office (TEO) in relation to the 2025/26 District Council Good Relations Programme.**

2. Introduction/Background

Since 1998, all Northern Ireland public bodies had a legal duty to promote good relations between people from different community, religious and racial backgrounds. In 2013, the Northern Ireland Executive furthered their commitment to good relations with the release of Together Building A United Community (T-BUC) strategy to improve community relations and continue the journey towards a more united and shared society.

The Council's Good Relations Programme aimed to improve day to day relationships by reducing all forms of prejudice, promoting equality and encouraging a society in which different cultures and traditions were understood, respected and accepted.



The Good Relations Action Plan reflects the aims and objectives of the central T-BUC strategy. It outlined how government, stakeholders, community and individuals would work together to achieve change against the following key priorities:

1. Our Children and Young People;
2. Our Shared Community;
3. Our Safe Community; and
4. Our Cultural Expression.

### 3. Previous Decision of Council

The Executive Office (TEO) District Council Good Relations Programme funding 2025/26 of £108,562.50 and the Good Relations Action Plan 2025/26 were approved at the May 2025 Community Development Committee.

A letter of variance totalling £128,562.50 was received from The Executive Office (TEO) in relation to the 2025/26 District Council Good Relations Programme. This was noted at the September 2025 Community Development Committee.

### 4. Key Issues

Correspondence received from TEO offering financial assistance totalling £158,562.50 towards The District Council Good Relations Programme for the period 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026 was circulated.

The additional £30,000 on the original funding offer was designated to support activities promoting social and racial cohesion initiatives. No additional match funding was required from Council.

This offer of funding was accepted by TEO's deadline of 13 October 2025.

### 5. Financial Implication

The Executive Office required match funding of a minimum of 25% from local Councils towards the overall Good Relations budget. The Council's contribution of £36,187.50 towards the overall Good Relations budget was included within the approved 2025/26 Council estimates for the delivery of the plan.

The additional funding allocation of £30,000 did not require any additional match funding from Council resources.

### 6. Equality and/or Rural Screening Requirements

The 2025/26 Good Relations Action Plan had been subject to Section 75 Equality Screening and had been screened out for the need of an Equality Impact Assessment.

In addition, a Rural Needs screening exercise was completed.

## 7. Summary

Council received a revised offer for funding of £158,562.50 from TEO for the costs associated with the District Council Good Relations Programme for 2025/26. No additional match funding was required. The additional £30,000 was designated to support activities promoting social and racial cohesion.

Proposed by Councillor Ní Chonghaile  
Seconded by Councillor Cosgrove and agreed that

**the offer of District Council Good Relations Programme funding from The Executive Office of £158,562.50 be noted.**

*NO ACTION*

### 4.3 **COMD/GR/004 GOOD RELATIONS WEEK 2025**

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was to update Members on the delivery and impact of the 2025 Good Relations Week programme.**

#### 2. Introduction/Background

Good Relations Week 2025 took place from Monday 13 October to Sunday 19 October 2025. The initiative was co-ordinated regionally by the Community Relations Council and supported by the Northern Ireland Executive's Together Building a United Community Strategy.

The 2025 theme was 'Connect' - recognising that the foundation of a better community was built on People, Planet, and Prosperity, all connected by the goal of Peace.

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

#### 3. Previous Decision of Council

The Good Relations Action Plan 2025/26 was approved at the May 2025 Community Development Committee with provision for Good Relations Week activity included.

The Good Relations Week programme overview was noted at the September 2025 Community Development Committee.

#### 4. Good Relations Week 2025

The Good Relations Team delivered 11 events across the Borough, celebrating inclusion, connection and community. The programme engaged a total of 409 participants. Ten school classes took part, spanning nursery, primary, secondary and Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision. Pupils represented the Catholic Maintained, Controlled, Integrated and SEN sectors. District Electoral Areas reached included Airport, Antrim Town, Glengormley Urban, Macedon and Threemilewater. Events were hosted in schools, libraries and Council buildings.

The Good Relations Team collaborated with colleagues across Council departments, including Environmental Health, Community Wellbeing and Neighbourhood Renewal, to enhance delivery and reach. Funding support from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) enabled wider community engagement. Partnerships with Beyond Skin and the Nerve Centre brought added depth to the programme - Beyond Skin contributed music and dialogue to the launch event, while the Nerve Centre supported the delivery of digital art workshops aligned with the 'Seen' exhibition.

Programme Highlights Included:

- Launch Event at Mossley Mill: A celebration of the Borough's rich cultural tapestry, featuring music, art, and powerful storytelling.
- 'Seen' Exhibition by Oliver Jeffers: Internationally acclaimed North Belfast artist brought stories of children seeking asylum to life in Mossley Mill.
- Digital Art Workshops: Delivered in partnership with the Nerve Centre, connecting young people to the themes of the 'Seen' exhibition.
- Intergenerational Music Workshop: A shared experience between Parkhall Integrated students and Antrim Men's Shed, promoting connection.
- Diversity Storytelling Sessions Tailored for nursery, primary, and SEN groups, celebrating inclusion and diversity.
- United Through Sport Talk: Explored how sport could: Break down barriers, promote shared spaces, connect communities, and cultivate mutual respect.

#### 5. Financial Position/Implication

Provision of £2,500 for Good Relations Week activity was made in the 2025/26 Good Relations Action Plan and budget. £3,675 of additional funding was secured from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE).

#### 6. Equality and/or Rural Screening Requirements

The 2025/26 Good Relations Action Plan was subject to Section 75 Equality Screening and had been screened out for the need of an Equality Impact Assessment. In addition, a Rural Needs screening exercise was completed.

## 7. Summary

Good Relations Week 2025, themed 'Connect', was delivered across the Borough from 13–19 October. The programme featured eleven inclusive events engaging 409 participants, including ten school classes from nursery, primary, secondary, and SEN sectors. Activities spanned multiple District Electoral Areas and were hosted in schools, libraries, and Council buildings.

Highlights included the launch event at Mossley Mill, the 'Seen' exhibition by Oliver Jeffers, digital art workshops with the Nerve Centre, intergenerational music sessions, diversity storytelling, and a sport-focused dialogue event. The programme was supported by cross-departmental collaboration within Council, funding from NIHE, and partnerships with Beyond Skin and the Nerve Centre.

Proposed by Councillor McWilliam  
Seconded by Councillor Cosgrove and agreed that

**the update on the delivery and impact of the 2025 Good Relations Week programme be noted.**

*NO ACTION: Amy Gribbon, Good Relations Officer*

## 5 **ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS (AORB)**

- 5.1 At a Member's request that the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Community Toolkit be rolled out to schools within the Borough, the Director of Community and Culture confirmed that this could be done.

*ACTION BY: Ursula Fay, Director of Community and Culture*

- 5.2 A Member extended their congratulations to Rathenraw Youth Scheme who received runner up in the Community Youth category at the Pride of Place Awards held in Limerick on 7 November 2025. It was proposed by a Member that Rathenraw Community Centre be considered for improvement.

Proposed by Councillor Lynch  
Seconded by Councillor Ní Chonghaile

**that a report on potential improvements to Rathenraw Community Centre be brought back to a future Community Development meeting.**

*ACTION BY: Ursula Fay, Director of Community and Culture*

- 5.3 A Member requested that Sure Start Antrim be nominated for the King's Award for Voluntary Service (KAVS) 2026, subject to the announcement on 14 November 2025 of the KAVS 2025 recipients including one of the groups previously approved for the Council's KAVS nomination in 2026.

Proposed by Councillor Dunlop  
Seconded by Councillor Lynch

On the proposal being put to the meeting and a recorded vote having been requested by the Chairperson, Members voted as follows:

<b>In favour of the Proposal Members viz 13</b>	<b>Against the Proposal Members viz 0</b>	<b>Abstentions Members viz 0</b>
<b>Aldermen</b> – McGrath and Ross  <b>Councillors</b> – Brady, Cosgrove, Dunlop, Gilmour, Lynch, Magill, McGrann, McWilliam, Ní Chonghaile, O'Lone and Wilson		

A unanimous vote having been recorded, it was therefore agreed that

**Sure Start Antrim be nominated for the KAVS 2026.**

*ACTION BY: Ursula Fay, Director of Community and Culture*

- 5.4 A Member's comments that the gazebos at the remembrance service in Antrim were not of a high standard were noted by the Director of Community and Culture.

*ACTION BY: Ursula Fay, Director of Community and Culture*

- 5.5 In response to a non-committee Member's comments in relation to Sentry Hill and the potential of this site as a tourist attraction, the Chairperson advised that this would require a proposer and seconder.

Proposed by Councillor Dunlop  
 Seconded by Alderman Ross that

**a scoping exercise be undertaken and a report detailing potential opportunities in relation to Sentry Hill, including the involvement of external funders, be brought back to a future committee meeting.**

*ACTION BY: Ursula Fay, Director of Community and Culture*

There being no further Committee business, the Chairperson thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting concluded at 7.40 pm.

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**MAYOR**