



5 November 2025

Committee Chair: Councillor S Wilson

Committee Vice-Chair: Councillor M Brady

Committee Members: Aldermen - J McGrath and S Ross

Councillors – J Burbank, S Cosgrove, P Dunlop, J Gilmour,  
R Lynch, H Magill, T McGrann, V McWilliam,  
M Ní Chonghaile, A O'Lone and M Stewart

Dear Member

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

A meeting of the Community Development Committee will be held in the **Council Chamber, Mossley Mill** on **Monday 10 November 2025** at **6.30pm**.

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 and Newtownabbey Borough Council**

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

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

Tel: 028 9448 1301

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

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# REPORT ON BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING ON MONDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2025

## 3 ITEMS FOR DECISION

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

#### 1. Purpose

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

#### 2. Introduction

The THRiVE Project is 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

Members are reminded 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.

Members are also reminded that the provision of an additional £3,000 financial assistance for the 2025/26 Service Level Agreement between the 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 is 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 continue to work with the THRiVE Project and Community Planning partners to manage the performance of the Project. Quarterly performance

reports will continue to be reported to the Community Development Committee.

Members are reminded that a presentation on the THRiVE Project was made to the October 2024 Community Development Committee.

#### 6. Summary

The Quarter 2 Report is **enclosed** for Members' information and is based upon performance measures in the Service Level Agreement. Members are advised that the Quarter 2 targets have been met.

#### 7. Recommendation

**It is recommended that the THRiVE Project Quarter 2 2025-26 performance report be approved.**

Prepared by: Conor Cuning, DEA Engagement Manager

Agreed by: Ronan McKenna, Head of Community Development

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community and Culture

## 3.2 CP/PP/006 PEACEPLUS PARTNERSHIP MINUTES

### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is 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

Members are reminded that the PEACEPLUS Partnership operates as a Working Group of Council.

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

### 3. Previous Decision of Council

Members are reminded that 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.

Members are reminded that 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.

Members are reminded that 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, is governed by a constitution and a Partnership Agreement.

## 5. Summary

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

## 6. Recommendation

**It is recommended 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.**

Prepared by: Paula Kerr, Peace Programme - Project Support Officer

Agreed by: Ronan McKenna, Head of Community Development

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community and Culture

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

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is 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

Members are advised that Heat Martial Arts and Fitness Club have made a request to hire Stiles Community Centre on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2026 for a charity fundraising event.

The Club have requested permission to apply for a license to sell alcohol at their event. The consumption and sale of alcohol is permitted with agreement by the Council if the relevant licence is obtained by the event organiser. The Club is based in Antrim and runs a white-collar boxing and kickboxing fight night 3 times per year and has done so for the past 10 years. The club have previously held similar events in local church halls, a hotel and a retail outlet.

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

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

#### 3. Previous Decision of Council

Members are reminded that a number of previous similar requests to the Council seeking permission to serve and sell alcohol at functions in community facilities have been approved.

#### 4. Financial Position/Implication

There are no financial implications for the Council from approval of this request.

#### 5. Summary

A request has been 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<sup>th</sup> March 2026.

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

**6. Recommendation**

**It is recommended 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.**

Prepared by: Paul Townsend, Community Facilities Coordinator

Agreed by: Ronan McKenna, Head of Community Development

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community and Culture

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

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is 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 aims 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

Members are reminded that 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 have 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.

Members are also reminded 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 is based upon performance measures in the Service Level Agreement.

#### 4. Financial Position/Implication

Members are advised provision of £15,000 in financial support for the Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors Forum has been provided for in the 2025/26 Community Planning budget. Other Community Planning partners have 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 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 is provided to Officers for the purposes of performance management.

## 6. Summary

The Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors' Forum 2025-26 Quarter 1 and 2 Report is **enclosed** for Members' information and is based upon performance measures in the Service Level Agreement. Members are advised that the Quarter 1 and 2 targets have been met.

## 7. Recommendation

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

Prepared by: Conor Cuning DEA Engagement Manager

Agreed by: Ronan McKenna Head of Community Development

Approved by: Ursula Fay Director of Community and Culture

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

#### 1. Purpose

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

#### 2. Introduction/Background

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

#### 3. Previous Decisions of Council

Members are reminded that 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 will 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 are 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 01 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 will 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 will be managed by the Council's Grant Funding Unit. Grant guidance notes have been developed, and a copy is **to follow** for Members information.
- Eligibility: The programme will be limited to identified Super Output areas identified within the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measures (NINIS),

excluding Neighbourhood Renewal Areas. Funding guidelines will reflect that core costs or specific projects which are clearly the responsibility of another statutory organisation will not be eligible.

- Funding Awards: Funding awards will range from £5,000 to £25,000
- Application Process: Applications will be made through the online grant platform, as in case with all Council Grant Funding.

The grant programme timeline is illustrated below for information purposes. This will 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% has been completed)
1 <sup>st</sup> April – 31 March 27	Delivery of projects

## 5. Financial Position

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

It is anticipated that DfC will provide £76,395.38 in 2026/27 which is the same as has been provided in 2025/26.

## 6. Equality Screening and Rural Needs

As part of the 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 has been subject to Section 75 Equality Screening has 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 will be managed through the Council's Grant Funding Unit and will align with the Council's Funding Policy and Financial Regulations.

Organisations who meet the eligibility criteria based on their location and project proposals meeting the grant criteria will proceed to being assessed and scored.

DfC funding will 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 will 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 are already in receipt of monies through the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme.

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

## 9. Recommendation

**It is recommended 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.**

Prepared by: Conor Cuning, DEA Manager and Stefanie Buchanan,  
Community Development Manager

Agreed by: Ronan McKenna, Head of Community Development

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community and Culture

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

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is 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) is a disciplined uniformed youth organisation sponsored by the Royal Air Force. Its aims are:

- To promote and encourage among young people a practical interest in aviation and the Royal Air Force.
- To provide training which will be useful in the services and civilian life.
- To foster the spirit of adventure and develop qualities of leadership and good citizenship

They have been making use of Antrim Castle Gardens for some time informally for training and development activities. However recent guidance requires them to obtain formal official authorisation to do this from the Council as the landowner.

#### 3. Details of the Request

The RAFAC are requested formal permission of the 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 the 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 introduce cadets to communication technology, teamwork under pressure and the importance of clear and accurate information sharing.

Camp Craft Activities – This will include temporary erection of tents and use of portable radio systems. These exercises promote self-reliance, safety awareness and practical outdoor skills. This activity will 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 are generally less visitors to the Gardens. The RAFAC are indemnified by the Ministry of Defence.

It is 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 are no financial implications of this request.

#### 5. Governance

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

#### 6. Summary

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

They have advised that their activities will be fully supervised, covered by comprehensive risk assessments and indemnified by the Ministry of Defence. They have also made a commitment to respecting all areas they use and leaving them in good order after every activity.

#### **7. Recommendation**

**It is recommended 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.**

Prepared and Approved 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 is to update Members on the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Community Toolkit.**

#### 2. Background

Members are aware that Ending Violence Against Women and Girls is 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 is 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

Members are advised that 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 the 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 has 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 the Council's wider EVAWG campaign which has 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 has 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 is 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 has 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 is in progress with details withheld from report for safety and preventative reasons.

#### 4. Financial Implication

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

## 5. Equality and/or Rural Screening Requirements

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

In addition, a Rural Needs screening exercise has been completed, a copy of which is **enclosed** 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 has 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 NHSCCT locations, Libraries, Community Facilities and Schools. Further to this the toolkit has 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 is for everyone it is closely aligned with the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls strategy and incorporated within the overall Council campaign in this area which has now seen a reach of over 1 million since December 2024.

## 7. Recommendation

**It is recommended that the Community Domestic and Sexual Abuse Toolkit update is noted, and the outcome of the screening documents is approved.**

Prepared by: Stef Buchanan, Community Development Manager

Agreed by: Ronan McKenna, Head of Community Development

Approved by: 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 is 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

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

- To advise the 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 is 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

Members are advised that 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 are **enclosed** for Members' information.

#### 5. Financial Position

There are no financial implications to the Council.

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

Members are aware that a comprehensive review of all Council working groups is being undertaken and Section 75 Equality Screening and Rural Proofing will be carried out as part of this review.

## 7. Governance

The specific role of the Panel is set out in a Constitution which includes the above-mentioned objectives. The Panel is 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.

## 8. Summary

The Borough Arts and Cultural Advisory Panel's role is 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 meets four times each year and reports to the Community Development Committee.

## 9. Recommendation

**It is recommended 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.**

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

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

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community and Culture

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

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is 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 is 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. The Council acquired the boat from its private owner in 2021 and it is now on display on land adjacent to The Gateway Visitor Centre, Antrim Loughshore Park.

#### 3. Previous Decision of the Council

Members are reminded that 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

Members are advised that a local veterans group has 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 is 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 is proposed that the Council enters 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 is proposed that the Council establishes 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 are no financial implications arising from this proposal.

#### 6. Governance

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

#### 7. Summary

The Joyce is 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 is 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 will be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee.

#### 8. Recommendation

**It is recommended 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.**

Prepared and Approved 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 is to update Members on activity planned to mark International Men's Day on 19 November 2025.**

#### 2. Introduction/Background

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

It celebrates worldwide the positive value men bring to society, their families and their communities. This day highlights positive role models and raises awareness of men's well-being. The theme for 2025 is '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 delivers a workshop type 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

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

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

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

#### 5. Finance

This event is being supported by funding from The Executive Office (TEO) as part of their regional commitment to the EVAWG 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 the Council in January 2025.

## 7. Summary

A motion to the Council in January 2025 requested delivery of a workshop event to mark International Men's Day 2025. An event is being held in Mossley Mill on Wednesday 19 November 2025. The event is being hosted by BBC sports presenter Thomas Niblock with special guests Daryl Clarke and Jonny Murphy and will 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 is proposed that this event is the first of an annual event to mark International Men's Day.

## 8. Recommendation

**It is recommended that the update on International Men's Day 2025 is 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.**

Agreed and Approved 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 is 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.

Members are further reminded that 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 the Council, were considered. At this time the Forest Service had indicated that it would only renew any lease with the Council if the Council was willing to take on responsibility for the development and management of the entire forest, which exceeds 172 hectares.

It was agreed at this meeting that the 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 is owned by the Forest Service and has 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.

Members are advised that 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 has previously been voted best small visitor attraction in Northern Ireland by Trip Advisors Director of Destination Marketing, is 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 has now 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 represents an annual increase of £1,300 or 45%. Forest Service also advised that they would be seeking this amount fully backdated to the commencement of the new lease date of 12 January 2024. This will 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 have contacted World of Owls to advise them of the valuation and new rental amount as well as rent owed. They have indicated that they are 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 has passed since the agreement to renew the lease was given in January 2023 and the advice of the rent increase it is proposed to make a one-off payment of £2,881 to cover the increased rent for the back dated period as well as the increase due to end March 2026. This will provide World of Owls with time to adjust their financial plans to accommodate the annual rent increase.

#### 6. Governance

The Council is required to confirm with the Forest Service that the new rental value of £2,900 is acceptable and will be in position to do this should approval for this one-off financial contribution be approved. Once agreed Forest Service can proceed with finalising the new lease to 11 January 2034. As valuations are carried out every 5 years there will be a further valuation carried out in 2029 by Land and Property Services on behalf of Forest Service.

#### 7. Summary

World of Owls is a small specialist tourism provider based in Randalstown, which operates as a registered charity. The charity is 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 has 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 is £2,900 per annum, a 45% increase, which they are applying from 12 January 2024.

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

It is 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.

#### **8. Recommendation**

**It is recommended 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.**

Prepared and Approved 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 is 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 are 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 provide an opportunity to recognise excellent communications among the best in the business. The awards opened for entries in September 2025 and are taking place on Friday 28 November 2025 in the Europa Hotel when winners will 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 as a community wellbeing campaign led by the 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 stands out because it weaves together physical, emotional, and social wellbeing through creativity, kindness, and shared purpose. The campaign strategy is grounded around four pillars:

1. **Accessibility and Inclusion:** Open to everyone, regardless of age or skill level. Schools, care homes, knitting groups, and individuals 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 has 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 the Council's high-profile events including Enchanted Winter Garden, Garden Show Ireland, Coronation and Armed Forces Day 2024. Lauren has 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 supports the broader industry by training local community groups on marketing and communications best practice. This work helps local organisations promote their initiatives more effectively and engage wider audiences.

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

### **4. CIPR NI Awards Ceremony**

Members are advised the awards ceremony will take place from 6.30pm on Friday 28 November 2025 at the Europa Hotel, Belfast.

It is 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**

Members are advised that the cost of a seat at the awards ceremony is £100. Therefore, attendance at the awards ceremony as proposed will cost an estimated £600, provision for which exists in 2025/26 budget.

### **6. Summary**

The Marketing Communications and PR Team has successfully been shortlisted as a finalist at the CIPR Northern Ireland Awards 2025. It is 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.

### **7. Recommendation**

**It is recommended 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.**

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

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

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

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is 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 is 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 has 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 the Councils grant funding programmes have been reviewed as part of the establishment of a centralised approach to the administration of grant funding which will be delivered by the Grant Funding Unit.

The responsibility for grant funding programme design continues to be the responsibility of the relevant sections of each Directorate that operates funding programmes. Elected Member approval continues 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 have been reviewed, and some modifications are 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 is 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 is not defined in Guidance
<b>Good Relations</b>	Financial Assistance is 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)	Will 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 will be ring-fenced within the overall Cultural Grant Aid Programme annual	Irish and Ulster Scots Cultural Bursary Programme  £250 x 30 awards  Introduce an assessment panel made up of a Member of each of the four main parties. It is	A Grant Programme that includes both Irish and Ulster Scots  In the event of over-subscription, a competitive process is in place to allocate awards within available budget

			budget of £25,000	recommended that these are the four Members who sit on the Arts Advisory Panel  Introduce a scoring method	
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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 will no longer fund gifts (as per Grant Funding Policy)
- Good Relations  
The Grant Programme will 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.  
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 will ensure these awards are made within available budget.

### 5. Finance

Provision of £1.5m has 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 will 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 will 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 will continue to be reported to the Community

Development Committee for approval. Application calls and proposed funding awards will 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.

Members are advised that 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 has its own specific grant guidance document and copies are **to follow** for Members' information.

A grant funding workshop will 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.

## 8. Recommendation

**It is recommended that the proposed modifications to the Community Development Directorate grant funding programmes be approved.**

Prepared by: Anna Boyle, Grant Funding Unit Manager

Agreed by: Ronan McKenna, Head of Community Development and Simon Goldrick, Head of Arts, Culture, Tourism and Events

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community and Culture

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

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report is 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 is responsible for leading the Community Planning process in the Borough. The Community Planning Partnership was established in 2015 and is made up of Elected Members and representatives of each of the Community Planning statutory partners. The Community Planning Partnership meets twice annually.

Members are reminded that the Councils Community Plan 'Love Living Here' for the Borough sets out a shared vision and agreed outcomes for the area up to 2030. This is 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

Members are reminded that the updated draft of the Councils Community Plan 'Love Living Here' was approved at the March 2024 Community Planning Committee.

Members are also reminded that 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 02 April 2025 were approved and are **enclosed** for Members information. The draft minutes of the 22 October meeting are also **enclosed** 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 will report the performance against the updated Delivery Plan bi-annually at the Community Planning Partnership and a Statement of Progress will 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 are enclosed as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.

7. Recommendation

**It is recommended 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.**

Prepared by: Conor Cuning DEA Engagement Manager

Agreed by: Ronan McKenna Head of Community Development

Approved by: Ursula Fay Director Community and Culture

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

#### 1. Purpose

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

#### 2. Introduction

NISRA is seeking views from individuals, organisations, and public bodies to help shape the content of Census 2031. This consultation provides an opportunity to influence what information the census will collect to support planning, policy, research, and service delivery across Northern Ireland. Census 2031 will build upon the success of Census 2021, ensuring that it continues to reflect the evolving needs of society. Through the consultation, NISRA wishes to understand:

- How Census 2021 data has 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 will help ensure that the Census remains relevant, efficient, and valuable for users across all sectors.

#### 3. Key issues

Participation in the consultation will 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 can help shape how future Census data supports:

- 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 will close on 04 February 2026. NISRA wishes to hear from a wide range of interested persons and organisations. The consultation documents and associated survey are available online via [Northern Ireland Census User Needs Consultation – Supporting documents | Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency](#)

Members are 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) has launched a consultation for Census 2031. Input is welcomed from all interested parties. The consultation closes on 04 February 2026. Full details and documentation can be accessed via the NISRSA website. Members are advised that they may wish to respond on a corporate, individual or party-political basis.

#### 5. Recommendation

**Members' instructions are requested.**

Prepared by: Conor Cunning, DEA Engagement Manager

Agreed by: Ronan McKenna, Head of Community Development

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community and Culture

## **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 is 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 will be presented to the relevant Committee with all financial reports available to all Members.

#### **3. Summary**

As at period 6:

The Community Development Directorate has 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 is **enclosed** for Members' information.

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

#### **4. Recommendation**

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

Prepared by: Richard Murray, Head of Finance

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community and Culture

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

### 1. Purpose

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

### 2. Introduction/Background

Members are reminded since 1998, all Northern Ireland public bodies have 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 aims to improve day to day relationships by reducing all forms of prejudice, promoting equality and encouraging a society in which different cultures and traditions are understood, respected and accepted.

The Good Relations Action Plan reflects the aims and objectives of the central T-BUC strategy. It outlines how government, stakeholders, community and individuals will 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

Members are reminded that 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.

Members are reminded that 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

Members are advised that correspondence **enclosed** has been 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.

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

Members are advised that this offer of funding has been accepted by TEO's deadline of 13 October 2025.

#### 5. Financial Implication

The Executive Office requires match funding of a minimum of 25% from local Councils towards the overall Good Relations budget. The Councils 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 does not require any additional match funding from Council resources.

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

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

In addition, a Rural Needs screening exercise has been completed.

#### 7. Summary

The Council has 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 is required.

The additional £30,000 is designated to support activities promoting social and racial cohesion.

#### 8. Recommendation

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

Prepared by: Amy Gribbon, Good Relations Officer

Agreed by: Ronan McKenna, Head of Community Development

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community and Culture

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

#### 1. Purpose

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

#### 2. Introduction/Background

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

The 2025 theme was 'Connect' - recognising that the foundation of a better community is 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

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

Members are reminded that 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 Include:

- 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 can: Break down barriers, promote shared spaces, connect communities, and cultivate mutual respect

#### 5. Financial Position/Implication

Members are reminded that provision of £2,500 for Good Relations Week activity was made in the 2025/26 Good Relations Action Plan and budget. Members are advised that £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 has been subject to Section 75 Equality Screening and has been screened out for the need of an Equality Impact Assessment. In addition, a Rural Needs screening exercise has been 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.

## **8. Recommendation**

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

Prepared by: Amy Gribbon, Good Relations Officer

Agreed by: Ronan McKenna, Head of Community Development

Approved by: Ursula Fay, Director of Community and Culture

**5 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS**

Any Other Relevant Business (AORB) may be taken at this point.