

September 22nd, 2023

**Notice Of Meeting**

You are requested to attend the meeting to be held on **Wednesday, 27th September 2023** at **7:00 pm** in **City Hall, Bangor.**

# Agenda

## Agenda

(Attached)

📎 *C 27.09.2023 Agenda.pdf*

*Not included*

### 1. Prayer

### 2. Apologies

### 3. Declarations of Interest

### 4 Mayor's Business

### 5 Mayor and Deputy Mayor Engagements for the Month of September 2023

(Attached)

📎 *Mayoral Engagements September 2023.pdf*

*Page 1*

### 6 Minutes of Council Meeting held dated 20 August 2023

(Copy attached)

📎 *C 30.08.2023 Minutes.pdf*

*Not included*

### 7 Minutes of Committees

#### 7.1 Planning Committee dated 5 September 2023

(Copy attached)

📎 *Minutes PC.05.09.23.pdf*

*Not included*

📎 *Minutes PC.05.09.23 PM.pdf*

*Not included*

#### 7.2 Environment Committee dated 6 September 2023

(Copy attached)

📎 *230906 EC Minutes.pdf*

*Not included*

📎 *230906 EC MinutesPM.pdf*

*Not included*

**\*\*\*IN CONFIDENCE\*\*\***

## **7.2.1 Matter Arising - Governance Arrangement for Management of Council Harbours Appointment of 'Duty Holder'**

## **7.3 Place and Prosperity Committee dated 7 September 2023**

(Copy attached)

📎 *PP 07.09.2023 Minutes.pdf* *Not included*

📎 *PP 07.09.2023 Minutes PM.pdf* *Not included*

## **7.4 Corporate Services Committee dated 12 September 2023**

(Copy attached)

📎 *CS 12.09.2023 Minutes.pdf* *Not included*

📎 *CS 12.09.2023 Minutes PM.pdf* *Not included*

## **7.4.1 Matter Arising - Report on the Consultation Response to Northern Ireland's 2030 and 2040 Emissions Reduction Targets and First Three Carbon Budgets and Seeking views on Climate Change Committee (CCC) Advice Report: The Path to Net Zero Northern Ireland**

(Report attached)

📎 *Item 7.4.1-Matter Arising-Report on the Consultation response to Northern Irelands 2030 - 2040 Emissions Reduction Targets and First Three Carbon Budgets a.pdf* *Not included*

📎 *Item 7.4.1 - Matter Arising - Appendix 1 - Carbon Budget Consultation Document.pdf* *Not included*

📎 *Item 7.4.1 - Matter Arising - Appendix 2 - Draft consultation response revised Full council.pdf* *Not included*

## **7.5 Community and Wellbeing Committee dated 13 September 2023**

(Minutes attached)

📎 *CWB 13.09.2023 Minutes.pdf* *Not included*

📎 *CWB 13.09.2023 Minutes PM.pdf*

## **7.5.1 Matter Arising - Report on the Funding Offer from Department of Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) for Capacity and Capability Building Programme in Northern Ireland: Non-Good Products 2023/24**

(Report attached)

📎 *7.5.1 Matter Arising Funding Offer from BEIS Capacity & Capability Building Programme.pdf* **Not included**

## **7.6 Audit Committee dated 18 September 2023**

(Copy attached)

📎 *AC 18.09.2023 Minutes.pdf* **Not included**

📎 *AC 18.09.2023 MinutesPM.pdf* **Not included**

## **8. Requests for Deputation**

### **8.1 Re-Gen**

(Copy attached)

📎 *8.1 Request for Presentation - Re-Gen.pdf* **Not included**

📎 *8.1 Appendix 1 - Letter from Re-Gen.pdf* **Not included**

## **9. Nomination to East Border Region Members Forum**

(Report attached)

📎 *9. Nomination to East Border Region Forum.pdf* **Not included**

## **10. NILGA Accredited Provision for Elected Member Development 2023/2024**

(Report attached)

📎 *10. NILGA Accredited Provision for Elected Member Development 23 24.pdf* **Not included**

📎 *10. Appendix 1 - NILGA Accredited Provision Nominations LetterANDAug2023.pdf* **Not included**

📎 *10. Appendix 2 - NILGA Local Development Planning Leadership Programme 2023-24 Promotion.pdf* **Not included**

📎 *10. Appendix 3 - NILGA Leadership Development Programme 2023 -24 Promotion* **Not included**

## **11. Implementation of New HRC Access Booking System Update**

(To follow)

## **12. Nomination to Outside Bodies**

(Report attached)

12. *Nominations to Outside Bodies.pdf*

*Not included*

## **13. Sealing Documents**

## **14. Transfer of Rights of Burial**

## **15. Notice of Motion Status Report**

(Report attached)

15. *NOM Status Report.pdf*

*Not included*

15. *NOM TRACKER LIVE.pdf*

*Not included*

## **16. Notices of Motion**

### **16.1 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Moore and Councillor Creighton**

This Council believes:

education should be accessible to all who seek it and embedding a culture of lifelong learning in our society is essential to enabling people to realise their potential.

part-time flexible learning is crucial to meeting the skills needed to build a modern, inclusive and green economy.

part-time students are a unique demographic, they are more likely to have disabilities, come from disadvantaged backgrounds, having caring responsibilities, such as children or elderly relatives, and in general, be part of a 'hard to reach' group who missed out on full-time study.

lifelong learning, including non-formal education, addresses social issues, strengthens communities and builds civic engagement. It is the most effective tool for meeting social policy objectives and creating positive social change.

recognises that lifelong learning must become a meaningful and developed policy area with tangible actions and outcomes, underpinned by the wealth of best practice and innovation from across the UK and

Ireland.

This Council therefore resolves to:

work with the Lifelong Learning Alliance to develop a Lifelong Learning campaign, to inform and raise public awareness of how lifelong learning transforms lives and communities.

Engage with MLAs and MPs to prioritise funding for formal and informal part-time education when the Executive is formed.

Encourage MLAs to form an All- Party Group on Lifelong Learning to support an evidence and best-practice informed approach to policy making, in collaboration with adult education bodies to form a voice for Lifelong Learning in the Assembly when an Executive is formed.

## **16.2 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Woods and Councillor McKee**

That this Council, recognising its commitment as a responsible employer, and that staff are paid the current Living Wage, tasks officers to explore becoming 'Living Wage' accredited with the UK Living Wage Foundation, as well as ensuring any regularly contracted employees and workers, including those who are employed externally to deliver Council services, are paid the living wage hourly rate. It also explores also becoming Living Hours and Living Pensions accredited too.





## **16.3 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Adair and Councillor Douglas**

That Council notes the increasing complaints regarding the poor condition and appearance of our cemeteries across the Borough and tasks officers to bring back a report on options to improve the maintenance of our cemeteries which are places of special significance to those who have lost loved ones.

**\*\*\* IN CONFIDENCE \*\*\***

## **17. Disposal of Kinnegar Logistics Base Update**

(Report attached)

 <i>17. Disposal of Kinnegar Logistics Base -update.pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>
 <i>17. Appendix 1 - Letter from Cleaver Fulton Rankin.pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>
 <i>17. Appendix 1 - Legal Opinion.pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>
 <i>17. Appendix 2 - Letter from Joe O'Neil Belfast Harbour to Stephen Reid.pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>

## **18. NIE Request for Use of Land Castle Place Car Park, Newtownards**

(Report attached)

- |   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| 📎 <b>18. Request for a lease to NIE - Kennel Lane Carpark Newtownards.pdf</b> | <b>Not included</b> |
| 📎 <b>18. Appendix 1 - location map - request from NIE.pdf</b>                 | <b>Not included</b> |
| 📎 <b>18. Appendix 2 - substation drawing - request from NIE.png</b>           | <b>Not included</b> |
| 📎 <b>18. Appendix 3 - working area map - request from NIE.pdf</b>             | <b>Not included</b> |

**LIST OF MAYOR'S/DEPUTY MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS**  
**FOR SEPTEMBER 2023**

**Monday 4th September 2023**

- 12:30                      Photos - Prize giving for Ark Housing Competition on TBUC - Francis Street, near the Chronicle
- 19:00                      Ards Borough Cup and the Mayors Charities Cheque - Council Offices, Church Street, Newtownards

**Tuesday 5th September 2023**

- 14:00                      Copelands Nursing/Residential Home 2nd Anniversary - Copelands, 97 Donaghadee Road, Millisle

**Wednesday 6th September 2023**

- 11:15                      UTV Life Interviews - The Walled Garden, Bangor
- 14:00                      Judging Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty & NI Water Calendar Competition - Down Civic Centre

**Thursday 7th September 2023**

- 11:30                      Kiltonga Nature Reserve Opening of Feeding Station - Kiltonga Nature Reserve

**Friday 8th September 2023**

- 14:00                      Visit to HMS Magpie - Bangor Marina Main offices

**Saturday 9th September 2023**

- 12:45                      Chillie Festival - The Walled Garden, Bangor

**Sunday 10th September 2023**

- 10:30                      400 Years of Presbyterian Witness - First Bangor Presbyterian Church, Bangor
- 12:15                      Friends of Columbanus - Brittany Visit - The Museum, Bangor Castle
- 15:00                      RYA Youth National Championships - Ballyholme Yacht Club

**Monday 11th September 2023**

- 15:00                      Visit to Mt Stewart - Mount Stewart Estate
- 19:00                      Bangor Abbey Loyal Orange Lodge 726 Mayoral Reception - Bangor Castle



**Tuesday 12th September 2023**

13:30 Photocall - Launch of Workplace Transport Safety by HSENI - Londonderry Park, Newtownards

18:30 NI Investment Summit - Titanic Centre, Belfast

**Thursday 14th September 2023**

12:30 Senior Prize Distribution - Bangor Grammar School

**Monday 18th September 2023**

11:00 Photo Call - Launch of the Council's Hardship Fund - Bangor Castle

14:00 Sound Around Ards Mayoral Reception - Bangor Castle

16:30 Tallest Sunflower Competition - Carrowdore

**Wednesday 20th September 2023**

14:30 Food & Drink Destination Plan2023-27 Launch - Harbour & Co, Donaghadee

18:00 Launch of Respiratory Manifesto - Great Hall, Stormont

**Thursday 21st September 2023**

18:15 Annual College Awards Celebration - Strangford Integrated College

**Friday 22nd September 2023**

18:00 Photo Call - Cancer fund for children - Queen's Hall, Newtownards

19:00 50th Anniversary of Bangor & North Down Samaritans - Bangor Castle

**Monday 25th September 2023**

10:00 Photo Call - Sustainable Flags - Bangor Castle

**Wednesday 27th September 2023**

12:00 Belfast City Regional Deal Meeting - Bangor Castle

12:00 Investors in People Celebration Event - Crowne Plaza Hotel, Belfast

**Thursday 28th September 2023**

13:00 Visit to Action Mental Health Promote Advocacy Group - AMH, 6 Enterprise Rd, Conlig

**Friday 29th September 2023**

10:00                    Mental Health & Wellbeing Connecting Event - Ards Blair Mayne  
Leisure Centre

11:30                    McMillan Coffee Morning - Bangor Aurora Leisure Centre

**Saturday 30th September 2023**

10:30                    Sponsored Walk, Leukaemia & Lymphoma NI   McKee Clock,  
Bangor

## ITEM 7.5

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**ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

A hybrid meeting of the Community and Wellbeing Committee was held via Zoom on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2023 at 19:00.

**PRESENT:**

**In the Chair:** Councillor Martin

**Aldermen:** Adair Cummings  
Brooks Douglas (via zoom)

**Councillors:** Boyle Holywood  
Chambers S Irvine  
Cochrane W Irvine  
Creighton Moore  
Douglas Woods (via Zoom)

**Officers:** Director of Community and Wellbeing (G Bannister), Arts & Heritage Manager (Emily Crawford), Head of Leisure Services (I O'Neill), Head of Parks & Cemeteries (S Daye), Head of Environmental Health, Protection & Development (A Faulkner) and Democratic Services Officer (H Loebnau)

**In Attendance:** Chris Kelly, Contract Manager,  
Northern Communities Leisure Trust.

**1. APOLOGIES**

No apologies had been received.

**NOTED.**

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Chairman asked for any Declarations of Interest.

Councillors Chambers, W Irvine and Woods declared an interest in Item 32 - Northern Community Leisure Trust Quarter 1 2023-24

**NOTED.**

### **3. DEPUTATIONS**

#### **3.1. MARIE CURIE – HOW COUNCIL CAN HELP WITH TERMINAL ILLNESS**

Mr Orr presented to the Committee remotely and explained the role of Marie Curie in the Community. Research methodology provided a defined idea of poverty using the social metric commission with further details being available on the SMC's website. Using 2019 data, over 2000 individuals had experienced poverty in the last years of their life. Those who were of working age (in this case, 20-64), were twice as likely to die in poverty than someone over the age of 65. Statistics showed that one in four within this working age died of poverty in 2019 which would likely increase in the years since. Many factors contributed to reaching a poverty status such as increased utility costs directly related to the diagnosed illness or loss of income due to reduced hours, leaving jobs, childcare etcetera. This was a heavy burden that an individual's family would also suffer from. One third of those dying in poverty were not receiving the benefits they should and so Marie Curie's campaign sought to allow those of working age to avail of any benefits associated with pensionable age whilst those living on their own and paying for their own care should receive some kind of universal credit for self-help.

Mr Orr put forth two recommendations; a reduction in funeral costs through a fund and to keep terminally ill individuals and their families in the Council's thoughts when tackling isolation and wellbeing issues across the borough.

In response to questions from Alderman Cummings, Councillor W Irvine, Alderman Adair, and Councillor Hollywood, Mr Orr explained that Marie Curie had been lobbying governments and DWP who had power over some of those changes as well as speaking with local parties and shadow representatives. With tax relief and costs for furniture, Mr Orr advised that many people did not have access to it or DLA and one of the contributing factors was that they did not have a qualifying benefit to access such assistance. Unfortunately, attempts to get information from Health Trusts as to who gets equipment in their homes did not yield any fruit. Any records that did exist would be difficult to correlate and translate to a real measure of the terminally ill and in poverty. He exemplified that one person may receive palliative care for years and not be eligible but that an attempt would be made to access such information. Marie Curie had sought to make sure energy costs were reimbursed for those still living in their homes as one should not be penalized for living in what was effectively a cheapest location for care compared to a hospital bed. A meeting had taken place with key departmental officers on the same week as this committee with more planned in the hopes of lobbying as a sector. On the point of lobbying, Mr Orr suggested writing to members of parliament in Northern Ireland to let them know of the situation. With that support and local councils, a letter from Council bodies or committees would be a strong move.

Marie Curie had also been working on partnering with Compassionate Communities NI and explained to members that there were only three death-literate libraries in

Northern Ireland, all quite a distance from Ards and North Down. Those libraries had sections surrounding death and all difficulties that may be associated with it and it would be quite useful if something similar existed in the local area. Councillor Hollywood suggested the Council's own website could have some additional resources as other Councils had dedicated sections for bereavement support.

All Councillors including the chair thanked Mr Orr during the deputation for both his and the work of Marie Curie in what is an extremely important and emotionally charged area.

### **3.2. SOUND AROUND ARDS**

Alison Coyle, Secretary of Sound Around Ards joined the Committee from the public gallery and introduced the organisation. Talking newspapers had formed in 1968, an idea that was brought back from Sweden. In 1980, Sound Around Ards was formed and made recordings which were posted to listeners. It was affiliated with Talking Newspapers NI and had 33 volunteers. The productions were made in teams with three or four people including the technician, one to source articles and two readers with general news and a magazine-styled audio section. SEHSCT at Newtownards Hospital had been kind enough to allow the team to work out of one of their rooms. A track system was used to keep tabs on those who used the service to make sure they still required the service and had not moved into a care facility. Envelopes containing CDs were freepost and included freepost for return from any mailbox.

At the time of writing, there were approximately 40 listeners of mostly an older age. Referrals were received from sensory services, word of mouth and advertising. Sound Around Ards were also trying to into other areas such as stroke, dementia, nursing and residential. Given that there was estimated to be 54,600 people affected by sight loss alone in Northern Ireland, it was likely many of them had not heard of the service.

An application had been made to the National Lottery for £6.5k to replace outdated equipment as recordings were still being made on old hospital radio equipment. The money may also aid in recognising volunteers by having an anniversary dinner. In summing up, Alison Coyle spoke of increasing the database of users, length of recordings and maybe including more assistance information. She recalled one user who had stated that Talking Newspapers was sometimes the only voice they heard all day.

Some members admitted that they had never heard of Sound Around Ards before but many including Councillor S Irvine and Councillor Douglas were willing to promote its existence in their constituencies. In answer to Councillor Chambers' questions on branching out to other areas and equipment, Alison Coyle advised that Bangor had a smaller branch which at some stage may merge with Sound Around Ards to provide their services to the whole of the Borough. With regard to funding, Sound Around Ards had not approached the Trusts for help and were happy to

continue with the fundraising aspect. At the time of writing, CDs were still the medium for recordings and likely would remain so to cater to a more simplistic method for older listeners. That said, eventually technology and future elderly populations would see this method change.

Alderman Brooks had suggested moving toward Soundcast or Youtube which would enable group listening over speakers; something that Sound Around Ards would look at in the future.

Councillor Boyle asked of the low figure of listeners and whether talking to groups may be of interest. The organisation used to have 80 regular listeners at its peak with circa 60 listeners just before the pandemic. A few letters had been sent recently to different groups as well as a few engagements, so there was an interest in speaking to any other groups if Councillors were able to point them in the right direction.

Alderman Adair suggested leaving leaflets and information into libraries given their popularity amongst aging groups whilst Councillor Creighton queried using social media to bolster awareness. Alison Coyle explained that a Facebook page used to exist and it may well be an option again in the future.

Alison Coyle returned to the public gallery after thanks were given by the Committee.

#### **4. COMMUNITY & WELLBEING DIRECTORATE BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT – JUNE 2023** (FILE REF: FIN45)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing regarding the 3-month period 1 April to 30 June 2023. The net cost of the Directorate was showing an underspend of £203k (6.9%) – box A on page 3.

##### **Explanation of Variance**

Community & Wellbeing's budget performance had been further analysed on page 3 into 3 key areas:

Report	Type	Variance	Page
Report 2	Payroll Expenditure	£224k favourable	3
Report 3	Goods & Services Expenditure	£124k adverse	3
Report 4	Income	£103k favourable	3

##### **Explanation of Variance**

The Community & Wellbeing Directorate's overall variance could be summarised by the following table (variances over £15k): -

CW 13.09.2023

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Type	Variance £'000	Comment
<b>Payroll</b>	(224)	Mainly due to a number of vacant posts across the Directorate which should be filled as the year progresses.
<b>Goods &amp; Services</b>		
Community & Culture	44	Advice Services, Dispersal Funding and Guitar Festival. All offset by additional income – see below.
Parks & Cemeteries	55	Parks & Cemeteries operating costs- £45k - mainly hired equipment. Outdoor Recreation – £11k -
Leisure	26	Mainly due to new leisure system set up costs.
<b>Income</b>		
Community & Culture	(56)	Advice Services, Dispersal Funding and Guitar Festival – offsets additional spend (see above).
Parks & Cemeteries	(18)	Increased burial income.
Leisure	(17)	Leisure Centres income ahead of target.

<b>REPORT 1 BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT</b>					
Period 3 - June 2023					
	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Variance	Annual Budget	Variance
	£	£	£	£	%
<b>Community &amp; Wellbeing DIR.</b>					
100 Community & Wellbeing DIR.	52,990	53,700	(710)	213,400	(1.3)
110 Environmental Health	522,460	578,250	(55,790)	2,336,900	(9.6)
120 Community and Culture	534,127	605,500	(71,373)	2,491,100	(11.8)
140 Parks & Cemeteries	1,020,003	1,068,700	(48,697)	4,472,300	(4.6)
150 Leisure Services	631,780	658,500	(26,720)	2,690,100	(4.1)
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,761,360</b>	<b>2,964,650</b>	<b>A (203,290)</b>	<b>12,203,800</b>	<b>(6.9)</b>
<b>REPORT 2 PAYROLL REPORT</b>					
	£	£	£	£	%
<b>Community &amp; Wellbeing DIR. - Payroll</b>					
100 Community & Wellbeing DIR.	42,098	42,300	(202)	168,400	(0.5)
110 Environmental Health	622,325	666,900	(44,575)	2,679,100	(6.7)
120 Community and Culture	367,133	426,100	(58,967)	1,768,300	(13.8)
140 Parks & Cemeteries	873,594	959,100	(85,506)	3,863,100	(8.9)
150 Leisure	1,057,616	1,092,800	(35,184)	4,569,200	(3.2)
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,962,766</b>	<b>3,187,200</b>	<b>(224,434)</b>	<b>13,048,100</b>	<b>(7.0)</b>
<b>REPORT 3 GOODS &amp; SERVICES REPORT</b>					
	£	£	£	£	%
<b>Community &amp; Wellbeing DIR. - Goods &amp; Services</b>					
100 Community & Wellbeing DIR.	10,892	11,400	(508)	46,600	(4.5)
110 Environmental Health	51,407	51,250	157	265,200	0.3
120 Community and Culture	409,217	365,450	43,767	1,721,900	12.0
140 Parks & Cemeteries	274,582	219,600	54,982	1,068,200	25.0
150 Leisure	299,897	274,100	25,797	1,325,000	9.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,045,996</b>	<b>921,800</b>	<b>124,196</b>	<b>4,426,900</b>	<b>13.5</b>
<b>REPORT 4 INCOME REPORT</b>					
	£	£	£	£	%
<b>Community &amp; Wellbeing DIR. - Income</b>					
100 Community & Wellbeing DIR.	-	-	-	(1,600)	
110 Environmental Health	(151,273)	(139,900)	(11,373)	(607,400)	(8.1)
120 Community and Culture	(242,223)	(186,050)	(56,173)	(999,100)	(30.2)
140 Parks & Cemeteries	(128,174)	(110,000)	(18,174)	(459,000)	(16.5)
150 Leisure	(725,733)	(708,400)	(17,333)	(3,204,100)	(2.4)
<b>Totals</b>	<b>(1,247,402)</b>	<b>(1,144,350)</b>	<b>(103,052)</b>	<b>(5,271,200)</b>	<b>(9.0)</b>

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the report.

Proposed by Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Councillor Cochrane that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor W Irvine queried page 2's £45k temporary costs of hiring equipment in Parks and Cemeteries and the reason for Council hiring whilst Councillor Boyle asked for an update on figures concerning leisure.

The Head of Leisure Services explained that goods and services had overspent due to legacy issues when £38k had been spent when there was no budget. However, they were £10k underspent for this quarter of 2023-24. They were above the target for income. Additional income was not shown as it was still being worked on and the



Finance team had been contacted. In addition, £100k of VAT was not shown on the report which had been secured for Council so in fact, they were £100k above what was stated. This figure was in addition to the figure of £17k shown and would be reported on in the future. The Head of Leisure Services explained that figures were better than the report showed and would be on track for the year.

Councillor Woods queried dispersal funding in Community & Culture, specifically what the £56k income was and on page 2's Goods/Services, where the additional income came from. The Arts and Heritage Manager explained that the guitar festival started early in the financial year and as such, the majority of sales may show in the previous financial year, therefore sales from this year would show in the coming financial year. The Director of Community & Wellbeing added that there had been a dispersal funding opportunity in supporting migrants and additional grant funding for CAAND and though more therefore had been spent than budgeted for, this was because it was being off set by additional grants in both cases. As for posts within the department, the vacancy management process had ended meaning any future posts would not be subject to its constrictions, but there would be a period of catch up.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Councillor Cochrane, that the recommendation be adopted.**

## **5. ITEM WITHDRAWN**

As the item was withdrawn, Councillor Martin moved to Item 6.

**NOTED.**

## **6. TRIAL OF DOGS IN THE COURTYARD AT NORTH DOWN MUSEUM (FILE REF: HER 15 09/23)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing on this scheme which was trialled initially for July and August 2022 to allow dogs into the courtyard at North Down Museum, to facilitate dog owners visiting the coffee shop. This was extended for one year until June 2023 to allow assessment of the impact of winter conditions and the return of pre-Covid-19 footfall to the Museum.

As the original report agreed in June 2022 stated, dogs were not permitted into North Down Museum, or Coffee Cure, only into the courtyard at North Down Museum. The trial period was introduced when a one-way system was still in place at the tail end of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Museum was a lot quieter then than it had become. Originally dogs could be walked through reception, up a small flight of steps and out into the courtyard. This quickly became unfeasible when the lifting of Covid-19

restrictions meant the one-way system was removed and dogs with owners could easily make their way into the galleries.

During wet spells, dogs were coming in wet and mucky and shaking off inside. The steps were also regularly left wet causing a slip hazard for both the customers and animals. At this stage it was agreed that dogs would have to enter via the courtyard gates that remain locked when the Museum is open due to security risks.

All visitors must enter the Museum via reception so that they can be met/counted and staff could have a knowledge of who/how many people are in the building for performance management reasons and evacuation purposes. This meant that each time a visiting dog arrived, a member of staff had to leave their post at reception to open and close the gates for them. This was extremely resource heavy.

The trial had been largely well received by dog owners; however, other visitors had complained about the policy. The primary reason was due to fear of dogs, particularly from children and those with autism, and concerns around hygiene, cleanliness and allergies were also highlighted. While Coffee Cure has potentially benefitted from attracting some new customers, the museum had experienced negative effects from the implementation of this policy. These are detailed in *Appendix* attached.

The museum, at the time of writing was actioning an accessibility plan in line with current accreditation standards. Part of this was to make the museum more welcoming to SEND individuals (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities). The museum had developed an adult education programme with fortnightly visits from groups of individuals with learning difficulties.

A new scheme for SEND children was due to launch at the start of October. The presence of dogs in the museum and courtyard could be problematic for individuals with these particular needs. The use of the courtyard for school's visits was therefore restricted and access to the space was required for increasing numbers of school groups. Schools had to be notified of the presence of dogs which may have discouraged parents of children who were nervous around dogs from visiting the museum.

Coffee Cure had stated that they have received abuse from museum customers when asked not to bring their dogs through to the café. Some owners were refusing to put their dogs on leads and regularly dogs were left unattended and not tied up while their owners order food, despite staff reminding customers of the policy. They reported that 80-90% of dog owners only purchased coffees, and the financial benefit was minimal. Coffee Cure welcomed dogs to their concession in the Walled Garden and therefore an alternative was available.

The café had been an excellent addition to the visitor experience in the museum however, clients who were only visiting the café and wished to do so with their pet

should not be prioritised over museum visitors. Inhibiting the museums' ability to use the courtyard and having dogs encroach on the museum building had been affecting the ability to deliver a museum service to the community.

A public survey remained open on the Council's website between 25.06.22 and 30.06.23 asking if dogs should be permitted in the courtyard. In total there were 234 respondents:

- 197 or 84.19% were in favour
- 37 or 15.81% were against

Although the figures in favour are higher – most of the comments carried a caveat e.g., *'as long as the dog is well behaved and kept on a lead'* or *'as long as the dog doesn't bark or isn't aggressive'* and these caveats were not always being met.

Those against were smaller in number but had very strong responses/reactions e.g., *'if this is made permanent, we won't be back'* and *'Dogs barked the whole time we were there'*.

If the yearlong trial allowing dogs into the courtyard at North Down Museum were to be made a permanent policy an additional full-time Museum Attendant is required to attend to dog owners entering the museum courtyard. The cost of a full-time post at grade 1C would cost in the region of £28,400 pa.

In addition, the division of the courtyard into a small 'dog friendly' area would be required to permit school groups to still use the space.

RECOMMENDED that Council agree, due to pressures on resources, non-compliance by some dog owners and the security of the collection and risk to accreditation, that the current policy is retained and dogs are not permitted into the courtyard at North Down Museum, and that patrons with dogs instead are encouraged to avail of the coffee shop service in the Walled Garden.

Councillor W Irvine did not wish for the accreditation of the museum to be put at risk but was curious as to whether some alternatives existed rather than abolishment of dog walkers in the courtyard such as signs directing visitors with dogs to the other entrance, whilst Alderman Brooks expressed disappointment with the result of the trial and recommendation before members. The Arts & Heritage Manager explained the reasoning for the recommendation being that the gate to the courtyard had to remain locked for security purposes associated to museum accreditation. In order for the gate to be manned when required for dog walkers, it placed a strain on human resources in the museum. In addition, issues had also arose of some dog walkers not waiting for the gate to be opened, and instead choosing to walk through the museum access way to the courtyard with a dog that may have been muddy from a walk. The Director of Community & Wellbeing added that a bylaw existed which stated dogs were not permitted in the courtyard and that the last year had merely

been a trial to test the waters. If there was no approval for the recommendation, Council would revert to the bylaw which would terminate the trial and as such, the end result would be stoppage of dogs in the courtyard either way unless an alternative recommendation was presented.

Proposed by Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Councillor S Irvine, that an alternative recommendation be made; to propose an extension of the initial trial for a period of six months.

Councillor W Irvine discussed the merits of allowing dog walkers into the courtyard such as an added income and perhaps there may be some way to try and assist staff with access via the main gate with signage regarding dogs being kept on leads at all times. As such, a six-month extension would allow that to be tested further.

Councillor Woods added that a six month extension would mean committing more staff resources and if any kind of equality assessment had taken place.

Alderman Douglas wanted it noted that she was not in support of the new proposal. In a non-recorded vote of 5 FOR and 8 AGAINST, the alternative proposal fell.

Proposed by Councillor Boyle, seconded by Councillor Creighton, that the original recommendation be adopted.

In a second non-recorded vote with 9 voting FOR and 5 AGAINST, the original recommendation was agreed.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Boyle, seconded by Councillor Creighton, with 9 voting FOR and 5 AGAINST, that the recommendation be adopted.**

## **7. PCSP ANNUAL REPORTS 2022-23** **(FILE REF: ANDBC/PCSP 87)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing which advised of AND PCSP being required under the Local Government Justice Act (2011) to submit an Annual report to the Joint Committee of the NI Policing Board and Department of Justice.  
A copy of the report had been attached for information.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the report.  
Proposed by Alderman Cummings, seconded by Councillor Woods, that the recommendation be adopted.

Alderman Cummings reminded Members that a recruitment process had opened for independent PCSP Members whilst Councillor Woods suggested amending the recommendation to include;

*"It is recommended that Council notes the report and issues a thank you letter to Alan McCay who has recently retired as PCSP Manager, thanking him for his lengthy service."*

Alderman Cummings had advised that such a letter was already going to be presented to Mr McCay but that he was happy with the change and it was agreed that the Chair of the committee, Councillor Martin would write the letter.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Cummings, seconded by Councillor Woods, that the recommendation be adopted and in addition, that a thank you letter be sent to Mr McCay.**

## **8. GOOD RELATIONS ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023** (FILE REF: GREL 424)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing which outlined the work of the section in delivering the Good Relations Action Plan for 2022-2023.

The Good Relations section was externally funded with 75% from the Executive Office and 25% by Council. The total Good Relations budget for 2022-2023 was £226,738.

The Good Relations Strategy (2019-2022) informed an annual action plan, which was submitted to the Executive Office for assessment. The Action Plan had been based on the four key themes of the Executives Strategy Together Building United Communities:

- Children and Young People
- Shared community
- Safe Community
- Cultural Expression

The Good Relations sections worked closely with PCSP, PEACE and Community Development sections to avoid duplication and ensure a cohesive delivery of programmes to the community.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the report.

Proposed by Councillor Boyle, seconded by Alderman Douglas, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor Boyle welcomed the report and spoke of the benefits in cross-community events such as schools brought to the battlefields in Belgium and the life-long friendships that would otherwise never occur. Alderman Douglas agreed, adding special thanks to the staff team. As Mayor, she had the privilege of attending events with asylum seekers, a holocaust survivor and attending an open day at Grange Park Primary.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Boyle, seconded by Alderman Douglas, that the recommendation be adopted.**

## **9. PEACEPLUS PARTNERSHIP MINUTES**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Minutes from workshops of the Ards and North Down Borough Council PEACEPLUS Partnership which was held either on TEAMS or in Ards Blair Mayne Wellbeing and Leisure Complex, Newtownards on the following dates:

9<sup>th</sup> February 2023

9<sup>th</sup> March 2023

4<sup>th</sup> April 2023

20<sup>th</sup> April

4<sup>th</sup> May 2023

11<sup>th</sup> May 2023

The minutes were attached as Appendices 1-6

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the minutes.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Adair, seconded by Alderman Douglas, that the recommendation be adopted.**

## **10. ARDS AND NORTH DOWN SPORTS FORUM GRANTS** (FILE REF: SD149)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing which advised Members would have been aware that on the 26 August 2015 Council delegated authority to the Ards and North Down Sports Forum, in order to allow it to administer sports grants funding on behalf of the Council. £45,000 had been allocated within the 2023/2024 revenue budget for this purpose.

The Council had further authorised the Forum under delegated powers to award grants of up to £250. Grants above £250 still required Council approval. In addition, the Council requested that regular updates were reported to members.

During July 2023, the Forum received a total of 18 applications: 3 Equipment, 1 Goldcard and 14 Travel/Accommodation). A summary of the 17 successful

applications are detailed in the attached Successful Equipment, Successful Goldcard and Successful Travel & Accommodation Appendices.

For information, the annual budget and spend to date on grant categories was as follows:

	Annual Budget	Funding Awarded July 2023	Remaining Budget
Anniversary	£1,000	£0	£250
Coaching	£3,000	£0	£2,103.75
Equipment	£14,000	*£1720	£9,807.24
Events	£6,000	£0	£968.00
Seeding	£500	£0	£305.01
Travel and Accommodation	£14,500	*£1,910.00	£1,758.29
Discretionary	£1,000	£0	£1,000
Schools/Sports Club Pathway	£5,000	£0	£4,500
*Goldcards proposed during the period July 2023 is 1 (11 Goldcards in total during 2023/24).			

\* \*The proposed remaining budget for Equipment of **£9,807.24** was based on a proposed award of **£1720.00** – for Approval. \*The proposed remaining budget for Travel and Accommodation of **£1,758.29** was based on a proposed award of **£1,910.00** – for Noting and Reclaimed/Withdrawn costs of £202.20.

RECOMMENDED that Council approves the attached applications for financial assistance for sporting purposes valued at above £250, and that the applications approved by the Forum (valued at below £250) are noted.

Proposed by Councillor Boyle, seconded by Councillor S Irvine, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor Boyle thanked all those involved in the North Down Sports Forum for their hard work.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Boyle, seconded by Councillor S Irvine, that the recommendation be adopted.**

## **11. ARDS AND NORTH DOWN SPORTS CAPITAL GRANTS** (FILE REF: SD150)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing which asked Members to recall that the Sports Development Capital Grant Scheme would have historically opened for two tranches within any one financial year however in 2020/21 only one tranche was delivered due to Covid, with the process having proved very successful. It was then proposed that the process of one

tranche would continue and be kept under review. Therefore, this year's 2023/2024 Capital Grants programme opened on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2023 and closed on Monday 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023 with an approved budget of £45,000 for 2023/24.

The Council received 12 applications; all of which were received before the deadline time of 12 Noon. No applications came in after the deadline.

Eligibility screening of the 12 applications was carried out and all applications met the eligibility criteria.

The 12 applications were then assessed against the following criteria:

1. Benefits to the club/organisation and the local community; clearly detailing anticipated outcomes of the proposed project
2. Increasing Participation
3. Increasing participation within key target groups: Women and girls, disability, over 50's and socially disadvantaged areas/groups
4. Improving and/or sustaining activities within the club setting; and
5. Improving the health and wellbeing of club members and/or wider community.

Applications were assessed by the Sports and Recreation Development Officer, NCLT/Serco's Sports Development Officer, the Outdoor and Recreation Facilities Officer and Age Friendly co-ordinator.

Eleven applications scored above the minimum threshold for funding and therefore are all proposed for funding subject to project management requirements being met where applicable and as highlighted in Appendix 1 (planning / Land Agreement conditions). The 11 successful applications requested a total of £40,649.75 and it was proposed to award £39,746.75. The only anomaly related to VAT. By providing this support, a total of over £87,000 of capital investment was to be secured for local sport. The Clubs commitment to self-fund their contributions to such a significant amount was to be applauded and recognised.

It should be noted that the quality of submissions and the detailed success of the local Clubs in completing this process was also extremely significant and highlighted both the demand for this level of support from Council and the continuing benefit of the work done by the Sports development team in assisting Clubs through this process.

It was proposed that the underspend of £5,253.25 may be utilised by the Sports Development team to offset the overspend in delivering unfunded elements of the service which otherwise may not have been deliverable this financial year.



RECOMMENDED that the Council approves the decisions of the Assessment Panel which are listed in Appendix 1 Successful Applications and Appendix 2 Unsuccessful Applications.

Furthermore, it is recommended that the underspend detailed above is utilised for other sports development schemes during this financial year.

Therefore, the total awarded funding for 2023/2024 Capital Grants is £39,746.75 subject to Project Management Requirements being met.

Proposed by Councillor Boyle, seconded by Councillor W Irvine, that the recommendation be adopted.

Both Councillors' Boyle and W Irvine expressed thanks for the report.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Boyle, seconded by Councillor W Irvine, that the recommendation be adopted.**

## **12. ITEM WITHDRAWN**

As the item was withdrawn, Councillor Martin moved to Item 13.

**NOTED.**

## **13. UPDATE ON ASHBURY PLAYPARK (FILE REF: CW4)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing Under the legacy North Down Borough Council Playpark Strategy 2014 and the more recent Play Strategy in 2021, the East Bangor area was identified as having a lack of play park provision. An area around Ashbury Avenue (Ashbury shops) and Linear Park was identified as being the best location to locate a play park in this area to serve the local population. A Public Consultation exercise was undertaken in 2019 to determine the preferred site. The sites considered were a site located on the grass area to the front of the shops (Site A) and another site in Linear Park (Site B).

The results were that 42% of respondents favoured Site A and 46% favoured Site B with 3% having no preference and 9% didn't specify a preferred location. At a subsequent Council meeting in August 2020, it was determined that the play park should be delivered at Site A, in front of the shops.

Negotiations began with the landowners as well as Land and Property Service to establish if the land could be obtained to deliver the Play Park and under what conditions. The landowners had aspirations of extending their commercial units at

the site and following lengthy negotiations it was finally agreed that they would submit a planning application for their commercial extension. This application included additional commercial units, an extension of the car park and the Play Park.

The Play Park was designed by the Council's contracted Play Park designer in line with the normal Council specifications and the drawings were issued to the landowner's agent for inclusion in the planning application. Council also paid the element of the planning fee attributable to the Play Park (£848). Indication was given by the landowners that when they receive their planning permission, they would then transfer the land needed for the play park to Council and Council would deliver the Play Park. The conditions of the land transfer will be determined at that point.

The planning application was submitted on 20th July 2022:

**LA06/2022/0750/F: Two class 1 shop units and 1 hot food unit to the ground floor and first floor accommodation for use as class B1(a) or class A2 financial professional and other service use with associated car parking and children's play area.**

At the November 2022 & March 2023 Community & Wellbeing Committee, Officers updated Members. As previously reported, NI Water requested an assessment of the network capacity in the area. The landowners Agent had been liaising with NI Water to resolve this issue.

NI Water had sent their report on their Wastewater Impact Assessment to the applicant (landowner). It was received by the landowner on 21st April 2023 and its recommendations were valid for 18 months.

A further report had since been commissioned by the landowner in order to address the recommendations in the NI Water report. This required further investigations to be undertaken along with recommendations for further work, especially in relation to stormwater offsetting (SWO) solutions etc.

**NI Water stated:**

**Once the SWO location has been confirmed with NI Water Clerk of Works on site, then developer will need to provide detailed design to demonstrate how SWO will be completed, and confirm that all consents are in place as detailed in Section 6 of the SER. We would advise that before our Clerk of Works visits the site that the necessary onsite investigation are completed. The visit by our Clerk of works can be arranged by contacting the Impact Assessments Team.**

**Under certain circumstances there may be a requirement for the developer to undertake a habitat regulations assessment. NI Water may need to complete**

**modelling to determine if the solution meets the requirements of a no detriment solution.**

**When NI Water are satisfied that there is a suitable solution can be completed on site and the proposed solution is in line with the NIEA agreement, then we can agree to release of the Article 161.**

**Only once the solution has been agreed with NI Water and all third-party consents are in place will we be in a position to agree a positive response to the planning application associated with the development.**

Therefore, until this issue has been resolved to the satisfaction of NI Water and they advise the planners that they are content, the planning application cannot be determined by the planners.

The issue relating to the open space raised by the planners that was previously reported, has generally been resolved following direction received from the Local Development Plan Team. They stated that the Local Development Plan is not at an advanced enough stage to merit it being a material consideration in relation to this planning application and the potential for this area to be classified as open space. They did state that further points of clarification relating to the retail and office use may be required.

The Play Park could not therefore be delivered until the planning process had been completed. The terms of the transfer would then be determined, and the legal transfer process would need to be undertaken. Should the application not be successful then further negotiations would be required.

**RECOMMENDED** that the Council note that the Play Park cannot be delivered until the planning application has been determined.

Proposed by Councillor Chambers, seconded by Councillor Cochrane, that the that an alternative recommendation be adopted.

It is recommended that council note that the playpark cannot be delivered until the planning application has been determined. Officers, in the meantime, will return a report to this Committee, detailing alternative options in the event of the current plans not being progressed and that Council Officers meet with NI Water and the developer for an on-site meeting to address the drainage issues.

Councillor Chambers noted that the Ashbury Playpark discussion had been ongoing for quite some time and was curious if a Plan B existed in the event that a planning application did not succeed whilst Alderman Adair recalled other instances where he believed an agreement had been made with NI water only to stall and believed NI Water had to be lobbied to deliver on community projects.

Councillor Creighton thanked officers for the report and noted that her colleagues, Councillor Irwin and Andrew Muir MLA had worked hard on moving the issue forward.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Chambers, seconded by Councillor Cochrane, that an alternative recommendation be adopted, that council note that the playpark cannot be delivered until the planning application has been determined. Officers, in the meantime, will return a report to this Committee, detailing alternative options in the event of the current plans not being progressed and that Council Officers meet with NI Water and the developer for an on-site meeting to address the drainage issues.**

#### **14. GREEN FLAG AWARDS** **(FILE REF: PCA12)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing which advised that Members would have recalled approval was given to put five sites forward for assessment under the Green Flag Award Scheme in 2023. The Green Flag Award scheme was the benchmark national standard for parks and green spaces in the UK.

The Green Flag Award Scheme encouraged high environmental performance and good management. Parks and green spaces were judged against following eight key criteria:

- Welcoming Place
- Healthy, Safe and Secure
- Clean and Well Maintained
- Sustainability
- Conservation and Heritage
- Community Involvement
- Marketing
- Overall Management

The judging criteria also considered the fact that each park/green space offered different kinds of facilities and would be managed and developed to varying opportunities and constraints. Innovation and the way facilities offered were tailored to the needs of the community would also be taken into account.

The following sites were put forward in 2022 for assessment in 2023:

1. Kiltonga Nature Reserve
2. Castle Park including Walled Garden
3. Ballymenoch Park
4. Linear Park

## 5. Kiltonga Nature Reserve

Judging was carried out at the end of June 2023, and Officers were pleased to report that all sites had been deemed to meet the appropriate criteria and were awarded Green Flag status accordingly.

Holding a Green Flag Award brought with it a vast amount of prestige. It was an excellent example of civic achievement and provides communities with a great sense of civic pride. Winning a Green Flag Award visibly demonstrated to the local community that a site was being well managed for the benefit of the local community and local wildlife.

Having a Green Flag Award was also a great attraction for tourism as research showed that people would make special trips to award-winning sites, and an excellent lever for obtaining external funding through improvement grants and maximising revenue opportunities from within the site.

The Parks & Cemetery Service envisaged that working towards future Green Flag status would reinforce our management strategies and help us identify any improvements needed.

When a site was well managed, via The Green Flag Award Management Plan, it could encourage the local community to use the site more which was important as numerous studies had linked both physical health and mental health to access to outdoor space. Mid and East Antrim was committed to promoting health by providing sites where people could exercise, play, learn and relax in an outdoor environment.

The accreditation of sites for Green Flag was a performance measurement element within the Parks and Cemeteries Service Plan. However, following the decision to remove green flag participation as part of setting the years' budget at the time of writing, no applications were to be made for the 2024 campaign and the above sites would lose their green flag status when up for renewal.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council notes the contents of the report.

Proposed by Councillor Woods, seconded by Councillor Chambers, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor Woods congratulated officers for their efforts in the past in acquiring Green Flag status for play parks. That said, she was disappointed decisions made during the rates setting had meant the Council would lose accreditation of these sites. The Head of Leisure Services explained that a sum of £1500 had been taken out of the budget (£500 per flag) during the cost saving exercise. Councillors Woods and Chambers agreed that was a small amount of money compared to the benefits that came with the accreditation,

Alderman Douglas expressed her thanks for the staff and to the communities involved who had made the accreditation possible.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Woods, seconded by Councillor Chambers, that the recommendation be adopted.**

## **15. PLAYPARK LOCKING UPDATE** (FILE REF: PCA 37)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing which explained that internal discussions had been ongoing for some time around the security arrangements for certain Council facilities including seven play parks. Previously the securing of these sites was undertaken by an external contractor at an annual cost of £28,500. However, in 2020, gate locking was brought inhouse after the external contractor withdrew and was fulfilled by the Council's Neighbourhood Environment Team (NET), with that budget being transferred to the NET Team. However, it became apparent that it was detracting from their main enforcement role and therefore a different approach was required.

The locking of sites was a legacy North Down Borough Council approach. There were 80 play areas across the Borough including Play Parks, Multi Use Games Areas (MUGA's), Skate Parks and Pumps Tracks, up until April 1st 2022 only seven of them, all of which were in Bangor, were being locked.

Those Play Parks were:

1. Bloomfield
2. Clandeboye
3. Green Road (Breezemount Park)
4. Kilcooley Community Centre
5. Kilcooley Square
6. Rathgill
7. Ward Park

Locking of those seven Play Parks ceased in early 2022. The locations of the remaining seven Play Parks that were being locked up to that time were in similar settings as many others across the Borough, where generally no issues occurred. Therefore, it was considered that the continued approach of locking them could not be justified and that they should be brought in line with the remaining 73 play areas which were not locked, and which did not experience any adverse issues as a result.

The issue of Play Parks locking was raised by a Council Officer at the quarterly 11 Council Play Development Officers meeting facilitated by Playboard NI. Six Councils were represented at that meeting. Those in attendance confirmed that they did not generally lock any of their playgrounds or MUGA's. Only two Councils said that they closed three and five of their playgrounds respectively and that this opening/closing

was at the insistence of constituted local Community groups and that the groups themselves facilitated the opening/closing through a Service Level Agreement with the Council. Most of the Council's that were not at that meeting did not lock any of their playgrounds.

### Issues Raised

The above seven Play Parks were left open from April 2022. Evidence gathered by the Council did not reflect any significant issues occurring as a result (attached). However, concerns were raised by the following:

- Clandeboye Community Association raised concerns over Anti-Social Behaviour and dog fouling in and around the MUGA and then the playground.
- Bloomfield Community Association also raised issues of Anti-Social Behaviour at the playground.
- An individual residing adjacent to Ward Park raised concerns of Anti-Social Behaviour.

As a result of these concerns being raised the following Notions of Motion and Council decisions were put forward:

A Notice of Motion was agreed at April 2022 Council meeting: **"That this Council notes with the concern the recent decision taken to no longer lock playgrounds in the Borough. That a report is brought back on the matter that will look at maintaining a locking up schedule that will include the Bloomfield and Rathgill playparks."**

An amendment was then agreed at the May 2022 Council meeting (amendments underlined):

**"That this Council notes with the concern the recent decision taken to no longer lock playgrounds & MUGAs in the Borough. That a report is brought back on the matter that will look at maintaining a locking up schedule that will include the Bloomfield & Rathgill playparks and the playpark and MUGA at Clandeboye".**

At the Council meeting in October 2022, a further decision was made by the Council to note the report presented to that meeting and **"Expressing concern with the reports of anti-social behaviour that is ongoing in and around Playparks. Furthermore, that Council agrees to carry out local consultation before taking a decision on the locking up of the seven playparks identified in the North Down area "**.

Subsequent to this, a further decision was taken following a proposal by several Elected Members at the Council meeting in February 2023, **"to lock the playparks at Clandeboye and Bloomfield at night on a trial basis for six months, starting as soon as possible"**.

The locking of the Play Park and MUGA at Clandeboye and the Play Park at Bloomfield began at the start of March 2023 and was initially facilitated by an agency staff member and the Parks and Cemeteries Rangers, but this was not sustainable on a permanent basis. A quotation process was used to external security companies who specialised in securing premises and Manguard Plus were appointed to carry out the opening and closing of the premises, they began this on 12 June 2023.

### Evidence

The attached Play Park Logs spreadsheet detailed the logs of repairs at each site by Assets and Property. It should be noted that logs referring to general maintenance such as bearing replacements, lubrication of equipment etc had not been included. While some of the incidents were clearly as a result of vandalism, some had been general wear and tear especially in relation to the rubber safety surfacing which generally experienced fails across many sites each year. There were specific circumstances surrounding the defecation issues at Kilcooley Community Centre, whereby local advice suggested that this was attributable to an individual who was over 18 with learning disabilities. Anything logged prior to April 2022, occurred while the Play Parks were still being locked. Any that occurred at Clandeboye and Bloomfield post March 2023, also occurred while they were being locked. The incidents of graffiti logged by the Neighbourhood Environment Team (NET) were also noted as was the number of reports of ASB logged by the Community Safety Team (CST). The evidence demonstrated that incidents of damage to the Play Parks as a result of vandalism were generally very low, as was the reports of graffiti to NET or ASB to CST.

### Community Consultation

In order to garner the views of residents who lived in the direct vicinity of the playgrounds, Officers conducted a door-to-door survey around each location. The Clandeboye, Bloomfield, Ward Park, Kilcooley Square, Kilcooley Community Centre surveys were carried out on Monday 7 August, Breezemount 10 August and Rathgill 12 August. The responses had been summarised as follows.

Playground	Number of houses surrounding the site	Number of responses gathered	Number of responses that raised ASB as an issue	Other issues raised
Clandeboye (Currently locked)  Clandeboye Road, Avonlea Park,	91	26	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dog Fouling</li> <li>• Good for children</li> <li>• Youths gather at the substation and in the trees</li> <li>• Litter</li> <li>• Did away with the bonfire</li> </ul>



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Church Drive, Church Avenue, Chester Park, Shrewsbury Drive.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Football pitch could be improved</li> <li>No issues</li> <li>Would be good if it was left open so that nan autistic child could use when its not busy</li> <li>Nice to see the kids having fun</li> </ul>
Bloomfield (Currently locked)  Primacy Park, Ballyminetragh Gardens, Bloomfield Link, Ballyree Drive, Bloomfield Walk, Primacy Walk,	59	29	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No issues</li> <li>Older ones hang out in it but there is no bother</li> <li>Litter</li> <li>Didn't think it got locked</li> <li>Dog fouling</li> <li>Bad language of older children</li> <li>Keeps children occupied</li> <li>Need more for older children</li> </ul>
Ward Park (Not locked)  Moira Drive	17	11	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Could be refurbished</li> <li>Ward Park in general needs investment</li> <li>Need something for older children</li> <li>Good for children</li> <li>Need more equipment for children 6-12 years old</li> </ul>
Kilcooley Square (Not locked)  Ballynoe Gardens, Craigboy Park, Drumawhey Gardens	21	7	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Well used by the local children</li> <li>Older kids do hang out in it but cause no issues, they need somewhere to go</li> <li>Could do with a revamp (it is due to get refurbished in September)</li> </ul>
Kilcooley Community Centre (Not locked)	55	22	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kids climb over the roof to get into it even when it is locked</li> <li>Need something for older kids in the area</li> <li>Good to have in the area</li> </ul>

Ganaway Avenue, Kilclief Gardens, Ballywalter Gardens, Clandeboye Close, Owenroe Drive, Kearney Gardens.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gets a bit of abuse/equipment and surface gets damaged</li> <li>• Gets very busy and its small</li> <li>• Kids on scooters/bikes damage the surfacing</li> <li>• No issues</li> <li>• Needs better maintenance</li> <li>• Don't need it</li> <li>• litter</li> </ul>
Rathgill (Not locked)  Rathgill Park, Rathgill Grove.	27	15	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needs upgraded</li> <li>• Litter</li> <li>• No issues</li> <li>• Need something for older children</li> </ul>
The Green (Breezemount Grove) (Not locked)  Green Road, Breezemount Grove, Breezemount Park.	34	15	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could be bigger</li> <li>• Needs refurbished</li> <li>• Litter</li> <li>• Youths climb the gates</li> <li>• Vandalism</li> <li>• Youth kick ball on Community Centre shutter making noise</li> </ul>

While a number of people raised concerns over ASB this was very much in the minority at each site and therefore did not demonstrate that there were significant issues associated with any of the above locations.

### Multi Agency Team

The CST in partnership with the PSNI, Education Authority, YMCA, Street Pastors etc monitored areas of concern throughout the Borough, including Bangor in a bid to address any ASB. Locking playgrounds may move the ASB from that area but would result in such behaviour moving elsewhere, it didn't directly address the issue. It was believed that engagement with the young people by the multi-agency team was considered a more proactive, effective approach in dealing with ASB etc.

The general consensus between the multi-agency team, who are very experienced in dealing with young people as that they do tend to consider play areas as 'safe spaces' albeit they no longer 'play' in playgrounds (whereas Skate Parks, MUGA's and Pump Tracks are targeted towards older children). So, they could in some instances gravitate towards them to 'hang out' or to escape from an unstable home

situation etc. It was not true to say that this then always translated into anti-social behaviour.

While there were occasions of littering and damage across our play area portfolio in the Borough this was not generally attributable to older children misusing the facilities, in terms of equipment damage it was mainly due to general wear and tear. The Play Parks were inspected every ten days by the Assets and Property Team and any defects were logged and actioned. If an issue had been brought to our attention between those inspections via Councils Parks Team (who attended the sites on a regular basis), the public or Elected Members, it was actioned accordingly in terms of level of urgency with issues such as broken equipment or glass being given the highest priority for action by the relevant teams. It should be noted that on occasion there were instances of littering or damage to those play areas that were locked, it simply occurred outside the times that they were locked, therefore demonstrating that locking play parks did not prevent issues occurring. Overall, any issues occurring were generally intermittent and not specific to any particular play areas.

### **Costs**

The cost of the locking up contract at the time of writing was over £1000 per week. To extend this Contract would have cost approximately £11,700 per site per year as rates stood at the time of writing, however, a tender process would need to be started (due to procurement threshold policy) should this policy be continued or extended in anyway.

RECOMMENDED that the Council, based on the evidence gathered that there are no overriding reasons to continue locking the play facilities at these two locations and that the approach should be rationalised in line with that across the Borough where no play facility is locked.

Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Councillor Hollywood put forward an alternative proposal.

*'That this Council notes with concern the ongoing anti-social behaviour at a number of playparks in the Bangor area and listens to the clear wish expressed by community groups for the locking up of playparks at Clandeboye, Bloomfield and Rathgill. Therefore, we commence locking up at the aforementioned playparks with immediate effect from within existing budgets and review the terms and conditions of any external contract to ensure value for money.'*

Councillor W Irvine thanked Councillor Woods for her input to the alternative proposal whilst raising concerns about the amount of money being spent on what should be a small job. Clandeboye, Bloomfield and Rathgill community groups had lobbied Councillors in relation to damage, anti-social behaviour and noise resulting from the decision to not lock play parks. Councillor Hollywood agreed and queried expenses of using agencies before Manguard was appointed, adding that the level of

anti-social behaviour was more significant than the consultation had suggested with reference made to a family member who had to leave their home as a result. Councillor Chambers also agreed with Councillors' statements and suggested there was no context or background to questions asked during the consultation whilst Councillor Woods added that there was no one size fits all approach.

The Head of Parks & Cemeteries explained that £1k per week covered seven sites including Linear Park and cemeteries. Council staff had carried out those duties but any extension to the opening of sites had meant moving toward a contract with prices accessed for solely play parks and another for all sites with a £6k saving in carrying out the latter rather than the former. He added that Parks and Cemeteries could not employ more staff as it was not only out of hours with split shift patterns but there was no specific budget at present. As the procurement process demonstrated, this contractor option was the cheapest available from those who were able to do the work. He had met with several groups and informal groups, the fruits of which informed what questions should be asked in the consultation questionnaires. It had been clear that parks which were locked still had issues with vandalism regardless whilst other issues occurring were in the areas surrounding the play parks, hence the recommendation.

When asked by Councillor Woods whether this had been a door-to-door red line scenario and what groups had been met with, the Head of Parks & Cemeteries advised that no red line existed and that issues of antisocial behaviour at locations such as Clandeboye were outside of the playpark itself and in the surrounding areas. He had met with constituted groups, umbrella groups and informal groups. Councillor Creighton suggested that the results of the questionnaires may not have been adequate if a door canvassing was the only method of catchment and asked if overtime had been considered prior to agency work. The Head of Parks & Cemeteries explained that it had been unsustainable when Council staff had been locking playparks. Whilst overtime did exist, some events that were planned had to be cancelled as existing staff such as Park Rangers had to carry out locking duties instead.

Councillor S Irvine queried if a keyholder from local communities may be a viable solution, given that similar duties had been bestowed on some residents in Newtownards for buildings. The Head of Parks & Cemeteries advised this had been tried before and that during his work in other Councils, there were numerous issues relating to community keyholders such as child safety and even threats against keyholders themselves.

Alderman Douglas suggested having those who opened nearby toilets include the locking of parks in their routines, though the Director of Community & Wellbeing had already been in discussions with the Director of Environment regarding that very same suggestion. The toilet attendants were very busy working between toilets which did not consist of just locking and unlocking but also cleaning across the whole Borough and thus the possibility of adding additional responsibilities was not going to

be possible. Alderman Douglas thought it would be wise to revisit the suggestion based on feedback from representatives of various community groups and encouraged officers to reengage.

Councillor Boyle spoke of how Councillors, as elected members, should pay close attention to community leaders and activists and that there were many views of what was deemed antisocial behaviour. Whilst he agreed the consultation that had been carried out was important, he too was concerned if it had been wide enough and referenced a line in the report that stated Councils did not generally lock playparks; contrary to two other Council areas that he knew did.

When asked what groups had been met with, the Head of Parks & Cemeteries recalled two, the Clandeboye Association and Ward Park Residents but would contact members with a complete list.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Councillor Holywood, that the following alternative recommendation be adopted; That this Council notes with concern the ongoing anti-social behaviour at a number of playparks in the Bangor area and listens to the clear wish expressed by community groups for the locking up of playparks at Clandeboye, Bloomfield and Rathgill. Therefore, we commence locking up at the aforementioned playparks with immediate effect from within existing budgets and reviews the terms and conditions of any external contract to ensure value for money.**

#### **16. NORTH DOWN COASTAL PATH TASK & FINISH WORKING GROUP (FILE REF: PCA 122)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing which explained that in January 2023, Elected Members decided to abandon the Kinnegar to Donaghadee Greenway Scheme and instead agreed to set up a Task & Finish Working Group to address issues of connectivity, access and maintenance along the North Down Coastal Path. This report proposes that Council appoints members to this Working Group in order to progress this decision.

#### **Background**

In 2016 Council agreed to develop a Greenway network in partnership with DFI, based on its strategy "Exercise, Explore and Enjoy. A Strategic Plan for Greenways" see link: <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/exercise-explore-enjoy-strategic-plan-greenways>. The Strategic Plan for Greenways was the first step towards creating a world class greenway network. This plan set out proposals for a 1,000km greenway network across Northern Ireland divided into a 400km Primary Greenway Network and a 600km Secondary Greenway Network. The Comber Greenway that existed formed part of the Primary Greenway network. 'Exercise – Explore – Enjoy' provided a vision and framework for a more strategic programme to develop greenway routes across Northern Ireland. It underscored the significant

contribution which greenways could make to the Executive's draft Programme for Government Framework 2016 – 21. However, it also highlighted the key role that local government had in the delivery of the greenway network considering their responsibilities for recreation and green spaces.

The Council agreed to develop feasibility studies and business plans, and through the 'Perfect Circle Procurement Contract' engaged Sustrans and AECOM who would work with Council Officers on designs and community engagement as was required by the DFI and Capital Development Good Practice. The local initial plan was to create in Ards and North Down a network connecting Kinnegar, Holywood, Bangor, Donaghadee, Newtownards and Comber together. From Kinnegar and Comber the network would then connect into Belfast and beyond.

In 2019, Council agreed following Community Consultation to redirect the proposed route from Newtownards to Helens Bay, and instead run from Newtownards to Conlig, Green Road, and to central Bangor.

Funding was secured from DFI and Levelling up towards the Comber to Newtownards and Newtownards to Green Road sections equating to 86% of the cost, and so Council was only to fund 14% of those two schemes.

Development of the Kinnegar to Donaghadee scheme was commenced shortly after the other schemes were initiated, and the feasibility study and initial outline business case were completed and approved by Council, following two twelve-week consultation exercises. Designs were drafted based on this progress and submitted for planning in Summer 2020. After this, a number of local residents and elected representatives queried the project. Following further public meetings and engagement, the Council in January 2023 decided to abandon the Kinnegar to Donaghadee Greenway Scheme. Around £302k had been committed and invested in the work up to that point. However, the Council agreed to set up a Working Group to address issues of connectivity, access and maintenance along the North Down Coastal Path.

Council needed to agree to membership and the terms reference for the Working Group, and a draft version had been attached in Appendix 1 of this report.

It was recommended that 10 members were appointed to the group by D'Hondt plus 1 other member, providing cross party and appropriate geographic representation.

Further it was recommended that community interest groups, rather than be members, were asked to attend the Working Group as required and appropriate as part of the working groups engagement and consultation work with residents and other path stakeholders.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council agrees to set up the North Down Coastal Path Working Group appoints members to the North Down Coastal Path Working Group as per this report and agrees the attached Terms of Reference

A recess was called at 21:09, with the committee resuming at 21:22.

Councillor Woods proposed an alternative recommendation, seconded by Councillor W Irvine; that Council agrees to set up a North Down Coastal Path Working Group; appoints elected members to the North Down Coastal Path Working Group via nominations through their political parties, or expression of interest as an independent member in the relative geographical representation; invites interested groups, and those with specific expertise to be represented on the Working Group; agrees to publish agendas and minutes of Working Group publicly; that final decision making on projects rests with Council; agrees to add in consideration of 'usage' of the path to the objectives and seeking out funding opportunities as outlined in the Terms of Reference, and, that the first meeting of the North Down Coastal Path Working Group is held within one month of agreement.

Councillor Woods explained that by altering the Terms of Reference, there would be much more flexibility for smaller parties and independents to join a working group. She suggested D'Hondt was not the correct method for the working group and explained the merits of having a wider catchment of members as well as an increased group size, allowing for the most appropriate individuals in place with the right expertise and knowledge. Both Councillors W Irvine and Boyle agreed, with Councillor Boyle understanding the D'Hondt method but did not think it was to use it in every outside body or committee as it was not about numbers but the right and best people and would also allow for non-elected members to join.

Councillor Hollywood asked how decisions would be made regarding which related community groups would be consulted with. The Director of Community & Wellbeing advised that as this had been a new proposal, he would need time to investigate further. Alderman Douglas reminded Members that, given the history of the coastal path's consultations and information sessions as well as issues surrounding greenways, any working group that was assembled would have to ensure the right groups were represented. She added that it had been a shame Councillor McKimm had not been present as it had been through his proposal some months ago that the original recommendation had been withdrawn on the coastal path.

Councillor Woods summarised the alternative proposal and recalled that some groups in Stormont such as a climate action group had around 70 members. She reminded Alderman Douglas that Councillor McKimm was not a member of the Community & Wellbeing Committee but that she had notified him of the discussion that was to take place.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Woods, seconded by Councillor W Irvine, that an alternative proposal be adopted; that Council**

agrees to set up a North Down Coastal Path Working Group; appoints elected members to the North Down Coastal Path Working Group via nominations through their political parties, or expression of interest as an independent member in the relative geographical representation; invites interested groups, and those with specific expertise to be represented on the Working Group; agrees to publish agendas and minutes of Working Group publicly; that final decision making on projects rests with Council; agrees to add in consideration of 'usage' of the path to the objectives and seeking out funding opportunities as outlined in the Terms of Reference, and, that the first meeting of the North Down Coastal Path Working Group is held within one month of agreement.

**17. RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION – URBAN TREE PARTNERSHIP RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION**  
(FILE REF: PCA 109)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing which outlined that in July 2022 the following Notice of Motion was agreed by Council.

*"This Council notes with concern that a number of planted trees in urban settings along roads which have died or have been removed but not replaced; Notes the importance of environmental and social benefits of such trees in the built environment; Notes that DfI Roads formerly had a partnership arrangement with Belfast Parks for the replacement of trees but that this partnership ended some time ago; That Council officers are tasked with opening discussions with DfI Roads and DAERA with a view to exploring the possibility of a partnership which will involve the supply and replacement of lost trees in the Borough and then providing a report to Council for further consideration."*

Council had set out its own targets for tree planting through its Tree & Woodland Strategy that was agreed by Council in March 2021. The purpose of the Tree & Woodland Strategy was to recognise the importance of trees, the many benefits they afforded us and the increasingly important role they could play in mitigating the effects of climate change. The **STAND4TREES** initiative aimed to plant a tree for every person in the Borough, that is approximately 160,000 trees.

The Council undertook to replace trees in numbers in excess of those that needed to be felled and had an annual tree-planting programme which saw many trees of both native and interesting varieties planted over each Autumn/Winter season. Through planting season 2022-2023 in excess of 15,000 new trees were planted in the borough. An annual update of the Tree and Woodland Strategy was reported to the Community & Wellbeing Committee each June. Since the launch, Council had planted over 27,500 new trees, the yearly breakdown was:

- 2021/22 – 12,435



- 2022/23 – 15,223
- 2023/24 – planning in place to plant a further 15,000 new trees.

### **Why Urban Street Trees are Important**

Ards and North Down's trees and woodlands were one of the Borough's greatest natural assets. They provided a range of health and social benefits for residents, as well as making urban areas and local neighbourhoods attractive places to live and work. Trees were a valuable asset and there was strong and growing evidence that exposure to them increased physical and mental health wellbeing, as well as supporting the ecology and biodiversity in any area.

Urban Street trees were a crucial part of the boroughs urban forest and provided numerous benefits including shade and shelter, introducing nature to otherwise barren areas, helping to clean the air and reduce the risk of flooding. Street trees formed an important and much-loved part of the borough's tree stock that should be improved, maintained, and sustained for future generations to enjoy.

Our environment, and trees in particular, had a dramatic and positive impact on our economy. Trees created attractive environments for business investment and development, creating the spaces we all would want to visit, relocate to or work in. The whole urban forest formed a crucial lifeline, helping birds, insects and more animals move through the landscape safely, and find food and shelter. All those gardens, parks and playing fields with trees could act as stepping stones between larger wild places that would otherwise have been isolated.

### **Challenges of Managing Street Trees**

Street trees live a tough life, and they needed to be able to cope with drought, compacted soils, road salt and traffic pollution. The choice of street tree species needed to be appropriate for them to thrive in their environment: close to houses, roads and people. There was a need to identify trees that could grow to reach an optimum canopy size to contribute the most benefits to the surrounding urban communities. Street trees were managed somewhat differently from woodland trees because they were on the road/pedestrian network. Their value needed to be balanced against the reality that they needed to be managed for safety. Street trees could cause problems if they are poorly maintained, for example: creating access issues if they limited pavement widths; branches obscuring sightlines or being too close to roofs, windows, wires, and aerials; leaf fall obscuring pavement obstructions and blocking drains; tree roots undermining foundations of buildings; and limiting parking options. Poor species selection could also affect people with allergies due to pollen. The road network itself was subject to continual change. Roads could be added, removed or subject to change through design; trees die, fall, are removed and replaced.

### **Meeting Wider UK & Regional Targets**

The **STAND4TREES** complemented the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) initiative 'Forests for our Future'. This DAERA initiative's

main purpose was to help tackle climate change by planting 18 million trees over the next 10 years. The intent reflected the wider political imperative across the UK to expand tree cover in response to climate change. It could equate to approximately 900 hectares of new trees per year, which aligned with the 900 hectare per annum planting target proposed for Northern Ireland by the UK Committee on Climate Change (2020) report.

### **Dfl Partnership Meeting**

Following the appointment of the Development Officer (Tree and Woodland) in December 2022, Parks Officers met with representatives from Dfl Roads to discuss the possibility of a partnership working in relation to Urban Trees. The Dfl representation indicated they would be open to Council adopting the process of replanting all failed street trees throughout Ards and North Down. Dfl had a tree maintenance budget which allowed them to maintain trees identified as being in a poor condition and of high risk. In order to successfully establish any new street tree, council would also need to take over management and maintenance of any newly planted street tree.

### **The Need to Manage Street Trees**

Protecting and managing new street trees helped them establish and increased their chances of survival. By looking after newly planted street trees we could:

- Improve their growth.
- Reduce costs of replacing dead trees.
- Reduce costs of future maintenance.

It was easier to maintain newly planted trees if they were planted in the right place to start with. How a site was prepared for tree planting after felling would affect what maintenance it would require. It was recommended that the maintenance of any newly planted street tree should follow a five-year cycle which included:

- Replace any trees that die.
- Reuse tree protection where possible.
- Replace damaged or missing tree protection.
- Maintain appropriate tree protection.
- Make sure planted trees are kept free from competing vegetation.

Whether trees were managed for landscape, habitat, commercial or multipurpose objectives, the legal obligation to ensure the reasonable safety of others remained the same. The law recognised that there is a balance to be struck between the risks and benefits of trees. Council, as owner and occupier of land, was required to consider the level of risk associated with a tree and whether it was reasonable to protect against that risk. The duty was to identify apparent sources of danger and to make land safe, so far as was reasonably practicable. Liability was determined based on whether a danger posed by a tree could have been foreseen and whether reasonable remedies could have been undertaken, which would have reduced the

risks to an acceptable level. To meet legal requirements, it was crucial that Council managed risks and could be seen to do so and was able to provide evidence that this had been done. To manage risk effectively, the hazard must first be identified and ranked according to severity, then prioritised for action. No tree was entirely safe, given the possibility that an exceptionally strong wind could damage or uproot even a mechanically 'perfect' specimen. It was therefore usually accepted that hazards were only recognisable from distinct defects or from other failure prone characteristics of the tree or of the site.

The need for a particular tree or group of trees to be inspected depended on the usage of the area within their potential falling distance. Inspection was unquestionably necessary within areas where people, or high value items of property, were continuously or frequently present close to trees which were capable of being hazardous. This would be particularly prevalent with street trees. When inspections were carried out and defects found, recommendations for works (or re-inspections) would always follow and should take account of the above and modern arboriculture practice. Each Inspector should ensure that recommended works were carried out without unreasonable delay.

A general principle to be observed was that, in areas where people or property could be at risk from tree failure, formal inspections should be carried out frequently enough to detect any hazards that may have recently developed. Tree loss could have a detrimental impact on the environment in general and on landscape value and amenities. In addition, where trees must be pruned or removed for safety reasons, there were financial costs. These costs collectively could be significant, and it makes sense therefore that, where possible, damage inflicted on trees through people's actions, was avoided or kept to a minimum.

### **Current Service Capacity**

The ongoing responsibility for tree planting and risk management in relation to trees, as a corporate one. For practical reasons however, the Parks and Cemeteries had taken the lead and supply a service to other landholding departments. The lead officer for overseeing tree planting and risk management was the Development Officer (Tree and Woodland) who provided a level of specialist knowledge. In view of the extent of tree cover on Council land, it would not be feasible for the Officer to inspect all council trees and any newly acquired street trees on a regular basis. The Officer role was supported by a modest budget allocation. This allowed the Officer to invest in the acquisition of appropriate software to record tree planting, surveys and maintenance data, deliver community engagement events and promotions, and develop promotional material highlighting the importance of our tree colonies. Any adopted or new planting schemes would require resources, both physical and financial, to ensure risk in minimised and new planting schemes are completed satisfactorily. Officers would be progressing a business case through the estimates process to development a modest street tree initiative for our urban areas.

## Summary

The Council were asked to note the following discussions:

1. DfI has indicated it would be open to Council adopting the process of replanting failed street trees throughout Ards and North Down.
2. DfI have a tree maintenance budget which allows them to maintain trees identified as being in a poor condition and of high risk.
3. In order to successfully establish any new street tree, Council will also need to take over management and maintenance of any newly planted street tree.

And that any such opportunities would be investigated further.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

Proposed by Councillor Woods, seconded by Alderman Adair, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor Woods asked what the outcomes had been of opportunities the Council had investigated. The Head of Parks & Cemeteries explained that a budget of £15k had been agreed for the Stand For Trees program but that any additional work they would want to do such as urban trees would require additional resources from both a financial and physical perspective. As such, it was hoped that a business case would be put together at the estimates period.

Alderman Adair welcomed the progress and asked if businesses or the public could sponsor trees, recollecting that some had done so in the memory of loved ones. The Head of Parks & Cemeteries advised this already existed on a number of projects with sponsorship of trees in cemeteries, parks and roundabouts and that his department would look toward other options as well.

Councillor Chambers was curious as to whether the Council would be responsible for trees that had already been planted and was informed that it would be dependent on the area as some trees were owned by Council whilst others had been managed by DfI. However, the Council and DfI worked together on such issues.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Woods, seconded by Alderman Adair, that the recommendation be adopted.**

## **18. RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION – MILLISLE FOOTBALL PITCHES (FILE REF: PCA 117)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing outlining that in January 2023, the following Notice of Motion was agreed by Council:

**That Council task officers to bring forward a report on options and potential funding opportunities to enhance and improve Council Football Pitches at Abbey Road Millisle to ensure they can be used and enjoyed by the local sporting clubs and community of Millisle.**

Council, at the time of writing had maintenance responsibility for 36 grass pitches across the borough. Those pitches were well used and proved to be a vital facility for residents to avail of physical exercise, social interaction and enhance the sporting talent already found in the borough. The Borough could be proud of the range of sports played on these pitches and the number of residents and visitors that participated in the activities.

While the use of the pitches was to be applauded, the natural form of the turf created challenges to the playing surface. To ensure the pitches were kept in a suitable condition for regular play, a programme of high-quality maintenance work was required. This maintenance was carried out on a two-pronged approach.

### **Annual Refurbishments**

Parks staff visited each grass pitch on a regular basis to complete general upkeep tasks such as grass cutting, surface inspections and sports line marking. Additionally, all grass pitches close for a number of weeks each year so a full refurbishment could be completed. Those refurbishments were carried out by professional contractors in the industry, with proven track records of completing these tasks.

The annual refurbishment programme included Verti-draining (a form of spiking the pitch) to loosen the surface compacted through play and allow air into the root system to strengthen them. The pitches were then top-dressed in sand or other organic material suitable for the surface, to level the surface. The refurbishment was completed through a process of grass seed injection into the surface, which added new grass growth to thicken the sward and improve its integrity for the season ahead.

Fertilizing of all pitches was completed by Parks Staff at regular intervals throughout the year. Fertilisers were selected to promote fast grass growth in Spring/Summer and strengthen root systems in Autumn/Winter.

### **Enhanced Capital Schemes**

With constantly increasing demands on sports turf in the leisure and professional sectors, optimum pitch or playing surface condition was paramount. Intensive drainage was considered to be an important measure taken to both enhance turf condition and cope with contemporary demands. Although the annual refurbishments took place, as the surface aged, its recovery after periods of intensive use was prolonged: drainage became slower or ceased altogether. This being the case, it was necessary to perform renovation works to reinstate pitch drainage quality.

Each year, Parks Officers, in conjunction with other professional advisors, assessed pitches to identify the areas most in need of an enhanced drainage scheme. Those schemes varied in approach depending on the condition and scope for works, but generally included the installation of deep trench drains across the playing surface. Trenched drains produced effective water catchment channels, drawing in water from both the surface and sub layers, while also reducing compaction in the soil layers.

### **Millisle Playing Fields**

Located on the Abbey Road, Millisle, the site consisted of two natural turf sports pitches. In line with other sites, Millisle benefited from the annual refurbishment scheme, and this was last completed in June 2023. The site had also benefitted from enhanced drainage schemes in the past. An internal inspection of the site was completed in Spring 2023 and some key issues were identified. The gradient and evenness of the pitch were found to be poor, and the surface had challenging drainage issues.

In normal circumstances this pitch would be recommended for the enhanced drainage scheme as outlined above. However, positive outcomes from historic schemes had proven to be short lived. The gradient of the pitch at the time of writing, surrounding landscape and infrastructure restrictions presented challenges to the flow of water, with trench drains quickly becoming of little use. This situation had been verified by professional contractors with a proven track record in high-quality pitch refurbishment and installation. Further industry advice suggested that Millisle Playing Fields required a much larger investment to improve the gradient and playing surface quality, that would sit outside of the maintenance schemes outlined above.

Council submitted an Irish Football Association (IFA) Funding 'Expression of Interest' Application earlier this year seeking such additional required funding. However, investment funds for sports pitches could be extremely competitive process. This could become more so when the pitches sat within the local government portfolio. For example, the Sport NI "Building Better Sports Facilities" funding programme launched in 2021 accepted applications from the following organisations who either owned or operated their own sports facilities: Sports Clubs (affiliated to a Sport Northern Ireland recognised governing body of sport); and Community Sports Organisations

While options for external funding did exist and we had made application as stated above, a refurbishment plan would be required to progress these when funding was available. Any such schemes may also have required an element of Council funding in line with set criteria of the specific fund. Parks Officers intended to propose an internal business case for this funding as part of the estimates period for 2024/25.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council note the above report.

Proposed by Alderman Adair, seconded by Councillor Boyle, that the recommendation be adopted.

Alderman Adair thanked officers for the detail of the report and given that there were some facilities the public could not use, he welcomed the EOI for funding and the business case for 2024-25. Councillor Boyle agreed and looked forward to further reports.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Adair, seconded by Councillor Boyle, that the recommendation be adopted.**

**19. UPDATE TO NOTICE OF MOTION – LITTER BIN RATIONALISATION (FILE REF: PCA 98)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing which outlined that, in April & October 2022, Parks Officers submitted progress reports to the Community and Wellbeing Committee regarding the two Notice of Motions as below.

September 2021: "That Environment Directorate Cleansing and Parks Officers work together to agree a draft plan for collaborating to ensure that waste management staff can be deployed to problem litter locations in a timely manner, having regard for severity and urgency. This should include consideration of need for a single, cross department out of hours contact to log issues and to facilitate the deployment of resource. That a report outlining the plan, complete with costings, is brought before the relevant committee." In addition to the above Notice of Motion, a further Notice of Motion was submitted in

November 2021: "That officers bring back a report to consider the option of transferring responsibility for bins which are currently the responsibility of the Parks Section into the Environment Directorate."

At the Council meeting held on 26th October 2022, Members had raised anomalies which existed as well as the requirement for the large bins that had been placed in Comber Square. Council Officers had looked at the issues at Comber Square and believed that the various bins were appropriate around this location. The non provision of the large bins within the green area of the square was not because this area was not managed by cleansing, but because of aesthetics and the practicality of servicing.

To address the issues raised by these two Notice of Motion's, Council Managers from the Parks, Cleansing, Communications and Enforcement Services had continued to meet to work more collaboratively in order to maximise efficiency and effectiveness of litter bin maintenance across all areas of the Borough and improve outcomes.

The key objective of this was to firstly ascertain where there were areas of service cross over and identify where both services could work in collaboration to address litter collection during peak demand. All litter bins (Parks & Cleansing) across the Borough were now plotted on the Councils GIS system which had allowed for greater route maximisation and sharing between departments. In addition, purchasing more bins, extending the use of larger capacity bins with anti-bird flaps, more targeted use of litter collection, weekend rangers and volunteering had in 2023 seen a dramatic drop in litter complaints. Services (Parks, Cleansing, Communications & NET) would continue to meet to tackle litter and deliver continuous improvement, through better operational activity, engagement with our community partners, education and behavioural change campaigns and enforcement.

Whilst it had proven impractical to transfer all waste bin maintenance to one department, the increased collaboration had, in officers' views, improved the overall cleansing service provided by both departments as much as was possible. Furthermore, in the interests of providing an integrated, single point of contact to Members for the purpose of flagging up significant and urgent littering issues that arose at the weekend, whether they were in areas maintained by the Parks or Cleansing Service Units, a single email address had been circulated to Members for that purpose.

A message sent to this email address would be forwarded to both Parks and Cleansing staff who were providing weekend service cover – and the matter would then be responded to by the appropriate service unit. A response was subsequently provided to the Elected Member on the action taken. This had streamlined the service and decreased response times and positive feedback was being received.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council note this report and the work carried out by various departments to improve the responsible management of litter bins within the Borough.

Proposed by Councillor Woods, seconded by Alderman Adair, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor Woods asked why it had been impractical to transfer all bins management between departments. The Head of Parks & Cemeteries explained that the Parks department had different work to carry out at different times of the year and it had had made good business sense to move between cleansing and parks as required, so there was some movement and this varied on the time of year.

Both Aldermen Adair and Douglas agreed that the service had been worthwhile since inception of the out-of-hours email service that allowed for bins to be emptied when overflowing and had improved the issue.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND**, on the proposal of Councillor Woods, seconded by Alderman Adair, that the recommendation be adopted.



## **20. COMMEMORATIVE TREE PLANTING APPLICATION REQUEST (FILE REF: PCA 4)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing which outlined Members' awareness that Council had facilitated the planting of commemorative trees on Council land in conjunction with local groups and organisations.

The Council's policy covering this aimed to provide a consistent and fair approach to the decision-making process on whether or not to approve any request to plant a commemorative tree on Council property. Further, it was critical that all tree planting contributed to the Councils overall Tree and Woodland Strategy.

The policy set out the following criteria:-

1. A request will be approved if it meets the following essential criteria
  - a. The request is being made by a properly constituted organisation.
  - b. The request is submitted in writing in the approved form at least 8 weeks in advance of the requested planting date.
  - c. The tree will become the property of Council and maintained as such. The species and variety will be at the discretion of Council and align with the Councils Tree and Woodland Strategy.
  - d. Applications will be considered on a date received priority should there be a conflict in dates requested. (Officers will liaise with those making a request to accommodate where required).
  - e. Applications must include details of any commemorative plaque to be considered for approval.
  - f. The request is satisfactorily equality screened.
  - g. The request is deemed to be eligible (See section 2)
2. Eligible requests will be as follows
  - a. To raise awareness of charities nominated by the Mayor
  - b. To highlight events directly organised by the Council
  - c. To mark a significant sporting event in the Borough.
  - d. To commemorate a significant anniversary of, or an event organised by a charity or community organisation which has a significant connection to the Borough.
  - e. To commemorate a major national event or anniversary.
3. In addition to failing to meet at least one of the above criteria, a request will be deemed ineligible if it falls into any of the following categories
  - a. An application which in officers' opinions is only promoting a commercial interest

- b. The promotion of an ethos, activity or organisation which is not deemed in the context of communities to be shared, neutral or promoting good relations.

A copy of the application form had been attached as an Appendix to this report.

Members were advised that the Commemorative Tree Planting Policy did not apply to or replace the memorial tree planting which took place in Council cemeteries.

In recent weeks there had been one request for commemorative tree planting. This has been received from: -

- Shore Street Girls Brigade – Anniversary tree. Single tree approval requested for Top of East Street, Donaghadee. Species to be determined by Council Officers.
- 

Officers were able to confirm that this request complied with the criteria in the policy subject to the policy approval.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council approves the Commemorative Tree Planting request from Shore Street Girls Brigade as outlined in the report.

Proposed by Alderman Brooks, seconded by Councillor Cochrane, that the recommendation be adopted.

Alderman Brooks congratulated the Shore Street Girl's Brigade on their 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary before suggesting that Council advertised the possibility of having trees more widely. The Head of Parks & Cemeteries advised that it was advertised in the Council's magazine and that when a group would fail in an application for a bench, they would be notified of the option to plant a tree instead.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND**, on the proposal of Alderman Brooks, seconded by Councillor Cochrane, that the recommendation be adopted.

## **21. SCHOOLS GROWING CLUBS UPDATE** (FILE REF: PCA 111)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing which provided an update to council for the Schools Growing Clubs 2023/2024. School's Growing Clubs was an initiative aimed at enhancing the educational experience, health, and well-being of children in the borough. The purpose of this report was to inform the council about the recent developments in the program, including the selection process, its potential contributions to the curriculum, and the positive impact it would have on students' growth.

### **Selection Process and Participants**

Primary schools across the borough were offered the opportunity to apply to join the initiative and council received a total of ten applications from various schools that expressed interest in becoming a Growing Club. As per the agreed process, a selection panel comprised of Parks and Cemeteries Officers evaluated the applications and would choose the most suitable schools to participate. After thorough review and consideration, the panel selected six schools to be part of the program.

The selection criteria included factors such as the school's commitment to sustainability and environmental education, the availability of space and existing infrastructure for gardening activities, the engagement level of teachers, PTA, and the potential for community involvement. The panel's objective assessment ensured a fair and transparent selection process, resulting in the choice of schools that were best aligned with the goals of the Growing Club initiative.

The six schools selected:

- Towerview PS, Bangor
- Andrews Memorial PS, Comber
- Loughries PS, Newtownards
- Hollywood PS, Hollywood
- St Patricks PS, Portaferry
- St Marys PS, Kircubbin

### **Contributions to Curriculum and Development**

The School's Growing Club had immense potential to enrich our children's learning experiences and holistic development. By integrating gardening and horticultural activities into the curriculum, students would gain hands-on knowledge about plant life cycles, nutrition, ecology, and sustainability.

Furthermore, the Growing Club offered an avenue for interdisciplinary learning, connecting subjects such as science, mathematics, and even art. Students would be encouraged to observe, measure, and analyse various aspects of plant growth, fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills. In addition, the club would promote teamwork, responsibility, and a sense of accomplishment as students worked together to tend to the garden and observe the fruits of their labour.

### **Health and Well-being Impact**

Engaging in gardening activities was proven to have positive effects on mental and physical well-being. The act of nurturing plants and being in nature could reduce stress, improve mood, and enhance concentration. Our students would have the opportunity to disconnect from screens and engage in a more active and hands-on form of recreation, fostering a healthier lifestyle. Children would also have the chance to learn where their food came from and appreciate the process of growing

their own food and how they could contribute to sustainable food production in their communities for the future.

### **Community Engagement and Education**

The Growing Club would not only benefit the students directly involved but would also extend its impact to the broader community. As the garden flourishes, it could serve as a hub for workshops, events, and educational sessions, involving parents, community members, and other schools. This would promote a sense of unity and shared responsibility for environmental stewardship, further strengthening the ties between the school and the community.

In conclusion, the School's Growing Club was a valuable addition to our educational offerings, with the potential to enhance the curriculum and promote health and well-being. We were excited about the positive impact this initiative would have on the children and the community at large. Members' continued support was instrumental in ensuring the success of this endeavour.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council continue to acknowledge and support the School's Growing Club initiative.

Proposed by Alderman Adair, seconded by Alderman Cummings, that the recommendation be adopted.

Alderman Adair thanked officers for what he called a great initiative and recalled having attended St Patricks School in Portaferry and St Mary's School in Kircubbin for eco-garden events which had been excellent events, the latter of which Councillor Boyle expressed pleasure in having attended as well. Alderman Cummings agreed and spoke of Andrew's Memorial Primary School who had been very enthusiastic with regard to growing clubs.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND**, on the proposal of Alderman Adair, seconded by Alderman Cummings, that the recommendation be adopted.

## **22. REGULATION OF COSMETIC TREATMENTS** (FILE REF: EHPD 6)

**PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:** - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing which outlined that, in October 2022, Council agreed to write to the Health Minister to seek better regulation of cosmetic treatments in Northern Ireland. In November 2022, a letter was sent from Council to the Permanent Secretary (see attached). A response had since been received which outlined that a fundamental review of the health and social care regulatory framework in Northern Ireland had been undertaken and a new draft regulatory policy framework was being developed, yet progress with this had been stalled due to the COVID-19 pandemic response and a significantly constrained budget. It was suggested that timescales in relation to recommencing this work would depend on the priorities of an incoming Minister and

available resources within the Department. A copy of the letter had attached to this committee minute..

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the content of the response letter from the Department of Health, Permanent Secretary.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Councillor Woods, that the recommendation be adopted.**

**23 FUNDING OFFER FROM DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ENERGY & INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY (BEIS) FOR CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY BUILDING PROGRAMME IN NORTHERN IRELAND NON-FOOD PRODUCTS 2023 (FILE REF: CW99)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing which sought Council approval to accept an offer of grant monies from the Department of Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to the value of £55,000.

The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) was the national regulator for product safety and is part of BEIS. It was established to lead and co-ordinate the UK product safety system to deliver improved protections for consumers and better support for industry across the UK. It was responsible for developing and building national capacity and capability for product safety that is consistent and applied uniformly across the UK.

OPSS had been funding District Councils in Northern Ireland to provide support to local businesses, market surveillance and to enhance enforcement capacity and capability to support their development of effective mechanisms to protect consumers and the UK internal market. For 2023/24 the grant would be made directly to the Council.

The purpose of the grant funding programme was to support District Councils in Northern Ireland to build capacity and capability to ensure the safety of consumers. It funded targeted and prioritised regulatory activity ensuring there was a robust consumer product and construction product safety system UK-wide. This was part of BEIS' approach to ensure robust market surveillance across the UK.

**Summary of the work delivered using the 2022/23 grant funding**

Members may have recalled from previous reports in 2023 and supported by legal advice, that these activities were a statutory duty on Council, and must have been carried out whether the funding was accepted or not. Within the last financial year, the team had delivered the following projects with the assistance of the grant fund:

**Button Batteries**

This project covered the sale of button batteries including information and business inspections. A consumer campaign was launched to advise the public of the dangers of button batteries, especially to young children. Information on the dangers of button batteries was also provided to 36-day care nurseries, 109 churches and 463 childminders through the Health Trusts Early Years Team and left at 52 homes during home safety visits.

**Second Hand Goods**

40 businesses selling second hand goods were visited by officers who provided advice on how to check the goods are safe for onward sale.

**Construction Products Data Gathering**

70 businesses were contacted, and information was gathered on construction products being manufactured, imported and sold within the Borough. This would be used to advise businesses when changes to the UK regulations on construction products are announced.

**Candles and Wax Melts**

Information and guidance were sent to 23 businesses who manufactured candles and wax melts and two business seminars were organised.

**Butane Test Purchasing**

145 businesses were advised of their legal obligations on underage sales via letter, 32 pre-visits were carried out and 11 test purchase visits were carried out with no sales.

**The 2023/24 Grant Offer**

The maximum amount of Grant offered was up to £55,000, this would be paid in financial year ending on 31st March 2024. The Eligible Expenditure for which the Grant was awarded was expenditure limited to costs which were incurred between 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2024. A copy of the grant offer had been attached to the committee minute.

The funding was used in Ards and North Down to fund staff posts to undertake a wide range of activities on non-food products including to;

- build on previous product safety capacity and capability building work
- ensure access to enforcement equipment and facilities;
- provide advice and support to local businesses to meet their obligations under product safety legislation for importing and appropriate labelling/marketing of goods;
- define work processes;
- develop officers' understanding of local supply chains and their associated risks;
- ensure adequate prioritisation of effort and resource against OPSS policy and national regulatory interests;

- ad hoc requests for case studies or other additional information.

The full details of the funded activities were set out on page 29 of the attached grant offer.

During the 2023/24 financial year, the team had planned the following Market Surveillance Projects:

- Construction Products and Mica
- Jewellery
- Motorcycle clothing
- Candles and Wax Melts
- Methacrylate in Gel Nail polish
- Butane Test Purchasing and advice to businesses

RECOMMENDED that Council accepts this Grant offer and authorises the Head of Environmental Health Protection and Development to sign and return the grant acceptance form on behalf of Council.

Prior to any proposition, Councillor S Irvine asked officers to confirm if market surveillance would relate to compliance with/ or enforcement with Article 5 and Annex 2 of the NI Protocol and Section 7F of the EU Withdrawal Act. The Director of Community & Wellbeing confirmed this was the case and advised support by previous advice on the matter that it was a statutory duty to exercise that function. He advised that if the grant was not accepted, funding would have to be covered by the Council instead. Based on this, Councillor S Irvine stated that he could not support the recommendation and hoped other Members would agree.

Proposed by Councillor Moore, seconded by Councillor Woods, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor Moore agreed with the Director, stating that the Council had a statutory responsibility and either would have to accept the grant or pay for it from the Council's own coffers; a sentiment Councillor Woods agreed with, adding that if Members had any problems with the protocol to take it up with Members of Parliament. Councillor Boyle remembered that the Council had received the grant before and that the conversation being had on this evening's meeting was one that happened every year. He believed it would be foolhardy to turn down financial assistance for a statutory duty and suggested to Members that the grant be taken and spent as opposed to having costs be applied to ratepayer monies. Councillor W Irvine agreed with Councillor S Irvine's earlier statement and had to object. As such, a recorded vote was called.

On being put to the meeting, with 5 voting FOR, 9 voting AGAINST, 0 ABSTAINING and 2 ABSENT, the proposal fell.

The voting was as follows:

<b>FOR (5)</b>	<b>AGAINST (9)</b>	<b>ABSTAINED (0)</b>	<b>ABSENT (2)</b>
<b>Alderman:</b> Douglas	<b>Aldermen:</b> Adair Brooks Cummings	<b>Aldermen:</b>	<b>Aldermen:</b>
<b>Councillors</b> Boyle Creighton Moore Woods	<b>Councillors:</b> Cochrane L Douglas Hollywood S Irvine W Irvine Martin	<b>Councillors</b>	<b>Councillors</b> Ashe Chambers

#### **24. AFFORDABLE WARMTH SCHEME TERMINATION UPDATE** **AUGUST 2023** (FILE REF: CW 8)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing which outlined that, at the Community and Wellbeing Committee on 21 June 2023, the report on Affordable Warmth recommended that written communication was sent to the Department for Communities (DfC) expressing concern over how the decision to terminate the Affordable Warmth Scheme would impact the most vulnerable in the Borough and sought assurances that every effort would be made by NIHE to identify and support eligible residents in our area to avail of the scheme for the duration of its lifetime. Members fully supported this and asked that the Permanent Secretary (Colum Boyle) be invited to meet with Members to hear their concerns in person, and the Chief Executive duly wrote to him with this request.

In the attached response (Appendix 1) the Permanent Secretary declined this invitation, advising that he would be discussing the changes to the Affordable Warmth Scheme at a PSG/Solace meeting on 5 September 2023, and advising, if following the meeting the Elected Members still wanted a meeting, David Polley, Director of Housing Supply Policy, who had responsibility for the Affordable Warmth Scheme, would be available to meet with them again.

Members previously met with Mr Polley and his colleagues on 16 March 2023 to discuss concerns with the scheme and as recorded in the June Community & Wellbeing Committee report, they appreciated that Councils had made a valuable contribution to the Affordable Warmth Scheme in terms of budget, in kind costs and "added value" but admitted that much of this had not been captured. They agreed to work with officers to try and capture some of this information including case studies,



so that it could be considered when trying to shape the next scheme. This work however did not take place as within weeks, DfC published a consultation EQIA to garner comments on the impact of a significantly reduced budget, and in the middle of the consultation period, announced the changes to the Affordable Warmth Scheme, effectively removing council involvement from 1st September 2023.

### **Concerns over EQIA Consultations**

Concerns regarding the EQIA consultation were communicated in our Council's EQIA response, along with similar views expressed by other councils and NILGA. In an attached letter from Jane Brady, Head of the Civil Service to Alison Allen, Chief Executive, Northern Ireland Local Government Association responding to some of the concerns on how the NICS Departments' Budget EQIA Consultations took place, and in particular the changes made to Affordable Warmth.

### **Staffing**

Members expressed concern over staff that were assigned to the Affordable Warmth Scheme in this Council, but the position of DfC was originally that they had no responsibility for staff transfer. Ms Brady emphasised in her letter *"as the funding model for AWS is solely on a fixed fee per referral basis, then as the employer each council would therefore be accountable for all staffing costs incurred"*. There was initially no agreement to TUPE staff and no redeployment available in Council. The AW Coordinator had subsequently resigned and taken up an external position, and as a result we were unable to achieve our target allocation of 100 to end August (anticipated 79).

We had subsequently received the attached NIHE Letter to the Chief Executive (Appendix 3) indicating that they may actually be able to consider redeployment of some staff and our HR Department are engaging with them to see if our remaining team members were eligible.

### **Transition Arrangements**

Over the summer it had become clear that DfC made the decision to remove Councils from the Affordable Warmth Scheme and leave it entirely in the hands of Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) with little or no consultation with either party. NIHE were not in a position to take on the scheme having neither sufficient staff to manage it or a transfer process in place to accept referrals from Councils. They had recently advised that to move from the delivery model at the time of writing for the Affordable Warmth Scheme, to the proposed single provider method (NIHE only) required approval from both their own Executive Team and Board. It was anticipated that they may not have received this approval until late August, with areas regarding resources and budget still to be finalised.

There had been frequent communication between the NIHE and council trying to ensure that the transition process was as smooth and effective as possible, but it was an evermoving picture.

### General Data Protection Regulations

Originally NIHE indicated that they would be prepared to accept lists of householders on council databases but subsequently they had advised that there are GDPR issues with this as consent of the householder was not normally obtained until the application form is completed for an applicant, in order for their details to be passed to NIHE. Officers were working with their own Data Protection team, NIHE and DfC to find a solution.

Numbers on waiting lists / expression of interest lists differed greatly across the 11 Councils and DfC had asked NIHE to ensure fair access to the scheme across all Councils from the 1st of September. NIHE therefore did not expect to be in a position to take over waiting lists and had asked that Councils make contact directly with the people on these lists and inform these potential applicants of this change.

Officers continued to work to ensure that as many applicants as possible are assisted through the process so that the most vulnerable in Ards and North Down would have the best chance of accessing the scheme going forward. This included prioritising "worst first" from the list at the time of writing with priority 1 (loft and cavity insulation) and priority 2 measures (heating). Applicants experiencing mould/damp/no heat were also considered urgent.

### Future Arrangements

From **1 September 2023**, the first point of contact for the scheme would be through the Housing Executives NI Energy Advice Service (0800 111 44 55) or [The Housing Executive - Community \(nihe.gov.uk\)](https://www.nihe.gov.uk).

From **1 September 2023**, callers would be advised that the Affordable Warmth Scheme would become an application-based scheme, and that all applications for the scheme must be made directly to NIHE. During the month of September, as the scheme was being wound up in Council, support and assistance was to continue to be provided to those in Ards and North down trying to access the scheme to maximise the likelihood of vulnerable households being accepted.

At the final DfC/NIHE/Senior Council Officers' meeting on 17 August 2023, we expressed concern that vulnerable applicants applying to NIHE would not receive the support needed and would be triaged based on household measures required and placed on a waiting list on that priority alone. NIHE were reminded that Councils take a holistic approach and focus on the needs of the occupants, making referrals to other support organisations based on their immediate concerns (eg food banks, charities, etc). NIHE advised that they had access to these support services and intended to use these contacts, including referrals to councils if appropriate.

Officers were continuing to seek opportunities to support our vulnerable households over the winter months, utilising the existing Council budget and will advise Members accordingly.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the content of this report and in particular the new arrangements for referrals to the Affordable Warmth Scheme.

It is also recommended that Council consider if they wish to meet with Mr Polley again or are content that the Chief Executive raised the concerns at the SOLACE meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

Proposed by Alderman Adair, seconded by Councillor Woods, that the recommendation be adopted with a small amendment, that the Council do meet with Mr Polley and extend an invitation to meet at Bangor Castle outside of committees.

Alderman Adair spoke of how he had met with Mr Polley at a previous meeting and despite feeling it had been initially constructive, he felt Members had been, 'led up the garden path,' as they had not been informed of incoming changes. He thought that NIHE were already under significant workloads without having to deal with the additional stresses. As such, Alderman Adair wanted to invite Mr Polley for a meeting at Bangor Castle as opposed to his coming to a committee. Councillor Woods agreed, suggesting that Council was best placed to assist, given that what was due to be in place would not be fit for purpose.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Adair, seconded by Councillor, that the recommendation be adopted and that Council agree for a cross party delegation to meet Permanent Secretary Mr Polley to discuss the delivering going forward of affordable warmth scheme.**

## **25. AGE FRIENDLY UPDATE AUGUST 2023** (FILE REF: CW 29)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing which outlined that, during the last year, Age Friendly work had continued to gain momentum with some key achievements and future plans noted in this report:

### 1. The Big Guide to Age Friendly Ards and North Down

The Big Guide had been extremely well received by both individuals and organisations, with numerous compliments continuing to be received at the time of writing. To date, over 5000 copies had been distributed across the Borough. The online version had also been launched and could be accessed using the link below:

[The Big Guide to Age Friendly Ards and North Down](#)

Those who could not easily go online had the ability obtain a hard copy of the guide by contacting [agefriendly@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:agefriendly@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk) and Members could also request copies for their own use/distribution.

## 2. The Over 50s Council

After a successful recruitment campaign, the Over 50s Council met quarterly, with both a morning and meeting option to facilitate the needs of the members. To date, the group had reviewed the Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan 2019-2022 and made constructive contributions to the proposed wording and actions of the new plan (see point 5), which was due to be launched in October.

The Over 50s Council were also kept informed of relevant planned consultations/surveys at a local and regional level and encouraged to participate. They were visited by ANDBC Community and Culture representatives to discuss the PEACEPLUS Programme in October 2022. South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (SEHSCT) attended the April 2023 meetings to obtain their views on their proposed Active Ageing social media interview, and the constructive criticism received was acted upon in finalising the video. SEHSCT hoped to launch their new Active Aging video and programme at the Positive Ageing Month Roadshows (item 4)

The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) attended the July 2023 meeting to consult on their proposed changes to the Concessionary Fares Schemes, which had become necessary due to the unprecedented cuts to budgets experienced by government departments. This type of engagement was valued by the Over 50s Council, and they had requested similar face to face opportunities with council departments and other community planning partners for future meetings, so that issues of importance to them could be discussed.

## 3. Internal Age Friendly Officers Group

Representatives from council departments met quarterly to increase awareness on Age Friendly (AF) and the need to consult on plans and strategies. AF was not just about older people – it was about making Ards and North Down a great place to live for all ages and links across all community planning themes. Recent successes of this group included better communication between departments, particularly in relation to forthcoming events and consultations, and an amendment to our formal Section 75 assessment process to add "Age Friendly" considerations as one of the required steps.

## 4. Positive Ageing Roadshows

Following on from the success of last October's Positive Ageing Month, there would again be an online calendar of events and activities for older people across the Borough, many of which were happening all year round and not just in October.

There was to be two Roadshows for seniors, supported by over 15 community planning partners, that would focus on the themes: community safety, home safety, health and wellbeing, and social participation. Additional funding had been provided by PCSP to support the events and Peninsula Healthy Living had been included to ensure the needs of the rural community were being considered.

The two roadshows were:

**Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2023 Kircubbin Community centre 11am – 2pm**  
**Friday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2023 Ards Blair Mayne 11am – 2pm.**

Further details were to appear in the local press, social media and the council website as well as fliers distributed to older people's groups and placed in key locations.

#### 5. Draft Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan 2023- 2027

The proposed Strategy and Action Plan for 2023 – 2027 had been shaped by the Over 50s Council and other community planning partners. It was awaiting final approval by the Age Friendly Alliance at their quarterly meeting in September, with a formal launch planned for October during Positive Ageing Month. At the AF Alliance meeting, partners would be tasked with leading on the various actions and these were to be monitored at future meetings.

#### 6. Age Friendly Employer Pledge

The Centre for Ageing Better was calling on employers to pledge to become more age friendly. The job market was changing, and employers were facing huge challenges. There were skills and labour shortages with vacancy rates at record highs. Workers in their 50s and 60s were key to filling these gaps. Yet employers had been missing out on all that older workers could offer. More people had been working later in life, but older workers often faced prejudice and were overlooked. Employment rates dropped after the age of 55, and over half of people had stopped working before state pension age - yet multigenerational workforces drove productivity and innovation.

[Age-friendly Employer Pledge | Centre for Ageing Better \(ageing-better.org.uk\)](https://ageing-better.org.uk)

The Age Friendly Employer Pledge was a nationwide programme for employers who:

- recognise the importance and value of older workers
- are committed to improving work for people in their 50s and 60s (and beyond)

- are prepared to take action to help them flourish in a multigenerational workforce

ANDBC was already committed to becoming an Age Friendly Borough, and as an organisation already met the majority of commitments required in the pledge:



With the agreement and support of the Organisational Development Manager, we believed that ANDBC was ready to become the first Northern Ireland Council to sign this pledge. We had already been meeting most of the desired outcomes so signing the pledge provided both a public statement and recognition of our continued commitment to an age friendly culture. It would also have set an example to other businesses in the Borough, and Officers would be encouraging other employers to also take the pledge as one of the proposed actions in the Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan 2023 – 2027. This had the support of Economic Development who viewed it as an opportunity to engage with the Labour Market Forum in the local area, to encourage local businesses to consider employing/retaining older people. Supporting the signing of the pledge and subsequent actions would also form part of the evidence for CharterPlus of our Elected Members' commitment to Age Friendly.

RECOMMENDED that Council:

1. Continues to promote online access to The Big Guide and distribute hardcopies for those who are unable to do so.
2. Notes the ongoing Age Friendly work, including that of the Over 50s Council and Internal AF Officers Group.
3. Notes the dates for the October Roadshows.
4. Notes the Draft Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan
5. Approves the adoption of the Age Friendly Employer Pledge, to be signed by the Chief Executive, as part of the Council's continued commitment to being an Age Friendly Borough.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Alderman Adair, that the recommendation be adopted.**

**26. PUBLIC DRINKING WATER SUPPLY 2022  
(FILE REF: CW 98)**

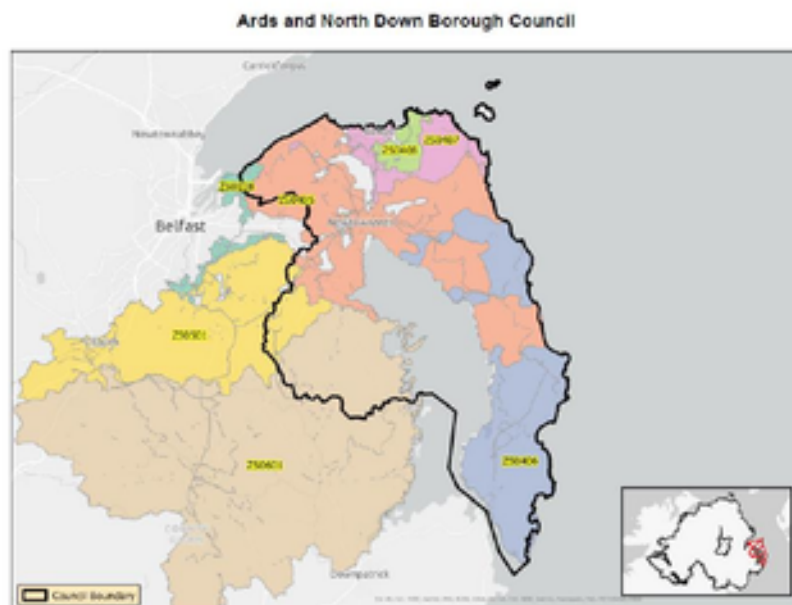
PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing regarding the attached Drinking Water Quality Report produced by Northern Ireland Water for the Ards and North Down Borough Council area for 2022. The report indicated a 99.9% level of compliance with an extensive array of drinking water quality parameters as laid down in the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017 as amended in 2018.

Sampling was intermittent at times during the COVID pandemic, with a complete cessation at domestic sources from December 2021 to 14<sup>th</sup> March 2022. Fortunately, sampling at domestic supplies had returned to normal service at the time of writing.

No classified major water quality failures were recorded for the Borough during the year; however, one serious incident was reported. This related to cold weather in December 2022 causing water supply pipes to burst at various locations in Northern Ireland and was not a result of local supply treatment failure.

Two significant events were identified during the year, with both relating to the final pH levels of water leaving Drumaroad Water Treatment Works, which provided drinking water to most of the Borough. No reason for the results was identified and it was felt that the level was not representative of the water supply.

The map below identified the various supply zones that operate in the Ards and North Down, as well as compliance levels from 2017 onwards.



Percentage Compliance at Customer Tap (including Supply Points)

	Target	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Northern Ireland Compliance	99.7%	99.8%	99.8%	99.8%	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%
Ards and North Down Compliance	99.7%	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%	100.0%	99.9%

2022 water supply zones wholly or partially within the council area:

Zone Code	Zone Name	Zone Code	Zone Name
ZS0108	Belfast Purdyburn	ZS0408	Drumroad Bangor East
ZS0405	Drumroad Ansb West	ZS0501	Drumroad Lisburn
ZS0406	Drumroad Portaferry	ZS0601	Drumroad Ballynahinch
ZS0407	Drumroad Bangor West		

Northern Ireland Water had identified the need to deliver a significant volume of water mains rehabilitation and other works across its ageing network in this area. A map of locations where rehabilitation works were planned was contained in the body of the report.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the report.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Cummings, seconded by Alderman Adair, that the recommendation be adopted.**

**27. FOOD CONTROL SERVICE PLAN 2023-24  
(FILE REF: CW 22)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing which outlined that the Food Service Plan had been produced as a requirement of the Food Standards Agency Framework Agreement on Official Feed and Food Controls. All Local Authorities were required to provide a plan of the Council's Food Control function for the Borough and review on an annual basis.



The Plan had been attached in the Appendix and elected members were asked to review and note the plan. A year end update would be provided to the Council.

RECOMMENDED that Council adopt the Food Control Service Plan for 2023-2024.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Brooks, seconded by Councillor W Irvine, that the recommendation be adopted.**

## **28. NOTICE OF MOTION**

### **28.1. NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLORS CREIGHTON AND MOORE**

*That this Council notes that the number of households with homelessness status on the social housing waiting list across NI has increased from 12,431 to 26,310 households between 31 March 2013 and 31 March 2023, an increase of 111.7%; notes the enormous strain the homelessness system is under with the number of households in temporary accommodation at unprecedented levels; agrees that this council has a role to play in preventing homelessness in this borough alongside other organisations and bodies in the Public, Statutory and Voluntary sectors; calls on this Council to assess how it contributes to homelessness prevention through carrying out an audit of its services; and requests that Officers bring back a report detailing the homelessness prevention work currently supported as well as how the Council's community planning function can further support homelessness prevention work in the local area.*

Proposed by Councillor Creighton, seconded by Councillor Moore that the Notice of Motion be adopted.

Councillor Creighton discussed the reasoning behind the Notice of Motion. As private rent was very expensive, more people were being forced into homelessness with 1670 households having a homeless status whilst the number of houses requiring temporary accommodation had increased from 2018 to 384 in 2021-22. With the additional struggle of sourcing temporary accommodation, some houses were being placed outside of the Ards & North Down Borough with the impact also affecting healthcare, policing and justice. Long waits were recognised as extremely damaging especially to children and their education. All levels of government had a part to play in an attempt to prevent homelessness rather than respond to it. Ards & North Down Borough Council were already engaged in a number of associated programmes and this Notice of Motion aimed to look at work already being carried out and see what other help could be offered. She understood the Council could not solve the issue on their own but believed they had a vital role in the overall fight against homelessness.

Councillor Moore had worked in the Bangor District of NIHE and recalled a Housing Officer had to be on the rota for individuals or families presenting as homeless. She

had firsthand experience of the difficulties in finding temporary accommodation and recognised a multi-agency approach was required to support people in the hopes that tenancies did not break down.

Alderman Adair commended the Councillors on the Notice of Motion and agreed that Council should work with partners and NIHE. In his own constituency, rental houses were being sold off which had led to the need of alternative housing and a desperate need of more social housing. Councillor W Irvine was equally concerned, sharing the sentiments of Alderman Adair. He thought it was plausible that quite a number of rental properties had dropped off the market as landlords were moving back into their properties given the financial crisis.

Councillor Woods reminded Members that hidden homelessness existed too with backup reports such as Nowhere to Go by DfC which may shine further light on the subject.

**AGREED, on the proposal of Councillor Creighton, seconded by Councillor Moore, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.**

## **28.2. NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLORS BOYLE AND S IRVINE**

*That this Council agrees to the sponsorship of £1000 for the category of Volunteer / Coach of the year award, to be recognised at the forthcoming 2023 Council Sports Awards Ceremony. This funding could potentially be realised through current budget underspends or Council reserves.*

Proposed by Councillor Boyle, seconded by Councillor S Irvine that the Notice of Motion be adopted.

Councillor Boyle spoke of how individuals had benefited from the Sports forum in their youth and devoted their time thereafter in adulthood as volunteers for the forum and thanked all those who played a part in its function. He believed the Council should be proud of the various sporting groups throughout the borough and their many accolades. The budget this year was reduced significantly from £21k to £5k, creating a real struggle for the forum to operate and host any events. As such, he was hoping £1k would be sourced from underspends or reserves in order to provide the required finance to host the Awards Ceremony, noting that such monies should not be sourced from leisure given the department's constraints at the time of writing.

Councillor S Irvine agreed and informed Members that his own experience with the forum had been in football and that within the last 15-20 years, sports awards for any club were a large vent. Though some did not compete at high levels, it gave an opportunity to get recognition through their work with the community. With the

Council sponsoring Volunteer of the Year Awards, it was always regarded as a big thing with local clubs publicising their own work and putting forth a volunteer who had devoted much of their personal time; a way to highlight an unsung hero.

Alderman Cummings agreed, citing the energy and enthusiasm in sports coaching that was very hard to quantify, especially so in financial terms. In addition, there were many athletes who were all very dedicated. He asked if sponsorship of volunteers had come from an offer of external body funding or if the opportunity for external sponsorship would be a possibility. The Head of Leisure explained that the Notice of Motion sent a message of looking for more from private sponsorship due to there not being enough money to pay for events. If this was to be the case, Council would have to step up and lead by example in the hopes of attracting other investors who would assist in the Awards Ceremony. If the financial contribution was agreed, officers would then go to other groups in the hope of making up the shortfall or, if not possible, the award would then be downgraded to an affordable level.

Councillor Woods noted the £5k budget with nine categories and asked where the £1k would come from whilst Alderman Douglas queried what sponsors existed. The Head of Leisure explained that the £1k would be in addition to the £5k budget, being sourced from somewhere else for the Council to sponsor awards and seek investment from other sponsors. It would help to pay for the awards night and also to help sponsor one of the awards. Officers were trying to attract attention for sponsorship, but all businesses were struggling and did not have adequate funding to support the awards. In addition, many businesses felt the Council should be the direct sponsors of the awards, so it was a difficult sell to prospective and current sponsors. Councillor W Irvine suggested approaching the Bangor Business Awards via the development team.

Councillor Boyle thanked Members for their thoughts and of the pleasure in attending an event that honours sports champions of this borough and the world. He knew staff were trying to hold onto current sponsors but realised the struggles of said sponsors.

**AGREED, on the proposal of Councillor Boyle, seconded by Councillor S Irvine, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.**

## **29. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS**

(a) The seeking of an update report on the progress of repairs to the main hall in the Portaferry Sports Centre that has been closed since the end of June 2023.

Councillor Boyle summarised the requirement of an update, citing the hall's closure based on Health & Safety reasons with residents wishing to know when they could access it again.

The Head of Leisure Services explained the site was dual use, owned by St MacNissi's Trust with the school managing the building. Issues had been identified

with the floor in the main hall giving way and it had to be closed in June. The school was only a custodian, but responsibility would lie with them and the Trust. However, given the summer holidays, it was understandable that the school was not operating. The main impact on Council's use of the building was on birthday parties and officers in the meantime would attempt to facilitate its users in the Market House and refund those events that could not be facilitated.

Notices, newsletters and emails were sent out informing as many people as possible of the circumstances and alternative arrangements. As Council did not own the building, they could do nothing but contact the school. It advised the headmaster was attempting to rectify the situation. A company had travelled from England to a centre elsewhere in NI and the leisure team asked them to inspect the floor on the afternoon of 13<sup>th</sup> September. The results of this inspection led to the conclusion that the floor's structure had failed meaning the supports below would require excavating and replacing. There were noted, potentially, similar issues throughout the whole building. Council had responsibility for some minor maintenance through an agreement but not for the scope of this issue. Alderman Adair shared the concerns of Councillor Boyle and hoped Council could work with the Trust to see if grants were available.

**NOTED**

### **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC/PRESS**

**AGREED, on the proposal of Councillor Chambers, seconded by Councillor Moore, that the public/press be excluded from the meeting.**

### **30. SUPPLIER CONTRACT EXTENSION**

(FILE REF: HER 14 09/23)

**\*\*IN CONFIDENCE\*\***

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)**

A report presented to Community & Wellbeing containing information relating to the extension of a contract for a supplier that worked with the Council. Its basis was in relation to the lawful closure of businesses during Coronavirus lockdowns and reduced operations whilst social distancing measures were a recommendation of the Government.

The report recommended that Council approved the extension.

The recommendation was agreed.

**31. APPROVAL FOR SINGLE TENDER ACTIONS**  
(FILE REF: CDV 30B)

**\*\*IN CONFIDENCE\*\***

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)**

A report presented to the Community & Wellbeing Committee relating to single tender action for a supplier operating across numerous sites in the borough. These tenders had been researched to find out if the supplier remained the sole supplier of the essential product, and this was found to be the case.

The report recommended that Council approved the single tender action.

The recommendation was agreed.

**32. NORTHERN COMMUNITY LEISURE TRUST QUARTER 1 2023-24** (FILE REF: CW 51)

**\*\*IN CONFIDENCE\*\***

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)**

A report to the Community & Wellbeing Committee relating to quarterly performance reports for the Northern Community Leisure Trust.

The report recommended that Council noted the report which included performance for the quarter.

The recommendation was agreed.

**33. TENDER FOR THE PROVISION OF FITNESS EQUIPMENT FOR COMBER LEISURE CENTRE** (FILE REF: LEI21)

**\*\*IN CONFIDENCE\*\*****NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)**

A report to the Community & Wellbeing Committee regarding the provision of fitness equipment for Comber leisure Centre, aligned to the Council's procurement policies in relation to tenders with the contract award being based on a combination of quality and price criteria.

The report recommended that Council agree to the contract award.

The recommendation was agreed.

**RE-ADMITTANCE OF PUBLIC/PRESS**

**AGREED**, on the proposal of Alderman Adair, seconded by Councillor Moore, that the public/press be re-admitted to the meeting.

**TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting terminated at 23:35.