

March 27th, 2026

To Each Member of Council

**NOTICE OF MEETING**

You are requested to attend a Meeting of the

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council

to be held on Monday, 30th March 2026 at 6:30 pm in Council Chamber, The Braid, 1-29 Bridge Street, Ballymena and via remote access.

Yours sincerely



Valerie Watts  
Interim Chief Executive, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council

# Agenda

## 1 FORMALITIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### 1.1 Notice of Meeting

### 1.2 Apologies

### 1.3 Declarations of Interest

Members and Officers are invited to declare any pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests, including gifts and hospitality, they may have in respect of items on this Agenda.

### 1.4 Minutes of Council Meeting

#### 1.4.1 Council Meeting held on 16 February 2026 - Circulated

📄 *02-26 Full Council Mins.pdf*

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#### 1.4.2 Special Meeting (Conferment of Freedom of the Borough & Insurance) held on 16 March 2026 - Circulated

📄 *03-26 Special Council Mins.pdf*

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### 1.5 Mayor's Announcements

## 2 QUESTIONS

### 2.1 Members

#### 2.1.1 Tabled question in the name of Councillor A Barr

I have received numerous complaints from residents and an MLA regarding dog fouling within MEABC.

Therefore, may I ask for clarification on MEABCs position regarding the provision and deployment of enforcement officers and any changes to staffing levels within that department?

Moreover, what is the current capacity and resourcing of street cleansing services?

#### 2.1.2 Tabled question in the name of Councillor M Collins (25.03.26)

Can an update be provided on the renaming of Prince Andrew Way in Carrickfergus?

## **2.2 Public**

None

## **3 MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

### **3.1 Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee held on 23 February 2026 - Circulated (25.03.26)**

[!\[\]\(cbe80b694ebd74fcfe136a095b608235\_img.jpg\) 02.26 CRPG Mins Draft.pdf](#)

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### **3.2 Neighbourhoods and Communities Committee held on 24 February 2026 - Circulated**

[!\[\]\(e474458956c9a37fbf9586ddb60a7fa1\_img.jpg\) 02-26 NC Mins.pdf](#)

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### **3.3 Planning Committee held on 26 February 2026 - Circulated**

[!\[\]\(870f5d5e9c0d57485634be3ecf52f3ca\_img.jpg\) 02.26 Planning Minutes.pdf](#)

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### **3.4 Environment and Economy Committee held on 2 March 2026 - Circulated (26.03.26)**

[!\[\]\(b792654f2cef9719eabeb6c5be00811e\_img.jpg\) Draft 03-26 Mins EE.pdf](#)

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### **3.5 Audit and Scrutiny Committee held on 3 March 2026 - Circulated**

[!\[\]\(b64b40baaee5acddc1eab8538ba84754\_img.jpg\) 03-26 A&S Mins.pdf](#)

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## **4 POLICY FRAMEWORK AND BUDGET**

## **5 STRATEGIC ISSUES**

## **6 ITEMS FOR DECISION - OPEN COUNCIL**

### **6.1 Disability Lived Experience Group Update - Circulated**

[!\[\]\(1ed10657a19f9137278430c48fd18626\_img.jpg\) Disability Lived Experience Group Update.pdf](#)

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[!\[\]\(a25a22d88c5882f4a20f36103df86562\_img.jpg\) Appendix 1 Notes and actions - Disability Lived Experience Group 9 March 2026.pdf](#)

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[!\[\]\(2885535958616e9ec6b97903614c334b\_img.jpg\) Appendix 2 MEABC Disability Lived Experience Group - Terms of Reference.pdf](#)

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[!\[\]\(62e94c0795f5d0e811cb40e6b18f26fd\_img.jpg\) Appendix 3 - Disability Lived Experience Group - Guidance Document.pdf](#)

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## 6.2 Inclusive Summer Opportunities Grant Funding Scheme - Circulated

Inclusive Summer Opportunities Grant Funding Scheme Report.pdf

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## 7 MOTIONS

### 7.1 Proposed by Councillor A Clarke, seconded by Councillor G McKeen

“This council resolves to establish a Retail Task Force for Mid and East Antrim Borough, comprising elected members, council officers, representatives from local retail and hospitality sectors, business organisations, town-centre partnerships, and any other relevant stakeholders.

The Task Force will undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the Borough’s three town centres, including:

footfall patterns and consumer behaviour;

infrastructure, accessibility, and public- realm considerations;

opportunities for diversification and investment.

The Task Force shall review existing town-centre boundaries, assessing whether these should be compressed or redefined to better reflect current economic activity and to support more targeted regeneration.

This may include proposals for the creation of Enhanced Zones within each town centre, where focused interventions - such as public-realm improvements, business support initiatives, marketing campaigns or investment incentives - can be prioritised.

The task force will aim to bring forward a strategic action plan outlining short, medium and long term measures to support local retail and strengthen town centre resilience.”

### 7.2 Proposed by Councillor A Henry, seconded by Councillor A Smyth

"This Council, in endometriosis awareness month, notes with concern the growing crisis in gynaecology services in Mid and East Antrim and across Northern Ireland, which has left thousands of women waiting extended periods for diagnosis and treatment while suffering serious pain.

Council recognises that conditions such as Endometriosis, Adenomyosis, Polycystic Ovary Syndrome and other gynae disorders can have profound impacts on physical health, mental wellbeing, employment and family life and that prolonged delays in diagnosis or treatment can significantly worsen outcomes for patients.

Accordingly, this Council calls on the Minister of Health to:

1. Bring forward a clear plan to tackle the backlog in gynaecology waiting lists.
2. Increase investment in gynaecology services
3. Report publicly on progress in reducing waiting times for gynaecology services.

This council agrees to write to the Minister of Health outlining these concerns and urging immediate action to address the crisis in women's health services."

## **8 SEALING**

(i) Mid and East Borough Council -and- Mascott Construction (Europe) Ltd (Carrickfergus Amphitheatre Spa refurbishment)

(ii) The NI EV Consortium -and- WEEV.IE LTD (To supply , maintain and operate Electric Vehicle Charging Units within 9 of the Councils in Northern Ireland)

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***Closed Council - In accordance with Council policy, members of the press will not be in attendance for this section of the Meeting.***

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## **9 STRATEGIC ISSUES - CLOSED**

## **10 ITEMS FOR DECISION - CLOSED**

### **10.1 Business Case for Card Machine Services - Circulated**

 <i>Council Finance Procurement Business Case for Card Machine Services MH.pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>
 <i>Appendix 1 - Business Case for Card Machine Services .pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>
 <i>Appendix 2 - Equality Screening Card Machine Services.pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>
 <i>Appendix 3 - RNIA Card Machine Services Business Case.pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>
 <i>Appendix 4 - DPIA Screening Card Terminal Business Case.pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>





## 10.2 Bonfire Consultation Outcome & Bonfire Management 2026 - Circulated

<a href="#"> <i>Bonfire Consultation Outcome Bonfire Management 2026 final.pdf</i></a>	<i>Not included</i>
<a href="#"> <i>Appendix 1 Proposal from ACT Initiative.pdf</i></a>	<i>Not included</i>
<a href="#"> <i>Appendix 2 ACT Initiative MEA Final Report.pdf</i></a>	<i>Not included</i>
<a href="#"> <i>Appendix 3 Bonfire Management Equality Screening.pdf</i></a>	<i>Not included</i>
<a href="#"> <i>Appendix 4 Bonfire Management Rural Screening.pdf</i></a>	<i>Not included</i>
<a href="#"> <i>Appendix 5 Bonfire Management Sustainability Screening.pdf</i></a>	<i>Not included</i>

## 10.3 HMO Notice of Motion Update - Circulated

<a href="#"> <i>HMOs Notice of Motion Update.pdf</i></a>	<i>Not included</i>
<a href="#"> <i>Appendix 1 NIHMO Enforcement policy.pdf</i></a>	<i>Not included</i>

## 10.4 Revised Policies following finalisation of rate for 2026/27 - Circulated

<a href="#"> <i>Revised Treasury Management Strategies and policies 2026 27 post rate striking cover report MH (004).pdf</i></a>	<i>Not included</i>
<a href="#"> <i>Appendix 1 - MEABC Treasury Management Policy and Strategy 2026-27.pdf</i></a>	<i>Not included</i>
<a href="#"> <i>Appendix 2 - Capital Asset Strategy 2026-27.pdf</i></a>	<i>Not included</i>
<a href="#"> <i>Appendix 3 - Medium Term Financial Plan 2026 -2030.pdf</i></a>	<i>Not included</i>

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**OPEN COUNCIL**

**MID AND EAST ANTRIM BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of Meeting held on Monday 16 February 2026 at 6.30pm  
in the Council Chamber, The Braid, 1-29 Bridge Street, Ballymena  
and via remote access**

**In the Chair:** Councillor J Minford, Mayor

**Vice-Chair:** Councillor T Hoey, Deputy Mayor

**Present:** Alderman R Glover  
Alderman T Gordon  
Alderman R Logan  
Alderman W McCaughey  
Alderman S McDonald  
Alderman P Reid  
Alderman A Wilson  
Councillor M Armstrong  
Councillor A Barr  
Councillor R Beggs  
Councillor D Clarke  
Councillor M Collins  
Councillor M Donnelly  
Councillor B Ferris  
Councillor I Friary  
Councillor J Gibson  
Councillor L Gray  
Councillor B Hadden  
Councillor C Harwood  
Councillor A Henry  
Councillor C Jamieson  
Councillor R Lawrence  
Councillor G McKeen  
Councillor J McKeown  
Councillor L Philpott  
Councillor A Rae  
Councillor A Skinner  
Councillor B Thompson  
Councillor M Warwick

**Present remotely:** Alderman B Ashe, MBE  
Alderman Ms Mulvenna  
Councillor A Clarke  
Councillor P Johnston  
Councillor R Quigley  
Councillor Mrs A Smyth

**In Attendance:** Mrs V Watts, Interim Chief Executive  
Mrs L Donnan, Interim Director of Corporate Services  
Mr J McVeigh, Acting Director of Community

Mr J McGrandle, Acting Director of Development  
 Mrs S Williams, Assistant Director - Business Support  
 Mrs S Fisher, Assistant Director, Citizen Focus  
 Ms C Grant, Acting Corporate Solicitor  
 Mr D Anthony, Household Recycling Centre Manager  
 Ms L McCloy, Policy, Performance & Partnership  
 Manager  
 Mr S Bailie, Facility Management and Maintenance  
 Manager  
 Mrs C McIntyre, Governance & Democratic Services  
 Officer  
 Mrs G Carmichael, Governance & Democratic Services  
 Officer

**Attendance remotely:** Ms R Salt, Governance & Democratic Services Officer

**Press:** There were no members of the press present

**Public:** There were no members of the public present.

**Item Minute**

**1. FORMALITIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**1.1 Notice of Meeting**

The Interim Chief Executive read the Notice of Meeting.

**1.2 Apologies**

Apologies were received from:

Alderman Mrs Morrow  
 Councillor Lyness  
 Councillor Stewart

**1.3 Declarations of Interest**

Members and Officers were invited to declare any pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests, including gifts and hospitality they might have in respect of items on this Agenda.

**1.4 Minutes of Council Meetings**

**1.4.1 Council Meeting held on Monday 12 January 2026**

On the proposal of Alderman Logan, seconded by Councillor Ferris, it was

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 12 January 2026 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

The Mayor acknowledged Councillor Skinner's written query which he had forwarded prior to the meeting.

#### **1.4.2 Reconvened Council Meeting held on Wednesday 14 January 2026**

On the proposal of Alderman Logan, seconded by Councillor Donnelly, it was

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the Reconvened Council Meeting held on 14 January 2026 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

Councillor D Clarke entered the meeting at 6.33pm

Following a technical fault with the online live streaming of the meeting, the Mayor agreed to have a 5 minute recess.

Recess commenced at 6.34pm and ended at 6.37pm.

The meeting recommenced at 6.37pm.

Due to the continued technical fault with the online live streaming of the meeting, it was proposed by Alderman McCaughey, seconded by Councillor Armstrong, that the order of business be amended to consider all Closed Council Items first.

On the proposal of Councillor Warwick and seconded by Councillor Jamieson, it was

**RESOLVED:** that the Meeting goes into Closed Council.

In accordance with Council Section 42(4) of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2024 and Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act members of the Press and the public were excluded for this section of the Meeting. The Mayor reminded Members that business discussed in Closed Council should remain confidential.

## **2 STRATEGIC ISSUES – CLOSED**

No items to consider.

## **3 ITEMS FOR DECISION – CLOSED**

### **3.1 Bonfire Consultation Outcome & Bonfire Management 2026**

The item was restricted as information fell under the prescribed exemptions: Part 1 of Schedule 6, Paragraph 3 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information). If restricted from publication the report would never become unrestricted.

A report was previously circulated to brief Full Council on the outcome and recommendations arising from the consultation on bonfire management conducted by ACT Initiative and to agree on next steps. Members were advised that the report had been provided for information only and would be brought back to Council for future consideration when screenings had been completed.

**RESOLVED:** to be considered at a future meeting to allow completion of screenings.

### 3.2 Tullygarley Playing Fields – Return of Expression of Interest

The item was restricted as information fell under the prescribed exemptions: Local Government Act (NI) 2014, Schedule 6, Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial of business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding the information). If restricted from publication, the report would become unrestricted after the Council decision would be made.

Members were advised that the report would now be considered at the next meeting of the Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee.

**RESOLVED:** to be considered at the next meeting of the Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee.

Alderman Mulvenna left the meeting remotely at 6.41pm.

### 3.3 Proposed Sale of Derelict Barn at Tobergel Lane, Larne

The item is restricted as information falls under the prescribed exemptions: Local Government Act (NI) 2014, Schedule 6, Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial of business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding the information). The report would become unrestricted after the Council decision and property disposal had been completed.

A report had been previously circulated for approval to complete the sale of the derelict barn at Tobergel Lane, Larne to the purchaser named in the report and for the sum as detailed in the report.

It was proposed by Alderman Logan, seconded by Councillor Beggs and

**RESOLVED:** to

- (i) approve the sale of the derelict barn at Tobergel Lane, Larne to the purchaser named in the report.; and
- (ii) authorise the Mayor and Interim Chief Executive to execute the contract, transfer deed and land registry forms on behalf of Council.

### 3.4 UK Town of Culture

The item was restricted as information fell under the prescribed exemptions: Local Government Act (NI) 2014, Schedule 6, Part 1, Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information). The report would become unrestricted sometime in the future.

A report had been previously circulated to consider the Council proposal for the UK Town of Culture bid.

Councillor Hadden entered the Chamber at 6.52pm.

Extensive discussion ensued and Members' questions were addressed by the Interim Chief Executive in relation to staff capacity, the EOI application process and anticipated cost to Council if a final bid was successful. It was proposed by Councillor Skinner, seconded by Councillor McKeen to identify local groups within each of the three towns (Ballymena, Carrickfergus and Larne) and to assist groups to submit EOI applications

Councillor Barr left the Chamber at 7.02pm.

#### Amendment

The debate continued and an amendment was proposed by Alderman Reid, seconded by Alderman McCaughey to approve the submission of an Expression of Interest (EOI) for all three towns (Ballymena, Carrickfergus and Larne) to enter the first stage of the competition, to facilitate an opportunity for local groups from each area to complete their own EOI and that Officers would work up a further full bid for the UK Town of Culture competition if any EOI was successful.

Councillor A Clarke left the meeting remotely at 7.15pm.

A recorded vote on the amendment was requested by Alderman Reid.

The Mayor put the amendment to the vote.

For (28)	Against (6)	Abstention (0)
Mayor: J Minford Deputy Mayor: T Hoey Aldermen: B. Ashe, P Reid, T Gordon, R Logan, A Wilson, W McCaughey  Councillor: C Harwood, A Skinner, B Hadden, R Beggs, J Gibson, M Donnelly, M Collins, R Lawrence,	Aldermen R Glover, S McDonald: Councillor: M Armstrong, C Jamieson, R Quigley, L Philpott	

A Rae, J McKeown, B Thompson, M Warwick, I Friary, L Gray, G McKeen D Clarke, A Henry, P Johnston, Mrs A Smyth, B Ferris		
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The Mayor declared the amendment carried.

### 3.5 Lease of Antiville Playing Fields

The item was restricted as information fell under the prescribed exemptions:- Local Government Act (NI) 2014, Schedule 6, Part 1, Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial of business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding the information). The report would become unrestricted on completion of the legal process for lease.

The report, previously circulated, for approval to lease Antiville playing fields, Larne to Larne Community Football Limited (LCF Ltd).

The Facility Management and Maintenance Manager responded to Members' concerns concerning adequate car parking provision and that parity of lease agreement arrangements would be applied to all local Clubs, as far as was possible, following a previous commitment by Officers.

It was proposed by Councillor McKeen and seconded by Councillor Philpott and

**RESOLVED:** to

- (i) review and approve the lease of the Football pitches, associated parking facilities and changing room at Antiville Playing Fields to Larne Community Football Limited
- (ii) authorise the Mayor and Interim Chief Executive to execute and seal the relevant contractual and legal documents on behalf of Council.

Councillor Barr entered the meeting remotely from 7.40pm to 7.55pm.

### 3.6 Household Recycling Centres: Restricted Access for Commercial Vehicles

The item was restricted as information fell under the prescribed exemptions: Local Government Act (NI) 2014, Schedule 6, Part 1, Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information). The report would never become unrestricted from publication.

A report had been previously circulated which outlined the rationale, implications and potential outcomes of implementing restrictions on vans and large trailers visiting MEA Councils' Household Recycling Centres.

Councillor Barr re-entered the Chamber at 7.57pm.

The Interim Chief Executive and Household Recycling Manager clarified the capacity to deliver, implementation arrangements, adequate public messaging to residents, signage and procurement as well as the potential for a future on-line booking system.

It was proposed by Alderman Ashe, seconded by Councillor Beggs and

**RESOLVED:** to

- (i) approve the implementation of the restrictions with a booking system as detailed as necessary measures to protect the intended use of Council's Household Recycling Centre (HRC) sites, proceeding to procurement for the purchase of the appropriate system
- (ii) approve that a review be undertaken after six months to assess the effectiveness of the restrictions and their impact on the community, with any necessary adjustments implemented following this assessment.

On the proposal of Alderman Reid and seconded by Alderman Glover, it was

**RESOLVED:** that the Meeting goes into Open Council.

#### **4.1 Special Council Meeting (Rates) held on Monday 9 February 2026**

Councillor Armstrong wished to be recorded as being against the proposal for the accuracy of the Minutes due to insufficient detail having been recorded.

It was proposed by Councillor Gibson, seconded by Alderman McCaughey

that the minutes of the Special Council Meeting (Rates) held on 9 February 2026 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

The Mayor put the motion to the vote.

Voting on the motion was as follows –

For	Against	Abstain
22	8	0

The Mayor declared that the motion had carried.

#### **4.2 Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor extended sympathies to the family and friends of Mr Paul Cole, a dedicated community volunteer, musician, teacher and historian, and a founding Committee member of the Whitehead Community Association.

Members stood for a minute's silence.

The Mayor gave his congratulations to various people in the Borough, including:

- Watch Commander Tommy Torbitt, an on-call firefighter from Larne Fire Station, who has been honoured for an extraordinary 50 years of service to his community.
- 'Good Morning Ballymena' on being awarded the King's Award for Voluntary Service.
- Broughshane shopkeeper James McNeill, now aged 88, having celebrated an extraordinary 70 years in business

A Member requested that congratulations also be extended to:

- Mr Frank McCooke on 25 years of business at The Slemish Market Garden in Ballymena.

The Mayor acknowledged both the closure of Wyse Byse, a familiar presence on Church Street which has ceased trading bringing to an end 53 years of independent retailing in Ballymena and the imminent closure of McKillen's, the much-loved family-run department store that had stood at the heart of Ballymena town centre for a century.

Councillor Barr left the Chamber at 8.04pm.

Finally, on behalf of the Chamber, the Mayor wished Councillor Ferris well on her imminent marriage.

Due to continued livestreaming issues, a Member asked that a message be issued on social media platforms to advise the public accordingly.

## **5 QUESTIONS**

### **5.1 Members**

No questions to consider.

### **5.2 Public**

No questions had been submitted from the public.

## **6 MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

### **6.1 Planning Committee held on Thursday 15 January 2026**

On the proposal of Councillor Rae, seconded by Councillor Smyth it was:

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 15 January 2026 be approved and adopted.

**6.2 Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee held on Monday 19 January 2026**

On the proposal of Alderman McCaughey, seconded by Councillor Gibson, it was

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the Corporate Policy and Governance Committee held on 19 January 2026, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

**6.3 Neighbourhoods and Communities Committee held on Tuesday 20 January 2026**

On the proposal of Councillor Warwick, seconded by Councillor Friary, it was

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the Neighbourhood and Communities Committee held on 20 January 2026, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

**6.4 Environment and Economy Committee held on Monday 26 January 2026**

The Mayor noted that it was agreed that Item 7.2 'Household Recycling Centres: Restricted Access for Commercial Vehicles' had been deferred to Full Council and had already been considered under Item 3.6 on tonight's Agenda.

On the proposal of Councillor Gibson, seconded by Councillor McKeen, it was

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the Environment and Economy Committee held on 26 January 2026, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

**6.5 Audit and Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday 27 January 2026**

On the proposal of Alderman Ashe, seconded by Councillor Henry, it was

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee held on 27 January 2026, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Councillor Barr re-entered the Chamber at 8.08pm.

**7 POLICY FRAMEWORK AND BUDGET**

No items to consider.

**8 STRATEGIC ISSUES**

No items to consider.

## 9 ITEMS FOR DECISION – OPEN

### 9.1 Services to mark the 110th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme in France

Report, previously circulated, to consider representation from Council to attend the services to mark the 110th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme event on 1 July 2026 by Council's two representatives nominated to The Somme Association plus a Council Officer and nominates two substitutes in the event that both Elected Members are unable to travel.

The following additional Elected Members were nominated to attend the event:

- Alderman McCaughey proposed and Alderman Reid seconded Councillor Collins to attend;
- Alderman Logan proposed and Councillor Harwood seconded Councillor Skinner to attend;
- Councillor Jamieson proposed and Alderman McDonald seconded Councillor Armstrong to attend; and
- Councillor Hadden proposed and Alderman Wilson seconded Councillor Quigley to attend.

The Interim Chief Executive agreed to clarify details of cost to those Members who may consider travelling independently.

It was proposed by Alderman Ashe, seconded by Alderman Logan and

**RESOLVED:** to

- (i) approve the attendance of the two Elected Members nominated to The Somme Association, the reserve, and one officer
- (ii) approve the nominations of Councillors Armstrong, Collins, Quigley and Skinner to also attend.

### 9.2 Inclusion & Equality Sub Committee Update

Report previously circulated which provided an update from the Inclusion and Equality Sub-Committee.

**RESOLVED:** to note the update from the Inclusion and Equality Sub-Committee.

## 10 MOTIONS

### 10.1 Notice of Motion Proposed by Councillor R Beggs, Seconded by Alderman A Wilson

In accordance with the notice on the agenda, it was  
Proposed by Councillor Beggs  
Seconded by Alderman Wilson:

"That Mid & East Antrim Borough Council expresses concern at the additional costs to be added to all non-EU parcels arriving in NI that has been announced by the EU as being applicable from 1 July 2026: namely a €3 customs levy on all small parcel imports valued under €150, alongside an additional €2 handling fee to fund the new EU Customs Authority.

This will add costs to both businesses and to consumers. We request that the Chief Executive pass on concerns to HM Government and to seek clarity as to whether these rules will apply under the Protocol and the Windsor Framework; whether the millions of parcels from the rest of the UK will be routed via 'green' or 'red' lanes; and clarify what additional costs and delays we might expect regarding parcels received from the rest of the UK or elsewhere."

A recorded vote was requested by Councillor D Clarke.

The Mayor put the motion to the vote.

For (35)	Against (0)	Abstention (0)
Mayor: J Minford Deputy Mayor: T Hoey Aldermen: B Ashe, R Glover, P Reid, T Gordon, R Logan, A Wilson, W McCaughey, S McDonald  Councillor: M Warwick, M Armstrong, C Jamieson, R Quigley, C Harwood, A Skinner, B Hadden, R Beggs, J Gibson, M Donnelly, L Philpott, M Collins, R Lawrence, A Rae, J McKeown, B Thompson, I Friary, L Gray, G McKeen D Clarke, A Henry, P Johnston, Mrs A Smyth, B Ferris, A Barr		

The Mayor declared the motion carried.

**RESOLVED:** that Council support the Notice of Motion.

**10.2 Notice of Motion Proposed by Councillor M Collins, Seconded by Councillor B Hadden**

In accordance with the notice on the agenda, it was  
Proposed by Councillor Collins  
Seconded by Councillor Hadden

"That this Council sends our congratulations to Carrick Rangers Football Club on their success in winning the County Antrim Shield, the club's first senior trophy in 33 years, and hosts a reception to mark the occasion."

**RESOLVED:** that Council support the Notice of Motion.

The Mayor advised that following support for this Motion, he would ask Officers to take the proposal forward with the relevant financial and equality assessment and asked that this be brought to a future Council meeting for a final decision on implementation.

**11 SEALING**

- (i) Mid & East Antrim Borough Council -and- Oxford Innovation Limited  
(Appointment of an Operator for the i4C Innovation and Cleantech Centre for the Pre-Operations Phase)

Following discussion, the Interim Chief Executive undertook to arrange a workshop for Members to address Members' queries and concerns in relation to this and other City Deal projects.

It was proposed by Alderman McCaughey seconded by Alderman Logan to authorise the Mayor and the Interim Chief Executive to execute and seal the contract and that a workshop take place to consider this and other City Deal Projects.

The procedure for sealing this document was confirmed by the Acting Corporate Solicitor following which the Interim Chief Executive agreed to a request to review the associated process.

Councillor Philpott wished to be recorded as being against the project on the grounds of cost and the deficit for Council.

The Mayor put the motion to the vote.

Voting on the proposal was as follows –

For	Against	Abstain
24	12	3

The Mayor declared the motion carried.

The Meeting ended at 9.09 pm.

..... Mayor

..... Interim Chief Executive

..... Date

DRAFT

## MID AND EAST ANTRIM BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Minutes of Special Council Meeting**  
**held on Monday 16 March 2026 at 6.30pm, in the Council Chamber,**  
**The Braid, 1-29 Bridge Street, Ballymena and via remote access**

- In the Chair:** Councillor J Minford, Mayor
- Vice-Chair:** Councillor T Hoey, Deputy Mayor
- Present:** Alderman R Glover  
Alderman T Gordon  
Alderman P Reid  
Councillor R Beggs  
Councillor I Friary  
Councillor R Lawrence  
Councillor G McKeen  
Councillor A Rae  
Councillor B Thompson
- Present remotely:** Alderman B Ashe, MBE  
Alderman R Logan  
Alderman W McCaughey  
Alderman S McDonald  
Alderman A Wilson  
Councillor A Clarke  
Councillor D Clarke  
Councillor M Collins  
Councillor M Donnelly  
Councillor L Gray  
Councillor C Harwood  
Councillor A Henry  
Councillor P Johnston  
Councillor A Smyth  
Councillor R Stewart  
Councillor M Warwick
- In Attendance:** Mrs V Watts, Interim Chief Executive  
Mrs S Williams, Assistant Director – Business Support  
Ms M Hegarty, Assistant Director - Finance  
Mr R Lowery, Insurance Officer  
Mrs C McIntyre, Governance & Democratic Services Officer  
Mrs G Carmichael, Governance & Democratic Services Officer
- Attendance remotely:** Mr J McVeigh, Acting Director of Community

**Press:** There were no members of the press present

**Public:** There were no members of the public present.

**Item Minute**

**1 NOTICE OF MEETING**

The Interim Chief Executive read the Notice of Meeting.

**2 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from:

Councillor Barr  
Councillor McKeown

**3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members and Officers were invited to declare any pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests, including gifts and hospitality they might have in respect of items on this Agenda.

No declarations were received.

**4 CONFERMENT OF THE FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH**

The report, previously circulated, recommended that Council confers the Freedom of the Borough on Sergeant George Horner.

It was proposed by Councillor Collins, seconded by Alderman Ashe and

**RESOLVED:** to confer the Freedom of the Borough on Sergeant George Horner.

It was proposed by Alderman Glover, seconded by Councillor Thompson,

**RESOLVED:** that the Meeting goes into Closed Council.

In accordance with Section 42(4) of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2024 and Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act members of the Press and the public were excluded for this section of the Meeting. The Mayor reminded Members that business discussed in Closed Council should remain confidential.

Councillors A Clarke, Donnelly, Gray and Johnston entered the meeting remotely during Item 5.

**5 INSURANCE RENEWAL 2026/27**

The item was determined to fall within Closed business as information falls under the prescribed exemptions: Paragraph 3, Part 1, Schedule 6 Local Government Act (NI) 2014 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) – commercially sensitive information.

The report, previously circulated, recommended that Council approve the proposed programme of cover.

The Assistant Director (Finance) responded to a Member’s query to confirm that Council continued to actively engage through SOLACE (The Society of Local Authority Chief Executives) to examine insurance arrangements across all Councils and that any budget savings would be transferred to the insurance reserve during 2026/27.

It was proposed by Councillor Beggs, seconded by Councillor McKeen and

**RESOLVED:** to approve

- (i) the insurance renewal premiums for 2026/27 as outlined in the report
- (ii) entering into a 2-year long term agreement for property insurance, in line with broker advice
- (iii) retaining an annual arrangement (1 year renewal) for the Public and Employers Liability insurance, in line with broker advice
- (iv) the transfer of the budgeted saving (arising from the difference between the anticipated 15% increase and the actual 4% increase) to the Council's insurance reserve for 2026/27.

It was proposed by Alderman Glover, seconded by Alderman Reid,

**RESOLVED:** that the Meeting goes into Open Council.

The Meeting ended at 6.45pm.

..... Mayor

..... Interim Chief Executive

..... Date

**MID AND EAST ANTRIM BOROUGH COUNCIL****CORPORATE RESOURCES, POLICY & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of Meeting held on Monday 23 February 2026 at 6.30pm  
in the Council Chamber, The Braid, 1-29 Bridge Street, Ballymena  
and via remote access**

- Chair:** Alderman W McCaughey
- Vice Chair:** Councillor J McKeown
- Present:** Alderman R Glover  
Councillor M Armstrong  
Councillor R Beggs  
Councillor J Gibson  
Councillor T Hoey  
Councillor G McKeen  
Councillor J McKeown  
Councillor B Thompson  
Councillor R Quigley
- Present remotely:** Alderman A Wilson  
Councillor A Clarke  
Councillor M Collins  
Councillor M Donnelly  
Councillor B Ferris  
Councillor J Gibson  
Councillor L Gray  
Councillor C Harwood  
Councillor A Henry  
Councillor C Jamieson  
Councillor B Lyness
- Attendance:** Mrs S Williams, Assistant Director - Business Support  
Ms M Hegarty, Assistant Director - Finance  
Mrs S Fisher, Assistant Director - Citizen Focus  
Mr S Bailie, Facilities Management and Maintenance  
Manager  
Mrs G Carmichael, Governance & Democratic Services  
Officer
- Also in attendance:** Mrs L Donnan, Interim Director of Corporate Services  
Mr J McVeigh, Acting Director of Community
- Press:** No members of the Press were in attendance.
- Public:** No members of the public were in attendance.

**ITEM MINUTE****1 Notice of Meeting**

The Assistant Director – Business Support read the Notice of Meeting.

**2 Apologies**

There were no apologies to be recorded.

**3 Declarations of Interest**

Members and Officers were invited to declare any pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests, including gifts and hospitality, they may have in respect of items on this Agenda.

Councillor Quigley declared an interest in item 7.4 - Tullygarley Playing Fields – Return of Expression of Interest, as a Member of the Community Board and left the meeting when the item was discussed.

**4 Items for Consideration / Decision****4.1 Performance Improvement Plan 2025/26 Quarter 3 Update**

Report previously circulated, provided the Performance Improvement Plan 2025/26 Quarter 3 Update Report for scrutiny and sought approval to publish the report on the Council's website.

It was proposed by Councillor Gibson, seconded by Councillor Quigley and

**RESOLVED:** to

- (i) note the Performance Improvement Plan Quarter 3 Update Report, and
- (ii) approve it for publication on the Council's website.

**4.2 Public Consultation Briefing**

The previously circulated report provided an update on the public consultations in which Council is involved, namely:

- (a) those where the Council is a stakeholder and submitting a response; and
- (b) those where the Council is responsible for conducting the consultation.

The report recommended that Elected Members note the consultation summary report and approve the draft response to the Consultation on the Northern Ireland Executive Disability Strategy 2025-2035.

It was proposed by Councillor McKeown, seconded by Councillor McKeen and

**RESOLVED:** to

- (i) note the consultation summary report and
- (ii) approve the draft response to the Consultation on the Northern Ireland Executive Disability Strategy 2025-2035.

#### **4.3 Quarterly Complaints Report – Quarter 3: October - December 2025**

The previously circulated report provided an overview of the complaints processed by Council during Quarter 3 of 2025/2026, i.e. between 1 October and 31 December 2025.

Members voiced their concerns regarding the recent inconsistencies with Bryson collections and queried the number of complaints under the Waste sector. The Assistant Director – Citizen Focus advised that the complaint information would be held by the particular directorate.

Discussion ensued and officers undertook to investigate which complaints were in particular to Bryson and advise Members.

**RESOLVED:** to note the quarterly complaint report for Quarter 3 2025/2026.

#### **4.4 Reception Scrutiny Review – Proposed Improvements**

The report updated the Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee following Audit & Scrutiny Committee approval to implement recommendations contained within the Reception Scrutiny Review.

**RESOLVED:** to

- (i) note the Reception Scrutiny Review recommendations, and
- (ii) approve that a bi-annual report will be brought to Committee to ensure ongoing monitoring and implementation.

#### **4.5 Update on the development of a Consultation & Engagement Strategy**

The previously circulated report provided an update on the development of a Consultation & Engagement Strategy for Council.

A Member noted for Officers to be aware of who to engage and be conscious that all people are not digitalised.

**RESOLVED:** to note the update on the development of a Consultation & Engagement Strategy for Council.

#### **4.6 Information Governance – Quarterly Update**

Report circulated recommending that Committee note the Quarterly Information Governance report for Quarter 3 2025/26.

In response to a query from a Member, the Assistant Director – Business Support undertook to take the publication scheme back to the team and respond to the Member.

**RESOLVED:** to note the Quarterly Information Governance report for Quarter 3 2025/26.

#### **4.7 Inclusion & Wellbeing draft Strategy and Action Plan**

The report, previously circulated, recommended approval to progress the implementation of an Inclusive Workforce Monitoring exercise and to agree the content of the Strategy and Action Plan, budget depending.

The Assistant Director – Business Support advised that not all screenings had been completed and would be brought to a future meeting, therefore this item was now for noting. She highlighted that this was a very important piece of work and noted that a new member of staff had taken on this role to address sickness.

**RESOLVED:** to note the Inclusion & Wellbeing draft Strategy and Action Plan.

#### **4.8 NIE Sub-station – Moat Road, Ballymena**

Report circulated recommending that Committee:

- (a) agrees to enter into a new Lease and right of way with NIE for a new sub-station at Moat Road, Ballymena, and
- (b) authorise the Chief Executive and the Mayor to execute and seal the new Lease and right of way.

Members voiced their concerns regarding the lapse in time for the lease and the Assistant Director – Business Support agreed to bring the matter back to Committee.

It was proposed of Alderman Glover, seconded by Councillor Armstrong and

**RESOLVED:** that a more detailed report setting out the background of the situation and clarifying whether the Council would receive a back payment in relation to this issue to allow Members to make a decision on this matter.

#### **4.9 White Ribbon NI – Staff Awareness Programme and Organisational Pledge**

Report circulated seeking approval on the development of a corporate awareness programme via White Ribbon NI and to sign-up to the White Ribbon NI pledge.

Members gave their support to the programme and queried if Council had already signed the pledge. The Assistant Director – Business Support undertook to check this.

It was proposed by Councillor McKeen, seconded by Councillor Thompson and

**RESOLVED:** to

- (i) note the update on engagement with White Ribbon NI;
- (ii) approve the delivery of six staff awareness sessions at a total cost of £1,500;
- (iii) approve the Council proceeding to sign the White Ribbon NI organisational pledge if not already a signatory to the pledge.

#### **4.10 Elected Member Learning & Development Strategy 2025–2028 and Year 1 Action Plan**

The report presented the final draft of the Elected Member Learning & Development Strategy 2025–2028 and associated Year 1 Action Plan.

On the proposal of Councillor Beggs, seconded by Councillor Gibson, it was

**RESOLVED:** to

- (i) note the Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy 2025–2028 and Year 1 Action Plan;
- (ii) endorse the strategic approach and recommended training framework, and;
- (iii) include training on the committee minute system for any new Members

#### **5 Items for Recommendation to Council**

No items to consider.

#### **6 Tabled Questions**

No questions had been submitted.

**The information contained in the reports associated with the following items was restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.**

It was proposed by Alderman Glover, seconded by Councillor Thompson, and

**RESOLVED:** that the Meeting goes into Closed Committee.

In accordance with Council policy, members of the press and the public were not in attendance for this section of the Meeting.

#### **7 Items for Consideration / Decision – Closed Committee**

##### **7.1 Procurement Update**

The item is restricted as information falls under the prescribed exemptions: Local Government Act (NI) 2014, Schedule 6, Part 1, Para 3 – Information

relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information).

If restricted from publication, when will the report become unrestricted:

- Sometime in the future

Report, circulated, to provide an update and with recommendation to note the outcomes of Tenders, Direct Award Contracts (DACs) and contracts procured through Framework Agreements for the period 6th January 2026 to Monday 9th February 2026.

**RESOLVED:** to note the appointments made in this report.

## 7.2 Quarter 3 (October - December 25) Management Accounts

The item was determined to fall within Closed Committee as information falls under the prescribed exemptions: Part 1, Schedule 6 Paragraph 3 Local Government Act (NI) 2014 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person including Council – commercially sensitive information. Publication of the report will become unrestricted: never.

Report circulated, presented the management accounts for Quarter 3 (April - December 25) to Elected Members, providing an overview of the Council's current financial position.

The Assistant Director – Finance responded to Members' queries regarding the following:

- Forecasted and budget figures
- Reserves
- Monthly Management Accounts, and
- Regular Directorate Meetings with Finance.

**RESOLVED:** to note the management accounts of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council for Quarter 3 (October - December 2025).

## 7.3 Treasury Management – Annual Outturn Report 2024/25 and 2025/26 in year Review

The item is restricted as information falls under the prescribed exemptions: - Part 1, Schedule 6 (3) Local Government Act (NI) 2014 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person including Council, and Environmental Information Regulations Reg 12(5)(e) Confidentiality of commercial information to protect the legitimate economic interest of the Council.

If restricted from publication, when will the report become unrestricted:

- Sometime in the future

Report circulated presenting Elected Members with the Treasury Management Outturn Report for 2024-25 and an in-year review of the Treasury Management practices and activities for Mid and East Antrim Borough Council for 2025-26.

**RESOLVED:** to note the contents of the 2024/25 Annual Outturn Report and the 2025/26 In-Year Review Report of Council's Treasury Management, which highlights:

- (i) Treasury Management activities continue to follow recommended good practice, meeting all targets and staying within the limits set out in the Treasury Management Policy; and
- (ii) Investments are being managed on a modest, low risk basis, achieving optimum returns while maintaining appropriate levels of security and liquidity.

#### 7.4 Tullygarley Playing Fields – Return of Expression of Interest

The item is restricted as information falls under the prescribed exemptions: Local Government Act (NI) 2014, Schedule 6, Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding the information)

If restricted from publication, when will the report become unrestricted:

- After Council decision made.

Councillor Quigley left the meeting at 7.23pm, having declared an interest in this item.

Report circulated provided an update on the future use of the playing fields at Tullygarley, Ballymena, following responses to an Expression of Interest exercise.

Members voiced their frustration at the timeframe of the exercise to progress to the second stage.

The Facilities Management and Maintenance Manager responded to Members' concerns. Discussion ensued regarding the suggested proposals and Members agreed to include the proposal to develop a purpose-built nursing home facility to care for residents living with learning disabilities.

It was proposed by Alderman Glover, seconded by Councillor Gibson and

It was proposed by Alderman Glover, seconded by Councillor Gibson and

**RESOLVED:** to approve

- (i) to exclude residential development from further consideration and approve progression to Stage 2 marketing limited to the three community-focused options (training pitch, padel/paddle court, and GP practice)
- (ii) required consultation with the Department for Communities on receipt of these bids, and
- (iii) to include to stage 2 marketing, the proposal to develop a purpose-built nursing home facility to care for residents living with learning disabilities .

**8 Items for Recommendation to Council – Closed Committee**

No items to consider.

DRAFT

**OPEN COMMITTEE**

It was proposed by Alderman Glover, seconded by Councillor Hoey, and

**RESOLVED:** that the Meeting returns to Open Committee.

**9 Forward Plan for Corporate Resources, Policy & Governance Committee**

Members noted the Agenda for the next Committee Meeting to be held on 13 April 2026 and the Forward Plan for the Committee

The Meeting ended at 7.34pm

..... Mayor

..... Interim Chief Executive

..... Date



**MID AND EAST ANTRIM BOROUGH COUNCIL****NEIGHBOURHOODS AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of Meeting held on Tuesday 24 February 2026 at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber, The Braid, 1-29 Bridge Street, Ballymena and via remote access**

- In the Chair:** Councillor M Warwick (Chair)
- Present:** Alderman R Glover  
Councillor I Friary (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor J Gibson  
Councillor T Hoey  
Councillor R Lawrence  
Councillor J Minford  
Councillor L Philpott  
Councillor A Rae  
Councillor B Thompson
- Present remotely:** Alderman B Ashe, MBE  
Alderman S McDonald  
Alderman M Morrow  
Councillor M Collins  
Councillor M Donnelly  
Councillor B Lyness  
Councillor A Smyth
- Attendance:** Mr J McGrandle, Acting Director of Development  
Mr J McVeigh, Acting Director of Community  
Mrs L Cowan, Strategic Tourism and Regeneration  
Manager  
Mr C Kennedy, Environmental Health Manager  
Ms L Kirkwood, Outdoor Recreation Officer  
Ms R Salt, Governance and Democratic Services Officer  
Mrs C Connor, Governance and Democratic Services  
Officer
- Press:** No members of the press were present.
- Public:** No members of the public were in attendance.

**ITEM      MINUTE****1            NOTICE OF MEETING**

The Acting Director of Development read the Notice of Meeting.

**2            APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from:

Councillor M Armstrong  
Councillor B Ferris  
Councillor L Gray

**3            DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members and Officers were invited to declare any pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests, including gifts and hospitality they might have in respect of items on this Agenda.

No declarations were received.

**4            ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION/DECISION****4.1        Request to Present to Committee from Bann Maine West Community Group**

Report, previously circulated, which sought approval from Elected Members for Bann Maine West Community Cluster to present at the next suitable Neighbourhoods and Communities (N&C) Committee.

Proposed by Councillor Hoey, seconded by Councillor Minford and

**RESOLVED:** To approve the application received from Bann Maine West Community Cluster and invite them to present at the next suitable Neighbourhoods and Communities Committee.

**4.2        Granting of Pavement Café License**

Report, previously circulated, sought Elected Member approval for the grant of a pavement café licence to Flax Coffee Co, 17-21 Bryan Street, Ballymena.

Proposed by Alderman Glover, seconded by Councillor Thompson and

**RESOLVED:** To approve the granting of a pavement licence to Flax Coffee Co, 17-21 Bryan Street, Ballymena

**5            ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL**

### 5.1 **Surrender Former Play Park Land Leases (Ballymena) to NIHE**

Report, previously circulated, sought approval from Elected Members to surrender two separate leases with Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) in respect of former play park lands at Maybin Park, Kells, and Maine Park, Galgorm.

Proposed by Councillor Philpott, seconded by Alderman Glover and

#### **RECOMMENDED:**

- (i) To approve the surrender by Council to NIHE of:
  - (a) Lease dated 11 May 1994 between NIHE and the legacy Ballymena Borough Council in respect of lands at Maine Park, Galgorm; and
  - (b) Lease dated 11 April 1984 between NIHE and the legacy Ballymena Borough Council in respect of lands at Maybin Park, Kells.
- (ii) to approve the reinstatement of the leased areas to grass as requested by NIHE; and
- (iii) to grant authority for the relevant deeds to be executed and sealed by the Mayor and Chief Executive on behalf of Council.

### 5.2 **Consultation on Draft Regulations, on Notice to Quit Periods for Private Landlords and Tenants**

Report, previously circulated, sought Elected Members' approval to issue a Council response to a Department for Communities' consultation on draft regulations relating to Notice to Quit periods for landlords and tenants in the private rented sector and to note the associated guidance, and that a Department for Communities' led Equality Impact Assessment has been completed.

Proposed by Councillor Gibson, seconded by Councillor Philpott and

#### **RECOMMENDED:**

- (i) To approve to issue a Council response to a Department for Communities consultation on draft regulations relating to Notice to Quit periods for landlords and tenants in the private rented sector and,
- (ii) To note the associated guidance, and that a Department for Communities led Equality Impact Assessment has been completed.

### 5.3 New Petroleum Licence policy

Report, previously circulated, sought Elected Member approval for a new Petroleum Licensing Policy for application with the Borough which introduces new licence conditions for users.

Proposed by Alderman Glover, seconded by Councillor Minford and

#### **RECOMMENDED**

- (i) To approve of the adoption of the Petroleum License Policy, dated March 2026.
- (ii) To note that the policy has been assessed under the Council's Equality Scheme, Rural Needs Policy, Data Protection Impact Policy and Sustainable Development Policy and no adverse effects were identified.

## 6 TABLED QUESTIONS

There were no tabled questions.

**The information contained in the reports associated with the following items is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.**

On the proposal of Councillor Hoey, seconded by Councillor Thompson, it was:

**RESOLVED:** That the Meeting goes into Closed Committee.

In accordance with Council policy, members of the press and the public were not in attendance for this section of the Meeting.

## 7 ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION/DECISION– Closed Committee

### 7.1 Arts and Culture Strategic Activity Update

The item was restricted as information fell under the prescribed exemptions: -

Local Government Act (NI), 2014, Schedule 6, Part 1, Paragraph 3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

If restricted from publication, when will the report become unrestricted: Never

The circulated report provided Members with an overview of Arts and Culture activity from November 2025 to January 2026.

Members voiced their support and congratulations to the Officer and her team to the positive work completed.

**RESOLVED:** To note the works undertaken by the Arts, Culture, Museums and Heritage Team in delivering a wide and varied programme of activity and the benefit this brings to the Borough.

## 7.2 Gracehill UNESCO World Heritage Site Development Update

The item was restricted as information fell under the prescribed exemptions:

Local Government Act (NI), 2014, Schedule 6, Part 1, Para 3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

If restricted from publication, when will the report become unrestricted: Never

The circulated report provided Members with an update on development plans for Gracehill village as a designated UNESCO World Heritage site.

**RESOLVED:** To note the update provided in the report along with the work carried out by Tourism, Arts and Culture Officers to date, as part of the Gracehill Local Management Steering Group.

## 8 ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL – CLOSED COMMITTEE

There were no items to discuss.

On the proposal of Alderman Glover, seconded by Councillor Hoey, it was

**RESOLVED:** That the Meeting returns to Open Committee.

## 9 FORWARD PLAN FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Committee noted the circulated forward plan for the Committee and Agenda for the next meeting on 14 April 2026.

The meeting ended at 6.45pm.

----- Mayor  
----- Interim Chief Executive  
----- Date

DRAFT

**MID AND EAST ANTRIM BOROUGH COUNCIL  
PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 26 February 2026 at 10.00am in the  
Council Chamber, The Braid, 1-29 Bridge Street, Ballymena  
and via remote access**

- In the Chair:** Councillor A Rae
- Vice Chair:** Councillor Mrs A Smyth
- Present:** Alderman R Glover  
Alderman T Gordon  
Alderman R Logan  
Alderman P Reid  
Councillor A Barr  
Councillor T Hoey  
Councillor J Minford
- Present remotely:** Alderman S McDonald
- Attendance:** Mr J McGrandle, Acting Director of Development  
Mr K Patterson, Acting Head of Planning and Building  
Control  
Mrs S Adams, Principal Planning Officer  
Mr H McAlister, Senior Planning Officer  
Mr K Irwin, Acting Principal Planning Officer  
Mr G McGuinness, Principal Planning Officer  
Mr S Shiels, Solicitor  
Mrs F McLernon, Office Manager, Planning & Building  
Control  
Ms C Connor, Governance & Democratic Services  
Officer  
Ms R Salt, Governance & Democratic Services  
Officer
- Also in attendance:** Mr L Ross, Les Ross Planning  
Ms H Wilson, Bell Rolston planning consultant  
Mr R Dougan, Vision Design  
Mr R Agus, Road Engineer  
Mr R Hutchinson, Applicant
- Public:** 2 members of the public were present
- Press:** No members of the press were present.

**ITEM MINUTE**

## 1 Notice of Meeting

Members were advised that the meeting would be audio recorded and broadcast live on Council's website.

No speaking rights had been registered. Each Member and Officer introduced themselves.

The Acting Director of Development read the Notice of Meeting.

## 2 Apologies

Apologies were recorded for Councillor A Skinner.

## 3 Declarations of Interest

Members and Officers were invited to declare any pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests, including gifts and hospitality they might have in respect of items on this Agenda.

There were no Declarations of Interests received.

## 4 Schedule of Planning Applications

### 4.1 Planning Application No. LA02/2025/0690/F – Lands to the south of 15 Quarterland Road, Islandmagee, Larne, BT40 3RW.

With the aid of visual display, the Senior Planning Officer detailed the planning application for Proposed battery energy storage system [BESS] 1.2GW, new access lane, improvements to Quarterland Road, and ancillary development - in substitution for scheme approved under Planning Ref LA02/2023/1283/F.

Due to the scale of the development, this application had been referred to the Planning Committee for determination under delegated authority.

The Senior Planning Officer summarised the characteristics of the site and area at Quarterland Road in Islandmagee and noted that planning permissions had been previously granted on the western portion for a 150MW battery storage facility on 2.3ha site utilising similar access arrangements to the current proposal which was significantly larger in terms of site area and capacity. He highlighted that the Islandmagee peninsula hosted significant energy infrastructure with the Scotland to NI gas pipeline and the Moyle interconnector located near the site with Ballylumford Power station to the west of the site.

As no objections were received from statutory bodies or through public consultation, the Planning Department recommended that the application be approved subject to conditions outlined in the report.

Mr Les Ross of Les Ross Planning, speaking in support of the Officer's recommendation concurred with the Officer and made himself available to answer any questions.

In response to a Member's query, Mr Ross explained that approval of the previous application allowed the project to progress to SONI for connection arrangements. Due to fast changing technology, SONI now require a longer 8-hour storage duration as opposed to the previous 1 hour. The connection capacity would remain at 150mw, but with extended storage. This would provide extended backup capability during grid outage or supply shortage which in turn requires more space.

The Officer explained that the site would be extended from the original location further from the road and closer to the interconnector compound.

Mr Ross confirmed that the planting around the site would be a heavier standard native species woodland mix.

It was proposed by Alderman Reid seconded by Alderman Logan to approve the application.

**The Chair put the motion to the vote.**

Voting on the proposal was as follows –

<b>For</b>	<b>Against</b>	<b>Abstain</b>
11	0	0

**RESOLVED:**

To approve Planning Application No. LA02/2025/0690/F – Lands to the south of 15 Quarterland Road, Islandmagee, Larne, BT40 3RW for the proposed battery energy storage system [BESS] 1.2GW, new access lane, improvements to Quarterland Road, and ancillary development - in substitution for scheme approved under Planning Ref LA02/2023/1283/F

Mr L Ross left the meeting at 11.15am

#### **4.2 Planning Application No. LA02/2025/0841/F Proposed Change of use from Dwelling to HMO at 46 Galgorm Road, Ballymena, BT43 5HA.**

With the aid of visual display, the Senior Planning Officer detailed the planning application for proposed change of use from a 5-bed terrace dwelling to a 5-bed HMO at 46 Galgorm Road, Ballymena, BT43 5HA. He described the location as being in a residential area within the development limits of Ballymena in close proximity to the train and bus station. It was further added that existing dwellings in area had already been converted to self-contained apartments and HMO's.

Following a detailed description of the current dwelling and proposed changes, the Officer highlighted that the proposed HMO would retain the existing layout of the dwelling without any external or internal alterations.

There were 28 letters of objection received in relation to the proposed HMO, which had been adequately addressed.

No objections were received from NI Water or Environmental Health during the consultation process and DfI Roads did not offer any refusal but advised that if Council were to approve with sub-standard parking, they offered suggested informatives. The policy permitted a reduced level of parking in highly accessible locations well served by public transport reducing the need for cars. It was therefore recommended that the application be approved.

Ms Wilson from Bells Rolston Planning spoke in support of the Officers' recommendation. She advised that the proposed HMO would provide vital accommodation for 9 employees from Hutchinson Engineering in order to fulfil their contracts with Wright Bus fabrication of chassis components. She noted that the implications of not approving today would mean that the company would be unable to fulfil its obligations with Wright Bus resulting in loss of money and jobs. She added that the proposed building did not require any alteration or extension and there would be no change in the parking density from the existing dwelling. One parking space is available to the rear of the property and sustainable transport methods are promoted.

Ms Wilson thanked the Council for bring this application to Committee within four months of submission.

In response to a question, Ms Wilson confirmed that there would be nine residents in the HMO with one parking space available for the property.

Mr Agus clarified that there had been one designated parking space to the rear, with any additional parking accommodated on the street behind the property. He explained that the parking provision was governed by Green Places standards which based requirements on the type of dwelling. As the house type was not changing there would be no change in demand for parking. He referred to previous DfI Roads responses to HMO applications noting that the existing regional policy and supplementary guidance did not require dedicated parking for HMO applications. He also highlighted that 54% of households in this area did not own a car. Furthermore, the intended residents would be transported to their place of employment and therefore would not require a private car.

Regarding the 28 objections the Acting Head of Planning and Building Control gave an overview of the objections detailed in the report. Objections had been considered and on balance the recommendation was as presented.

The Senior Planning Officer advised that the general waste and recycling impacts would be comparable to that of the existing property.

It was noted that tenure was not a planning consideration.

The Senior Planning Officer confirmed that there would be two sharing facilities in the HMO; a bathroom and WC on the ground floor and a bathroom on the first floor.

The Senior Planning Officer confirmed that DfI Roads stated there was sub standard parking but had offered informatives and given no reason for refusal.

It was proposed by Alderman Gordon, seconded by Alderman Logan to accept the Officer’s recommendation.

A recorded vote was requested by Alderman Glover.

The Chair put the motion to the vote.

Voting on the motion was as follows –

<b>For (2)</b>	<b>Against (9)</b>	<b>Abstention (0)</b>
Aldermen T Gordon and R Logan	Mayor, Councillor J Minford Deputy Mayor, Councillor T Hoey, Aldermen: R Glover, S McDonald and P Reid Councillors: A Barr, J McKeown, A Rae and Mrs A Smyth	

The Chair declared the proposal fallen and requested an alternative proposal.

The Acting Head of Planning and Building Control made Members aware of the information set out in the protocol for the operation of the planning committee as follows;

“The Committee is not necessarily bound to agree with a Planning Officer’s recommendation; it has to reach its own decision. Officer’s views, opinions and recommendations may on occasion be contrary to the views, opinions or decisions of the committee or its members. This is acceptable when based on sound planning considerations which must fairly and reasonably relate to the application concerned.”

It was proposed by Alderman Glover, seconded by Councillor Hoey that Planning Permission be refused contrary to the Officer’s recommendation

on the grounds that, the proposed development is contrary to planning policies HOU1, HOU2 and GP1 of the Local Development Plan.

Alderman Logan requested a recorded vote.

The results of the vote were as follows:

For (10)	Against (1)	Abstention (0)
Mayor, Councillor J Minford Deputy Mayor, Councillor T Hoey, Aldermen: R Glover, R Logan, S McDonald and P Reid Councillors: A Barr, J McKeown, A Rae and Mrs A Smyth	Alderman T Gordon	

The Chair declared the motion carried.

**RESOLVED:** to refuse Planning Permission contrary to the Officer's recommendation on the grounds that, the proposed development is contrary to planning policies HOU1, HOU2 and GP1 of the Local Development Plan.

Ms H Wilson, Mr R Dougan, Mr R Agus and Mr R Hutchinson left the meeting at 11.40am.

**4.3 Planning Application No. LA02/2025/0431/F - Proposed change of use of the existing office and former retail unit to storage, retention of existing farm shop with extension, provision of new polytunnel, retention of car park extension, retention of 2no. polytunnels and small ancillary timber sheds at Slemish Market Garden, Kernohans Lane, Ballymena, BT43 7QA.**

With the aid of visual display, the Principal Planning Officer presented the details of the application and advised that, as MEABC were the current landowners, the proposal fell under the Planning Scheme of Delegation and therefore must be determined by this Planning Committee.

The Officer outlined the site's location and layout at Kernohan's Lane, noting that it lay within the settlement limits of Ballymena and was zoned as open space. He advised that the applicant was seeking part-retrospective planning permission to retain several existing structures and an extended car park. The proposal also included an extension to the market garden shop and the construction of a new polytunnel.

With regard to policy considerations, the Officer confirmed that the proposal complied with current retail policy, subject to conditions restricting the retail use of the site. The application was also found to be in accordance with the open space policy. Access arrangements remained unchanged, and the site provided adequate parking provision. Therefore, DfI Roads indicated that they were content with the proposal.

Environmental Health Officers suggested that a condition be added relating to the approval of specific delivery hours as outline in the attached report.

Members were advised that the southern portion of the site lay within a flood-risk area. The proposal qualified for a policy exception as a minor non-residential development under 150m<sup>2</sup> threshold. DfI Rivers raised no objection on the basis that no infilling would take place within the affected section of the car park. Planning Officers confirmed that no infilling was proposed and that the development met the criteria for exception. A condition removing permitted development rights had been added to the recommendation to prevent any future development within the flood plain.

As the proposal fulfilled planning policy and all consultees were content subject to conditions it was therefore recommended that the application be approved.

In response to a Member's query, the Officer confirmed that some of the work was conducted without planning permission and was carried out between November 2020 and summer 2021. He also noted that some of the works could qualify for a CLUD.

In response to concerns about potential flood risk, the Officer informed that the site was subject to a 1 in 100-year flood risk with an additional allowance for climate change. This represented the highest standard required by DfI Rivers and was in line with policy. It was noted that the carpark surface was not asphalt which would help reduce surface run-off.

The application had proposed erecting signage, but this was not required as part of planning conditions. DfI Rivers confirmed they were satisfied with the Flood Risk Assessment and with the level of risk associated with the proposed car park.

The Head of Planning explained that no built fabric was proposed within the existing flood plain. The area in question related to an existing permeable surface, which had been assessed through the Flood Risk Assessment, and Rivers had confirmed they were satisfied with the findings. It was noted that any other matters referenced would be addressed through the wider planning process.

The Head of Planning advised that Council would be removing permitted development rights thereby restricting any future development on the site. Any subsequent applications would be referred to the Planning Committee

under the current scheme of delegation and considered at the discretion of the Head of Service.

It was proposed by Alderman Gordon seconded by Councillor McKeown to approve the officer's recommendation. .

The Chair put the motion to the vote.

Voting on the proposal was as follows –

For	Against	Abstain
11	0	0

**RESOLVED:** to approve Planning Application No. LA02/2025/0431/F - Proposed change of use of the existing office and former retail unit to storage, retention of existing farm shop with extension, provision of new polytunnel, retention of car park extension, retention of 2no. polytunnels and small ancillary timber sheds at Slemish Market Garden, Kernohans Lane, Ballymena, BT43 7QA.

**4.4 Planning Application No. LA02/2025/0456/F - Proposed installation of floodlit 3G full size football pitch and spectator stand to replace grass pitch at Whitehead Youth Centre, 1 Castleview Road, Whitehead, Carrickfergus, BT38 9NE.**

With the aid of visual display, the Principal Planning Officer detailed the planning application, site location and characteristics and advised that, as MEABC were the current landowners, the proposal fell under the Planning Scheme of Delegation and therefore must be determined by this Planning Committee.

The Officer advised that the site was zoned as existing recreational open space and lay within the Whitehead conservation area. Access and parking arrangements remained unchanged and as the site was outside the flood risk area there was no known history of flooding.

The proposal comprised the installation of four new flood lights, dug outs, and a 176-seat covered spectator stand. It also included a 4m high perimeter fence and 5.5m ball stop fencing at the goals, along with a 2m acoustic fence along the north-west boundary.

Details of the proposed pitch drainage system were outlined, with emphasis placed on ensuring effective drainage to minimise flood risk and prevent rubber infill from entering nearby watercourses.

A stage 2 appropriate assessment was carried out as part of the Habitat Regulations Assessment which concluded that the proposed drainage plan with mitigation measures (detail in the report) in place was unlikely to have a significant impact on any European designated sites.

NIEA and SES were content with the proposal subject to conditions in the drainage plan.

DFI Roads and Rivers were content, were content subject to drainage conditions.

Environmental Heath suggested a condition be imposed relating to the operating hours of the flood lights. Acoustic fencing and minimum tree height had also been added as a condition.

NIEA natural environment division raised concerns around the impact of lighting on protected species. Council considered the response and noted that the floodlighting would be unlikely to have a negative impact on protected species as bats are likely to have already avoided or adjusted to the existing artificially illuminated areas and therefore complies with the policy. The application was therefore recommended for approval.

Members welcomed the proposal and emphasised the need for a 3G pitch in Whitehead.

With regard to the impact of light on protected species the Acting Head of Planning clarified that Council was carefully considering all factors and acting in the public interest.

It was proposed by Alderman Logan, seconded by Alderman Reid to approve the officer's recommendation.

The Chair put the motion to the vote.

Voting on the motion was as follows –

For	Against	Abstain
11	0	0

**RESOLVED:** to approve Planning Application No. LA02/2025/0456/F - Proposed installation of floodlit 3G full size football pitch and spectator stand to replace grass pitch at Whitehead Youth Centre, 1 Castleview Road, Whitehead, Carrickfergus, BT38 9NE.

**4.5 Planning Application No. LA02/2025/0823/F - Proposed installation of floodlit 3G full size football pitch and spectator stand in place of grass pitch at Ballymena Showgrounds, 30 St Patricks Link, Ballymena, BT43 7FU.**

With the aid of visual display, the Principal Planning Officer detailed the planning application, site location and characteristics, and advised that, as MEABC were the current landowners, the proposal fell under the Planning

Scheme of Delegation and therefore must be determined by the Planning Committee.

Access and parking arrangements remained unchanged and as the site was outside the flood risk area there was no known history of flooding.

The proposed pitch would be slightly larger than the previous one, with the addition of a new 176-seat covered spectator stand with similar pitch surface and lighting. There would be a 12m high ball stop fence and a 4m high perimeter fence.

Details of the proposed pitch drainage system were outlined, with emphasis placed on ensuring effective drainage to minimise flood risk and prevent rubber infill from entering nearby watercourses.

A stage 2 appropriate assessment was carried out as part of the Habitat Regulations Assessment which concluded that the proposed drainage plan with mitigation measures (detail in the report) in place was unlikely to have a significant impact on any European designated sites. NIEA have no objection to the proposal.

One third party objection relating to noise, lighting and disrespectful language relating to issues on the existing pitch. The Officer informed that lighting, noise and traffic have all been considered in the assessment with conditions attached.

DFI Roads and Rivers were content, subject to an effective drainage plan. Environmental Health suggested a condition be imposed relating to the operating hours of the flood lights.

As there were no further objections from statutory bodies/consultees it was recommended that the application be approved.

In response to a query regarding lighting, the Officer clarified that the information provided by the Council about the pitches had been reviewed by Environmental Health, who subsequently applied the relevant conditions.

It was proposed by Alderman Glover, seconded by Councillor Minford to approve the officer's recommendation.

The Chair put the motion to the vote.

Voting on the motion I was as follows –

<b>For</b>	<b>Against</b>	<b>Abstain</b>
11	0	0

**RESOLVED:** to approve Planning Application No. LA02/2025/0823/F - Proposed installation of floodlit 3G full size football pitch and spectator stand in place of grass pitch at Ballymena Showgrounds, 30 St Patricks Link, Ballymena, BT43 7FU.

## 5 Planning Appeals Update

### 5.1 New Appeals

One new planning appeal was noted:

**LA02/2025/0111/CA - Rapid Fabrications, 31 Crosshill Road, Larne, BT40 3EB. Alleged unauthorised change of use from a timber recycling yard [Sui Generis] to Rapid Fabrications.**

**RESOLVED:** to note one new appeal submission to the Planning Appeals Commission.

### 5.2 Appeal Decisions

One new appeal decision.

- **LA02/2024/0922/O – 40m approximately North West of 10A Burnside Road, Broughshane, Ballymena. Site of dwelling and garage [Infill] - Appeal Dismissed**

**RESOLVED:** to note the Planning Appeals Commission decision to dismiss this appeal.

## 6 CORRESPONDENCE

### 6.1 NILGA/Dfl - Planning Learning and Engagement Programme – Request for Nominations

With reference to correspondence received from NILGA it was

**RESOLVED:** to nominate Councillor Rae (Chair) and Councillor Minford (Mayor) to attend the Planning, Learning and Engagement Programme Advisory Group.

### 6.2 Dfl – Renewable Energy Workshop – Request for Nominations

With reference to correspondence received from Dfl it was;

**RESOLVED:** to nominate the Acting Head of Planning and the Chair, Councillor Rae to attend the Renewable Energy Workshop.

The meeting ended at 12.23am.

.....

Mayor

.....

Interim Chief Executive

.....

Date

DRAFT

## MID AND EAST ANTRIM BOROUGH COUNCIL

### ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY COMMITTEE

**Minutes of Meeting held on Monday 2 March 2026 at 6.30pm  
in the Council Chamber, The Braid, 1-29 Bridge Street, Ballymena  
and via remote access**

**In the Chair:** Councillor J Gibson

**Present:** Alderman R Logan  
Alderman McCaughey  
Councillor A Clarke (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor R Beggs  
Councillor G McKeen  
Councillor L Philpott  
Councillor A Skinner  
Councillor M Warwick  
Councillor C Harwood  
Councillor J McKeown

**Present Remotely:** Alderman B Ashe, MBE  
Councillor B Hadden  
Councillor A Henry (until 7.53pm)  
Councillor C Jamieson  
Alderman Mrs M Morrow  
Alderman A Wilson (until 8.31pm)  
Councillor C Jamieson  
Councillor P Johnston

**Attendance:** Mr J McGrandle, Acting Director of Development  
Mr J McVeigh, Acting Director of Community  
Mrs U O'Loughlin, Head of Economic Development  
Ms C Hunter, Acting Climate Change & Sustainability Manager  
Mrs L Kirkwood, Outdoor Recreation Officer  
Ms C Connor, Governance and Democratic Services Officer  
Ms R Salt, Governance and Democratic Services Officer

**Also in attendance:** Mr M Huddleston, jhe Solutions  
Mr P McClenaghan, NIE  
Mr B Sinclair, NIE  
Mrs S O'Donnell, NIE

**Press:** There were no members of the press in attendance.

**Public:** There were no members of the public in attendance

**ITEM MINUTE**

## **1 Notice of Meeting**

The Interim Director of Development read the Notice of Meeting.

## **2 Apologies**

There were no apologies to be recorded.

## **3 Declaration of Interest**

Members and Officers were invited to declare any pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests, including gifts and hospitality they might have in respect of items on this Agenda.

The following declarations were received:

Councillor Johnston, declared an interest in items:

5.5 - NI Waste Management Strategy Consultation

8.4 - DfC Shaping Sustainable Places Programme – Development Update

8.5 - Town Centre Dereliction Strategy – Update

9.3 - Cullybackey to Galgorm greenway Business Case,

in relation to his employment with Gordon Lyons MLA (DfC).

The Member did not leave the Chamber during these items but did not participate in discussion.

Alderman Logan declared an interest in items:

8.6 - PEACEPLUS Action Plan Economic Appraisal

8.7 PEACEPLUS Business Case for Appointment of ICT Consultancy

Team, in relation to his membership of the PEACEPLUS Partnership.

The Member did not leave the Chamber during these items but did not participate in discussion.

## **4 PRESENTATION**

### **4.1 NIE Networks Big Rebuild Presentation**

The Chair introduced the representatives from NIE Networks Big Rebuild and invited them to take their seats on the dais.

With the support of visual aids, representatives from NIE Networks provided an overview of the Big Network Rebuild, a 6-year, £250 million investment programme to upgrade and maintain a safe, reliable and resilient electricity network with increased network capacity to meet Northern Ireland's Energy needs in a sustainable way.

The project would involve the rebuild of low voltage, 11kv and 33kv powerlines, along with vegetation management to reduce risk of damage. It would also include major upgrades to overhead lines, underground

cables and substations as well as the introduction of an automated fault detection system.

The representatives updated Members on the planned works within the Mid and East Antrim Borough and outlined the potential service disruptions that could occur. They explained the measures in place to keep residents informed and minimise inconvenience, including letter drops, text alerts, and social media updates ahead of any works commencing. They also noted that public meetings would be arranged before major projects commenced, and that local support would be available through the regional customer services team.

In response to Members' questions the representatives gave the following clarification:

As the Kilroot area was separate from the Carrickfergus Public Realm remit, further information would have to be sought regarding the potential replacement of overhead cables with underground cables.

Replacing overhead cables with underground cables would not mitigate against adverse weather impacts.

Vulnerable customers would continue to receive timely information, and Government agencies would provide support during severe weather events.

Smarter automated systems would be used to detect, isolate and repair faults on overhead cables instantaneously allowing quicker response times; Members were advised that this work was separate from the smart meter programme.

The programme includes strengthened vegetation management across the network to help reduce tree related damage during the increasingly severe weather. A lessons-learned strategy was already in place and is expected to further minimise the impact of extreme weather, although some level of impact would remain unavoidable.

Household capacity levels have been reviewed in light of increasing home electrification. An upgrade in transformers was planned to ensure the network was ready to accommodate the significant additional uplift in capacity.

The representatives confirmed that the increase in renewable energy input has been considered to ensure the grid could reliably absorb the extra capacity.

The Chair thanked the representatives for their update, and they left the meeting at 6.45pm.

## 5 ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION / DECISION

### 5.1 Sustainable NI Membership 2026-27

Report and appendix previously circulated, to provide an update on the support Council received from Sustainable Northern Ireland (SNI) in 2025/26 and to request approval of the expenditure of £6,000, for the 2026-27 Sustainable NI membership.

In response to a query regarding value for money, the Acting Climate Change & Sustainability Manager outlined the range of benefits provided through the membership, highlighting the new sustainability compass, which is now widely used by Officers to support sustainability screening. She further advised that the membership offered an important network connecting Councils, public bodies and the NI Assembly on climate and sustainability matters. Sustainable NI also acted as the Secretariat for both the NI Sustainable Development Forum and the All-Party Group on Climate Action, and prepared consultation responses on key government policies.

It was noted that Councillor McKeen voiced his objection to the proposal.

It was proposed by Alderman Logan, seconded by Councillor McKeown and

**RESOLVED:** To approve the expenditure of £6,000.00 for 2026-27 Sustainable NI membership.

### 5.2 Eco Schools NI Programme Funding 2026-27

Report, previously circulated, seeking approval of option 1 financial support for 2026/27 of the Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful Eco-Schools programme.

Members expressed their support for the programme and emphasised the need to start encouraging environmental awareness at an early stage.

The Acting Climate & Sustainability Manager undertook to provide a list of schools currently taking part in order to identify and encourage those not yet involved.

It was proposed by Councillor Harwood, seconded by Alderman McCaughey and

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) To note the success of programme delivery outlined within Appendix 3 and,
- (ii) To approve Option 1 financial support for 2026/27, as outlined in Appendix 1.

**5.3 Live Here Love Here Financial Support 2026-27**

Report, previously circulated, updating Elected Members on Council's community-led environmental performance over 2025/26 and to seek approval for continued financial support and participation in this regional initiative at a cost of £25,000 for 2026/27.

The Acting Climate and Sustainability Manager undertook to provide more press and social media updates publicising the work and funding that Council have put into this programme.

It was proposed by Alderman Ashe, seconded by Councillor Warwick and

**RESOLVED:** To approve the request for continued financial support and participation in this regional initiative at a cost of £25,000 for 2026/27.

**5.4 DAERA Public Body Reporting: Climate Adaptation Report 2026**

The Acting Climate and Sustainability Manager gave an overview of the report, previously circulated, which updated Members on the DAERA Public Body Reporting on Climate Adaptation, and (i) sought approval for the Council's draft report response, previously circulated as Appendix 1 and (ii) approval for DAERA to publish Council's response online.

It was proposed by Councillor McKeown seconded by Councillor Harwood and

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) To approve the draft report response
- (ii) To provide approval for DAERA to publish Council 's response online.

**5.5 DAERA draft Rethinking Our Resources: Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy**

The Acting Climate and Sustainability Manager provided an overview of the report, previously circulated, updating Members on the DAERA Rethinking Our Resources: Northern Ireland Resources and Waste

Management Strategy and to approve the draft response to this consultation.

Alderman McCaughey stated that his party was unable to support the strategy's approval in its current form and would require it to be bolstered before offering their backing.

In response to the Acting Climate and Sustainability Manager advised that the comments could be included in the response to the consultation.

Alderman Ashe further requested that DAERA was also informed of the concerns regarding the number of consultations required for these responses, as well as the time and cost involved for Officers in completing the work.

In response to a query regarding the provision of Reuse and Repair workshops, the Officer advised that Reuse and Repair Week would be held in May and that Council planned to hold an event during this period and confirmed that Members would be kept informed of developments.

It was proposed by Alderman Logan, seconded by Alderman Morrow and

**RESOLVED:** To approve the draft response to the consultation to include the concerns raised at the meeting.

## **5.6 Council Response to DAERA Draft Nature Recovery Strategy**

Report previously circulated, briefing Members on the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Draft Nature Recovery Strategy and seeking approval for the draft response to the Draft Nature Recovery Strategy.

In response to a query the Outdoor Recreation Officer confirmed that the GIS (Geographical Information Systems) Officer would provide Councillors with details of the Borough's woodland, including volume and category breakdowns.

It was proposed by Councillor Skinner, seconded by Councillor Hadden and

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) To note the Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Public Consultation on the draft Nature Recovery Strategy.
- (ii) To approve the draft response to DAERA Draft Nature Recovery Strategy.

### 5.7 Economic Development Activity Report

The previously circulated report sought to provide Members with an update on current Economic Development activity.

Referring to item 5.10 on the Committee's agenda (Powerhouse Energy Group Investment), the Head of Economic Development noted that this represented a strong indication that the borough was successfully attracting external investment especially in the cleantech sector.

In response to a concern raised by a Councillor regarding the absence of senior leadership at the forthcoming investment conference in Carrickfergus, the Acting Director of Development confirmed that there would be strong representation by Senior Management and confirmed that he would follow up with the Chief Executive.

**RESOLVED:** To note the updated Economic Development Activity report.

### 5.8 PEACEPLUS Update

Report, previously circulated, updating Members on the Mid & East Antrim PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan.

The Head of Economic Development reminded Members of the official launch of the MEA PEACEPLUS Programme on 10 March 2026 at Ballygally Castle Hotel

**RESOLVED:** To note the PEACEPLUS update with the focus on mobilisation of key activities as outlined in the PEACE PLUS Action Plan.

### 5.9 Project Gigabit

Report, previously circulated, providing Members with an update from Department for Economy (DfE) on Project Gigabit: Maximising Gigabit Broadband Coverage.

The Head of Economic Development undertook to contact Fibrus regarding specific constituents' addresses and if any additional postcodes needed to be added to the list for premises with poor broadband connectivity; she noted that she could only arrange for postcodes to be added during the month of March 2026.

In response to a Member's query, the Head of Economic Development confirmed that once the new high-speed broadband infrastructure was installed, customers would be free to change broadband provider, as the necessary infrastructure would already be in place.

**RESOLVED:** To note the information in the report and the appended eligible postcodes, map, postcode checker link and key contact details.

### 5.10 Powerhouse Energy Group Investment

Report previously circulated, to provide Members with an update on a new potential investment into the Borough from Powerhouse Energy Group and on our proposed approach to the CleanTech sector and the wider green economy and discussed the benefits to the local Borough.

In response to Members' questions, the Head of Economic Development confirmed that this factor was only a partial reason for the company choosing to invest in the Borough, and not the sole driver. She also clarified that the site would operate as a manufacturing facility rather than a Research and Development facility.

The Head of Economic Development advised that she was unable to discuss the specific details of the plant location/construction or processes involved due to a live planning application. The Acting Director of Development assured Members that all concerns would be addressed and appropriate methods worked through, confirming that the work would be carried out correctly and without detriment to the environment or surrounding area.

**RESOLVED:** To note the potential investment from Powerhouse Energy Group and the proposed approach to the Clean Tech/wider Green Economy, a key area of focus to support economic growth in the Borough.

### 5.11 Labour Market Partnership Update

Previously circulated report providing Members with an update on activities delivered by the Mid and East Antrim Labour Market Partnership.

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) To note the programmes delivered under the LMP Action Plan and promote the forthcoming initiatives to clients and contacts.
- (ii) Quarterly updates will continue to be provided to this Committee.

### 5.12 Ballymena Chamber of Commerce– Request to present to Committee

The previously circulated report sought approval from Elected Members for Tom Wiggins of Ballymena Chamber of Commerce and Industry to present to Committee.

In response to a query, The Director of Development agreed to liaise with Chamber of Commerce regarding the town centre workforce.

A member commented on the significant time it took to approve a request to present to council.

It was proposed by Alderman McCaughey, seconded by Councillor Harwood and

**RESOLVED:** To approve that Tom Wiggins of Ballymena Chamber of Commerce and Industry be permitted to present to Committee.

## **6 ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL**

There were no items for recommendation.

## **7 Tabled Questions**

No tabled questions had been received.

The information contained in the reports associated with the following items is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

It was proposed by Councillor Warwick, seconded by Councillor Philpott, and

**RESOLVED:** That the Meeting goes into Closed Committee.

In accordance with Council policy, members of the press and the public were not in attendance for this section of the Meeting.

## **8 ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION/DECISION – CLOSED COMMITTEE**

### **8.1 Local Economic Partnership Update - Mark Huddleston jhe solutions**

The item was restricted as information fell under the prescribed exemptions - Local Government Act (NI) 2014 Schedule 6, Part 1, Para 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information).

If restricted from publication, the report would become unrestricted: Sometime in the future.

With the support of visual aids, Mr Huddleston, representative from jhe Solutions provided an update on the progress of the Local Economic Partnership. He outlined current economic data for the Borough highlighting key challenges, strengths and weaknesses and factors

inhibiting growth. He then presented the purpose and vision of the LEP and summarised the themes that would guide future actions, along with measures proposed to assess success.

Councillor Skinner asked for it to be noted that he did not make the statement that "Council would not match fund," and wished to clarify that no organisations who sought match funding for projects would be ruled ineligible.

The representative apologised for the miscommunication and agreed to issue clarification on the query.

**RESOLVED:** to note the Local Economic Development Partnership Update.

Mr Huddleston left the meeting at 8.04pm.

## 8.2 Capital Plan – FY 25/26 Quarter 3 Update

The item was restricted as information fell under the prescribed exemptions: Local Government Act (NI) 2014, Schedule 6, Part 1, Para 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information).

If restricted from publication, the report would become unrestricted: Sometime in the future

Report, previously circulated, sought to update to update Elected Members on the delivery of the Financial Year (FY) 2025/26 Capital Plan at the end of Quarter 3 (period ending 31 December 2025).

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) To note the update on delivery of the Capital Plan at the end of Quarter 3 (period ending 31 December 2025); and
- (ii) Note the Capital Plan Reprofitting decisions approved by Elected Members at the September 2025 Environment & Economy Committee Meeting.

## 8.3 Amateur and Grassroots Sporting Organisation Improvement Funding – Update –

The item was restricted as information fell under the prescribed exemptions - Local Government Act (NI) 2014 Schedule 6, Part 1, Para 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information).

If restricted from publication, the report would become unrestricted:  
Sometime in the future.

Previously circulated report sought to update Elected Members on delivery of the Amateur and Grassroots Sporting Organisations Improvement Fund for the Financial Year 2025/26 and seeking approval to deliver a third Amateur and Grassroots Sporting Organisations Improvement Fund programme in the 2026/27 and 2027/28 Financial Years.

It was proposed by Alderman McCaughey, seconded by Councillor Harwood and

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) To note the progress update for projects being delivered in FY2025/26
- (ii) To approve the allocation of £5,000 from the Amateur and Grassroots Sporting Organisations Improvement Funding budget FY2026/27 to support the project being delivered by St Mary's GAC Ahoghill .
- (iii) To approve the delivery of a new round of the Amateur and Grassroots Sporting Organisations Improvement Funding to be launched in March 2026.
- (iv) To approve the delivery of the new round of the Amateur and Grassroots Sporting Organisations Improvement Funding over a 2 year period FY 2026/27 and FY2027 /28 based on the terms and conditions previously approved.
- (v) To approve that any organisation who has benefited from the scheme previously can apply for the new round of capital funding support.
- (vi) To approve that the completion date for all projects supported by the new programme will be 31 March 2028.

**8.4 DfC Shaping Sustainable Places Programme – Development Update**

The item was restricted as information fell under Part 1, schedule 6 of the *Local Government Act (NI) 2014* - Paragraph 3 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) - as the report contained commercially sensitive information.

If restricted from publication, the report would become unrestricted:  
Sometime in the future.

The previously circulated report provided an update on the development of the proposed DfC Shaping Sustainable Places Programme.

The Head of Economic Development provided a brief update on the development of the proposed DfC Shaping Sustainable Places Programme, building on from the Small Settlements Programme. She Indicated that she expected to receive further clarity on Council co-funding for 2026-27.

**RESOLVED:** To note the update on the development of the proposed DfC Shaping Sustainable Places Programme.

## 8.5 Town Centre Dereliction Strategy – Update

This item was restricted as information fell under the prescribed exemptions:

Part 1, Schedule 6 Local Government Act (NI) 2014 - Paragraph 3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) as this report contained commercially sensitive information.

If restricted from publication, the report would become unrestricted: sometime in the future.

The Interim Director of Community gave an overview of the report previously circulated to provide an update in relation to work underway to develop appropriate interventions to address vacancy and dereliction and to provide a further update to Elected Members following publication of the Department for Communities' vacancy and dereliction funding framework.

The report also sought Members approval for the preparation of a funding bid to DfC for match funding to address vacancy and dereliction and approve Officers to develop a capital grant scheme to tackle vacancy and dereliction, subject to match funding being secured from DfC.

In response to a Member's query regarding updating Council's internal audit list of areas with significant dereliction, the Director of Community agreed to update once the team received up to date GIS data.

Members expressed concerns that the current mix of enforcement and incentive was not a strong enough approach to tackle Landlords who allow property to fall into serious disrepair. The Director of Community explained that Building Control was pursuing legal action against one derelict building in the Borough, and noted that the forthcoming dilapidation bill, once passed by the Northern Ireland Assembly would give Councils stronger powers to enforce. However, a combined approach using both enforcement and incentives would still be required.

Members further suggested involving local councillors more in the process, improving coordination across all operational departments such as sweeping and hedge cutting to improve the Town Centre areas, and exploring the possibility of relaxing planning policies and zoning to support

more viable future uses of buildings. They also highlighted the need to review vacancy rates, reimagine town centres, consider grant options for buildings once vested, and continue working closely with the Development Department to progress these initiatives.

It was proposed by Councillor Skinner, seconded by Councillor McKeen and

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) To note the update provided in relation to work underway to develop appropriate interventions to address vacancy and dereliction;
- (ii) To note that Officers intend to provide a further update following publication of the Department for Communities' vacancy and dereliction funding framework;
- (iii) To approve the preparation of a funding bid to DfC for match funding to address vacancy and dereliction; and
- (iv) To provide approval for Officers to develop a capital grant scheme to tackle vacancy and dereliction, subject to match funding being secured from DfC.

**8.6 PEACEPLUS Action Plan Economic Appraisal**

This item was restricted as information fell under the prescribed exemptions: Part 1, Schedule 6 Local Government Act (NI) 2014 - Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) The report was restricted as the Economic Appraisal includes financial information in relation to the management and operation of the PEACEPLUS Programme in Mid and East Antrim. The report is restricted and not for circulation.

The Head of Economic Development gave an overview of the report previously circulated seeking approval of the Economic Appraisal for the PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan to enable the procurement of programmes to commence.

In response to a Member's question the Head of Economic Development advised that funding would be released to groups imminently once partnership agreement had been signed. She added that on a case-by-case basis up to 20% of funds could be paid in advance, noting that SUEPB recognised cash flow challenges faced by groups and wished to remove barriers that inhibit progress. The Officer advised that any consideration of extensions would be reviewed as the programme progressed. At present, the final date remained 30 June 2028.

It was proposed by Councillor McKeen, seconded by Councillor Harwood and

**RESOLVED:** To approve the Economic Appraisal for the PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan to enable the procurement of programmes to commence.

### 8.7 PEACEPLUS Business Case for Appointment of ICT Consultancy Team

The item was restricted as information fell under the prescribed exemptions: Local Government Act (NI) 2014, Schedule 6, Part 1, Para 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information). If restricted from publication, the report would become unrestricted: Sometime in the future

Report previously circulated seeking Members approval of the recommendation to advance the procurement of the Professional Consultancy Team as set out in the Business Case.

It was proposed by Alderman McCaughey, seconded by Councillor McKeen and

**RESOLVED:** To approve the recommendation to advance the procurement of the Professional Consultancy Team as set out in the Business Case.

### 8.8 Go Succeed Update

The item was restricted as information fell under the prescribed exemptions - Local Government Act (NI) 2014 Schedule 6, Part 1, Para 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information). The report would become unrestricted when the funder(s) issue(s) Letters of Offer for the Go Succeed Service.

Report, previously circulated, updating Members on the Go Succeed Programme, the current position regarding Local Growth Fund (LGF) support and the potential implications for the NI Enterprise Support Service (known as Go Succeed).

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) To note the update on Local Growth Fund (LGF), focusing on the potential implications for the Enterprise Support Service (Go Succeed).

- (ii) To note and support the ongoing work to explore opportunities to secure continued support for the service, taking account of the changes in the external funding environment and pressures on existing budgets.
- (iii) A further paper will be brought to the Environment and Economy Committee in April to provide a further update on the funding position.

### **8.9 City Deal Quarterly Update – Carrickfergus Visitor Centre Report**

This item was restricted as information fell under the prescribed exemptions: Part 1, Schedule 6 Local Government Act (NI) 2014 - Paragraph 3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) as this report contains commercial sensitive information. If restricted from publication, the report would become unrestricted: Sometime in the future.

The Director of Development gave an overview of the report previously circulated which sought approval to proceed with the full replacement of the Danske Bank building in Carrickfergus in order to create a new visitor centre.

In response to Members' concerns regarding the value for money and Councils being excessively charged, the Director confirmed that the procurement process had been carried out in line with the required procedures and independently verified by local government. He further noted that only a limited number of contractors in Northern Ireland would be capable of delivering this type of specialist work.

It was proposed by Alderman Logan, seconded by Alderman McCaughey and

**RESOLVED:** To provide approval to proceed with full demolition of the Danske Bank in order to construct a new visitor centre.

### **8.10 St Patrick's Barracks Quarterly Report –**

This item was restricted as information fell under the prescribed exemptions: Part 1, Schedule 6 Local Government Act (NI) 2014 - Paragraph 3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) as this report contains commercial sensitive information. If restricted from publication, the report would become unrestricted: Sometime in the future.

The Interim Director of Development gave an overview of the report, previously circulated, providing an update on the St Patrick's Barracks Programme of work and informed Members of the planned workshops for all City Deal Projects beginning with i4C.

**RESOLVED:** To note the update in this report.

### 8.11 Sister Cities student exchange

This item was restricted as information fell under the prescribed exemptions: Part 1, Schedule 6 Local Government Act (NI) 2014 - Paragraph 3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) as this report contains commercially sensitive information. If restricted from publication, the report would become unrestricted: Never

Report, previously circulated, seeking approval for the provision of £5,000.00 support to Uplift Performing Arts for the Sister Cities student exchange trip to Danville in Summer 2026 and confirmed that the full allocation for this year's budget would be assigned to supporting the Uplift Performing Arts exchange trip to Danville Summer 2026.

It was proposed by Alderman Ashe, seconded by Councillor Skinner and

**RESOLVED:** To approve the provision of £5,000.00 support to Uplift Performing Arts for the Sister Cities student exchange trip to Danville in Summer 2026

### 8.12 Waste Harmonisation – Update on Judicial Review Proceedings

This item was restricted as information fell under the prescribed exemptions: Part 1, Schedule 6 Local Government Act (NI) 2014 - Paragraph 3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) If restricted from publication, the report would become unrestricted: Sometime in the future

Report, previously circulated, providing an update on the Judicial Review proceedings regarding Waste Harmonisation.

In response to a Member's query, the Acting Director of Development confirmed that Judicial proceedings were expected to conclude before the current recycling contract ended and in sufficient time for the planned purchase of lorries and referred Members to the timescales outlined in the next agenda item. He also confirmed that legal fees had already been set aside for this purpose.

The request by Members for an update on the final legal fees was noted by the Director of Development.

**RESOLVED:** To note the update.

## **9 ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL – CLOSED COMMITTEE**

### **9.1 Business Case – Purchase of Bin Receptacles for Waste Harmonisation using Framework Agreement**

This item was restricted as information fell under the prescribed exemptions: Part 1, Schedule 6 Local Government Act (NI) 2014 - Paragraph 3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) If restricted from publication, the report would become unrestricted: Sometime in the future.

The report, previously circulated sought approval for the business case concerning the purchase of bin receptacles for Waste Harmonisation using a framework agreement.

Members expressed concerns regarding the granting of approval for the business case. Clarification was sought on the annual recurring costs and the lack of a confirmed schedule for receipt for the purchase of blue bins. Members expressed disappointment that no officers from the relevant department were present to address these questions. Members also queried the liability risk including the potential for surcharge to Elected Members of granting approval for the business case given the queries around costs.

The Acting Director of Development noted the questions regarding cost and gave assurances to Members regarding approval.

The Director also undertook to contact Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council to make enquiries regarding the potential reuse of the blue bins they no longer require.

It was proposed by Councillor Mckeen, seconded by Alderman Morrow to recommend that Council approve the business case for Small Scale Groundworks and to put in place a framework contract to ensure the necessary control measures are in place to protect and maintain Council assets.

The Chair put the motion to the vote.

Voting on the motion was as follows -

For	Against	Abstain
9	2	4

The Chair declared that the motion carried.

## 9.2 Business Case – Small Scale Groundworks

This item was restricted as information fell under the prescribed exemptions: Part 1, Schedule 6 Local Government Act (NI) 2014 - Paragraph 3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) If restricted from publication the report would become unrestricted: Sometime in the future.

Report, previously circulated sought approval of the business case for Small Scale Groundworks and to put in place a framework contract to ensure the necessary control measures were in place to protect and maintain Council assets.

Members requested that the relevant officers be in attendance for every item on the agenda going forward.

It was proposed by Councillor Skinner, seconded by Councillor McKeen and

**RECOMMENDED:** to approve the business case for Small Scale Groundworks and to put in place a framework contract to ensure the necessary control measures are in place to protect and maintain Council assets.

## 9.3 Business Case - Cullybackey to Galgorm Greenway

This item was restricted as information fell under the prescribed exemptions: Part 1, Schedule 6 Local Government Act (NI) 2014 - Paragraph 3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) If restricted from publication, the report would become unrestricted: Sometime in the future.

Report, previously circulated, sought approval for the Business Case to move from RIHA stage 3 to stage 7 and complete the detailed design and construction of the Cullybackey to Galgorm Greenway.

It was proposed by Alderman McCaughey, seconded by Councillor Harwood and

**RECOMMENDED:** to approve the Business Case to move from RIHA stage 3 to stage 7 and complete the detailed design and construction of the Cullybackey to Galgorm Greenway.

**OPEN COMMITTEE**

It was proposed by Councillor Harwood, seconded by Alderman McCaughey, and

**RESOLVED:** That the Meeting returns to Open Committee.

**10 Forward Plan for Environment & Economy Committee**

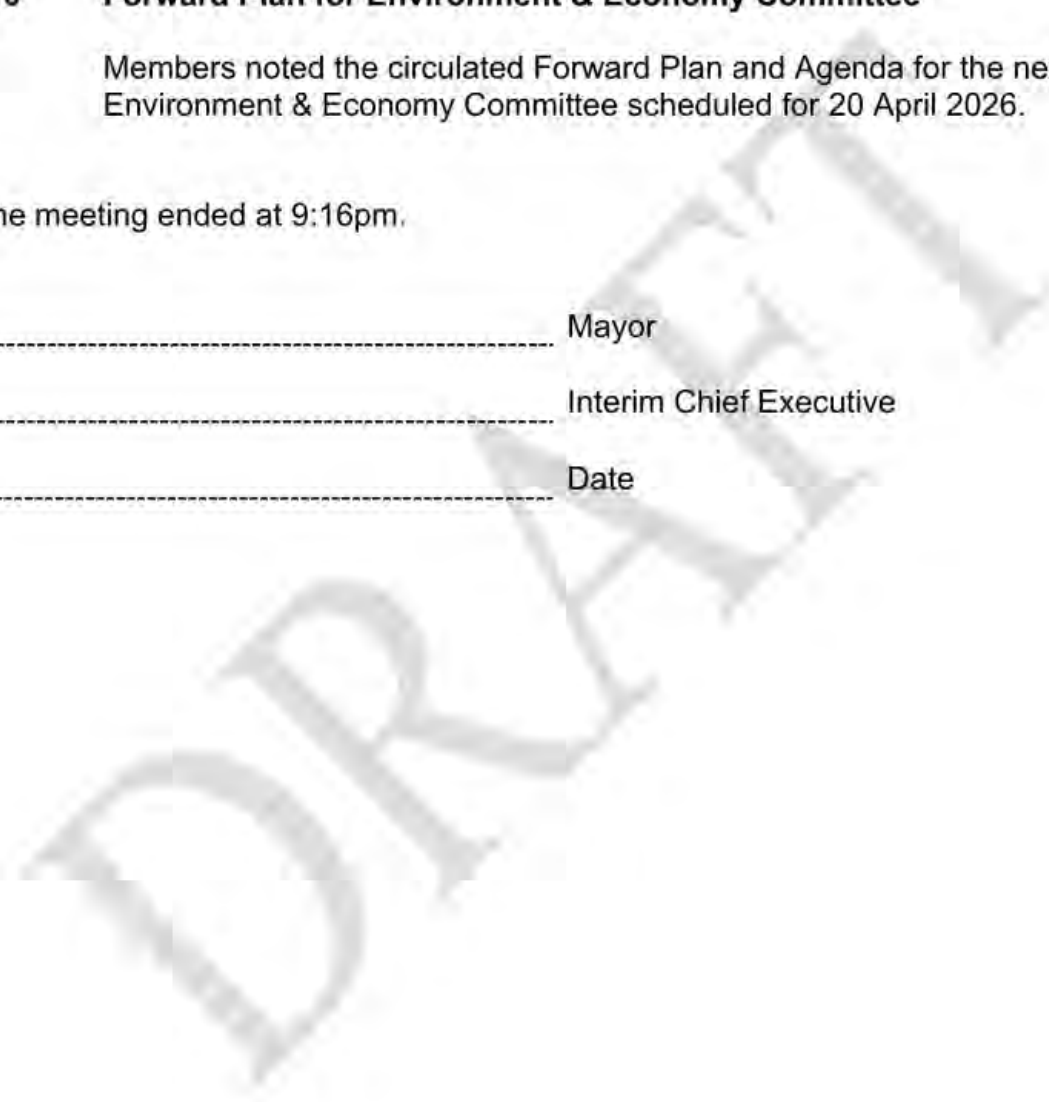
Members noted the circulated Forward Plan and Agenda for the next Environment & Economy Committee scheduled for 20 April 2026.

The meeting ended at 9:16pm.

..... Mayor

..... Interim Chief Executive

..... Date



## MID AND EAST ANTRIM BOROUGH COUNCIL

### AUDIT & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Minutes of Meeting held on Tuesday 3 March 2026 at 6.30pm  
in the Council Chamber, The Braid, 1-29 Bridge Street, Ballymena  
and via remote access**

- In the Chair:** Alderman B Ashe, MBE (Chair)
- Present:** Alderman T Gordon  
Councillor R Beggs  
Mr E Kelly (Independent Member)
- Present remotely:** Alderman P Reid  
Councillor A Barr  
Councillor C Harwood  
Councillor A Henry (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor R Quigley
- Attendance:** Mrs L Donnan, Interim Director of Corporate Services  
Ms M Hegarty, Assistant Director – Finance  
Ms R Salt, Governance & Democratic Services Officer  
C Parr, Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO)  
C McDermott, Deloitte
- Attendance remotely:** Mr J McVeigh, Acting Director of Community
- Press:** There were no members of the press present.
- Public:** No members of the public were in attendance.

#### ITEM MINUTE

#### 1 NOTICE OF MEETING

The Interim Director of Corporate Services read the Notice of Meeting.

#### 2 APOLOGIES

No apologies were received.

#### 3 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Members and Officers were invited to declare any pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests, including gifts and hospitality they might have in respect of items on this Agenda.

No declarations were received.

## **4 ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION / DECISION**

### **4.1 Internal Audit - Progress report**

The report on Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Audit and Scrutiny Committee Progress previously circulated was presented for noting.

**RESOLVED:** to note the report.

### **4.2 Internal Audit – IT Risk Management review**

Report previously circulated to update Members on the IT Risk Management Framework.

C McDermott from Deloitte drew Members' attention to the following areas where recommendations had been made:

1. Documented procedures regarding identification of ID risk, including responding to incidents, communication strategies, lessons learned following incidents
2. Third party IT risk management – assessing and identifying risk on Vendor register.
3. Misalignment with policies and procedures across directorates.

Members noted the recommendations and suggested that some processes needed to be formalised. Questions were raised regarding any support from National Cyber Security Council and it was highlighted that IT processes had been historically underfunded, but that good progress was being made.

**RESOLVED:** to note the content of the Internal Audit – IT Risk Management Review.

### **4.3 Internal Audit – Procurement Report**

Report previously circulated to update Members on the Internal Audit in relation to Procurement, focusing on Direct Award Contracts and procurement below the Tender Threshold.

There were recommendations in relation to formal spend analysis by product or service, which would identify where Council could leverage bulk purchasing, as well as finalising updates to Conflict of Interest and Gifts and Hospitality policies.

**RESOLVED:** to note the content of the Internal Audit – Procurement Report.

### **4.4 Internal Audit – Follow Up**

Report previously circulated to update Members on the Annual review of

previous recommendations made.

C McDermott from Deloitte advised that all closed recommendations had been validated and fully implemented.

The Interim Director for Corporate Services advised that these recommendations were regularly discussed by Senior Management and assured Members that progress was being made.

**RESOLVED:** to note the contents of the Annual Internal Audit Follow-Up Exercise.

#### 4.5 Internal Audit Charter

Report previously circulated to present Members with a Charter document which sets out Deloitte's role as Internal Auditors and the authority of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee in relation to work carried out by Deloitte.

**RESOLVED:** to approve the Internal Audit Charter for Mid and East Antrim.

#### 5 ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

There were no items for recommendation.

#### 6 TABLED QUESTIONS

No questions had been received.

**The information contained in the reports associated with the following items was restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.**

It was proposed by Alderman Gordon, seconded by Councillor Beggs, and:

**RESOLVED:** that the Meeting goes into Closed Committee.

In accordance with Council policy, members of the press and the public were not in attendance for this section of the Meeting.

#### 7 ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION/DECISION – CLOSED COMMITTEE

##### 7.1 Procurement - DAC update

The item was restricted as information fell under the prescribed exemptions:

Part 1, Schedule 6 Local Government Act (NI) 2014 – Paragraph 3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) – as this item

included commercially sensitive information. If restricted from publication, the report would become unrestricted: - Never

The report previously circulated updated Members on the number of Direct Award Contracts (DACs) issued by Council during 2025/2026, including data for Q1-Q3, supporting the Committee’s ongoing role in ensuring continued transparency and effective oversight in this key area of procurement activity.

Members discussed initiatives to bring down the number of DACs and noted the progress that was being made in this regard.

**RESOLVED:** to note the contents of the report.

**8 ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL – CLOSED COMMITTEE**

There were no items for recommendation to Council

**9 TABLED QUESTIONS – CLOSED COMMITTEE**

No questions were received.

On the proposal of Alderman Gordon, seconded by Councillor Beggs, it was:

**RESOLVED:** that the Meeting returns to Open Committee.

**10 FORWARD PLAN FOR AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Members noted the circulated Forward Plan for Audit and Scrutiny Committee.

The meeting ended at 7.18pm

\_\_\_\_\_ Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_ Interim Chief Executive

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

<b>Council/Committee:</b>	Full Council
<b>Date:</b>	30 March 2026
<b>Report Title:</b>	Disability Lived Experience Group Update
<b>Publication Status:</b>	Open
<b>Author:</b>	Siobhan Fisher, Assistant Director Citizen Focus
<b>Approver:</b>	Laureen Donnan, Interim Director of Corporate & Support Services

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update from the Disability Lived Experience Group.

### **2. Background**

- 2.1. The Group met on 10 December 2025 to discuss the proposed process for recruiting volunteer members. During this meeting, Members agreed that additional consideration was required to refine the recruitment approach, and requested that this would be in collaboration with the Centre for Independent Living NI (CILNI).
- 2.2. Officers subsequently met with the Policy and Campaign Manager from the CILNI, whose feedback informed further development of the recruitment process and supporting materials.
- 2.3. A further meeting of the Group was held on 9 March 2026, at which Members reviewed the revised recruitment proposals and updated Terms of Reference. The notes and actions from this meeting are included at Appendix 1.

### **3. Key Issues for Consideration**

- 3.1. Terms of Reference

Members were invited to consider and agree the following points:

- Maximum number of volunteer members
- Term of service for volunteer members
- Required quorum for meetings

Members noted that a quorum for sub-committees typically includes at least 3 Elected Members. However, given the nature of this group and the inclusion of volunteer members, the group agreed that a quorum of 25% of total membership, including a minimum of 2 Elected Members, would be both appropriate and practical in order to support the ongoing work of the group.

The Terms of Reference are included at Appendix 2.

### 3.2. Recruitment of Volunteer Members

Members received an update on revisions made to the draft Guidance Document and Application Form for volunteer recruitment. A number of minor amendments were proposed and have now been incorporated.

The updated Guidance Document, included at Appendix 3, has been developed to support prospective applicants interested in joining the Disability Lived Experience Group. The Application Form is included at Appendix 4.

## 4. General Considerations / Implications

- 4.1. Financial implications – Any costs related to the group will be covered within the existing budget.
- 4.2. Alignment with Corporate Plan – Progression of EDI related work within Council aligns with the statutory duties of Council as a public authority and to the priorities contained within both the Community Plan and the Corporate Plan.

## 5. Proposed Way Forward

- 5.1. Officers will progress with implementation of the recruitment process to appoint volunteer members to the Disability Lived Experience Group.

## 6. Recommendation or Decision

- 6.1. Elected Members are asked to note the contents of this report and the associated appendices.

## 7. Appendices / Link

- Appendix 1: Notes from Disability Lived Experience Group 9 March 2026
- Appendix 2: Disability Lived Experience Group Terms of Reference
- Appendix 3: Disability Lived Experience Group Guidance Document
- Appendix 4: Disability Lived Experience Group Application Form

**NOTES AND ACTIONS – Disability Lived Experience Group****Date: Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2026 at 6.30pm****Hybrid Meeting (In-Person & Teams), Dobbs Room, Carrickfergus, Townhall****Present:****Elected Members:**Cllr A Skinner (**Chair**)

Cllr B Ferris

Cllr M Armstrong

**Officers:**Siobhan Fisher, Assistant Director - Citizen Focus (**SF**)Laura-Jane McCloy Policy, Performance & Partnership Manager (**LJM**)Ellen Boyd, Equality & Inclusion Manager (**EB**)**Others:**Deena Nimick, Centre of Independent Living (**DN**)

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
	<b>NOTICE OF MEETING</b>
	The Chair read the notice of the meeting.
<b>1</b>	<b>WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS</b>
	The Chair welcomed all attendees.
<b>2</b>	<b>APOLOGIES</b>
	Apologies received from Cllr G McKeen and Cllr L Philpott.
<b>3</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>
	None declared.

## NOTES AND ACTIONS – Disability Lived Experience Group

4	<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>
	<p>The Terms of Reference were circulated in advance of the meeting. Members were invited to consider and agree the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximum number of volunteer members</li> <li>• Term of service for volunteer members</li> <li>• Required quorum for meetings</li> </ul> <p>The Chair initiated a discussion on the suggested maximum number of Volunteer Members. DN proposed that consideration be given to setting a minimum number of Volunteer Members and recommended a minimum of 12. It was agreed to set a maximum number of 15 Volunteer Members, with a minimum of 12.</p> <p>The Chair then moved on to initiate discussion on the length of term Volunteer Members would serve before a further recruitment process for new Volunteer Members would take place.</p> <p>EB suggested that a three-year term would be appropriate to allow the group to build momentum and confidence. Members discussed terms of three to four years. Cllr Armstrong proposed a minimum term of two years, with the option to extend for a further two years. This would bring the group in line with the Council mandate. This proposal was welcomed and agreed collectively by the group.</p> <p>The Chair initiated a discussion on the quorum for the group. It was noted that quorum for sub-committees typically includes at least 3 Elected Members. However, Members felt that given the nature of this group and the inclusion of volunteer members that a quorum of 25% of total membership, to include a minimum of 2 Elected Members, would be more appropriate and practical.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Officers to update the TOR accordingly.</p>
5	<b>NOTES AND ACTIONS FROM MEETING OF 10 DECEMBER 2025</b>
	<p>The Chair then moved to approve the notes and actions from the previous meeting, which were proposed by Cllr Ferris and seconded by Cllr Armstrong.</p>

## NOTES AND ACTIONS – Disability Lived Experience Group

6	<b>RECRUITMENT OF VOLUNTEER MEMBERS DISCUSSION</b>
	<p>The Chair invited EB to update the group on the recruitment of Volunteer Members and to lead the discussion. EB guided the group through the recruitment Guidance Document and the associated Application Form, inviting comments or suggestions from the group.</p> <p>DN suggested including a minimum attendance expectation of 3 out of 4 meetings, as well as ensuring Volunteer Members read any papers prior to each meeting. DN also recommended additional text in relation to representation of different disabilities and alternative formats to include BSL/ISL, as well as involving experts in meetings where applicable.</p> <p>A discussion took place around holding the meetings in hybrid format to help with fatigue and participation. DN agreed this would be helpful, but stated that in-person attendance would be preferable where possible. She also suggested that when using the hybrid option, cameras should be switched on to ensure accessibility, for example for deaf group members.</p> <p>DN asked whether payments for personal assistants would be covered under the group's claimable expenses. It was explained that the Council's current expenses framework does not provide for this.</p> <p>Cllr Armstrong emphasised the importance of managing the expectations of Volunteer Members, in relation to what Council can and cannot do. DN suggested that a formal induction for Volunteer Members would be key to communicating these boundaries and maintaining a positive approach from the outset.</p> <p>LJM clarified that applicants would be shortlisted if they meet the three essential criteria. If there were more applicants meeting the criteria than places available on the group, then additional weightings would be considered in relation to range of disabilities, gender balance and geographical representation. DN recommended that, once shortlisting is complete, courtesy calls be made to ensure that all shortlisted applicants understand expectation. DN also suggested adding the DDA definition of disability to the Guidance Document to avoid any ambiguity.</p> <p>The actual recruitment timeline was discussed. It was agreed that the recruitment would stay open for two weeks, followed by three weeks for shortlisting and courtesy calls. It was also agreed to run an awareness raising campaign prior to the opening of applications.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Officers to update the Guidance Document and Application Form accordingly and implement the agreed recruitment process.</p>

**NOTES AND ACTIONS – Disability Lived Experience Group**

<b>7</b>	<b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b>
	No further business.
<b>8</b>	<b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b>
	TBC.



## **Mid and East Antrim Borough Council** **Disability Lived Experience Group**

### **Terms of Reference**

#### **1. PURPOSE AND ROLE**

The purpose and role of the Disability Lived Experience Group is:

- To assist the Elected Members and Officers of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council to gain understanding of the potential impact of service delivery and design across the Council, upon disabled people;
- To create a space for disabled people to discuss issues within Council's remit that are important to them and bring issues of concern to the forefront of Council's attention;
- To provide Council with access to the expertise and knowledge of those with lived experience, on a range of equality and disability issues, and improve communication links between the Council, individuals and organisations representing those with disabilities.

#### **2. MEMBERSHIP**

The Group will consist of:

- 5 Elected Members:  
Cllr M Armstrong  
Cllr B Ferris  
Cllr G McKeen  
Cllr L Philpott  
Cllr A Skinner
- A minimum of 12 and a maximum of 15 Volunteer Members.

#### **Chair and Vice Chair**

The Chair of the Disability Lived Experience Group will be an Elected Member and will be elected by the Group at its first meeting.

The Vice Chair will also be an Elected Member and will be elected by the Group at its first meeting.

The Chair will be responsible for ensuring that business is conducted effectively at meetings. The Vice Chair will stand in for the Chair if unavailable.



### **Council Officers**

Representation will be requested from relevant service areas in advance of each meeting, upon issue of each agenda.

An Officer will conduct the secretarial duties for the meetings.

### **Appointment of Volunteer Members**

There will be a public call for expressions of interest for volunteer members every 2 years, with the option to extend the term by a further 2 years.

## **3. MEETING ARRANGEMENTS**

The Disability Lived Experience Group will meet quarterly. It is expected that all Members will attend a minimum of 3 out of 4 meetings.

All Members are expected to read any papers in advance of each meeting.

Ad Hoc meetings may be convened at the discretion of the Chair.

Meetings will normally last for no longer than 2 hours with a comfort break offered at the halfway point.

The meetings will be held in a hybrid format. Attendance in person at the Braid Centre, Ballymena or virtually via Teams. Members attending virtually must always keep their cameras on to ensure full participation.

Guest experts will be invited to contribute on specific themes as required by the group.

### **Quorum**

The quorum of the Disability Lived Experience Group will be at least 25% of the total group membership, to include at least 2 Elected Members.

### **Preparation of Agenda**

A request for agenda items will be issued in advance of the meeting.

The Chair and the Vice-Chair of the Group will agree the Agenda 7 Days before the meeting.

The agreed Agenda and Papers will be issued to all Members of the Group 5 Working Days before the meeting.



#### **4. REVIEW AND REPORTING**

Notes and actions agreed at the meeting will be taken and circulated by an officer in attendance.

Notes and actions in respect of the Group's meetings will be provided to Full Council, and to the internal Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer Network as part of the wider reporting structure on Council's equality and diversity work.

A review of these Terms of Reference will take place annually in advance of the Annual General Meeting.

## Appendix 3

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## Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Disability Lived Experience Group

### About the Group

We are looking for 15 reference group members to join our Disability Lived Experience Group to consult on and help shape Council services to further promote a thriving and inclusive borough.

The purpose of the Disability Lived Experience Group is to:

- Help Elected Members and Council officers to understand how the design and delivery of our services may impact disabled people and those representing different disabilities.
- Provide a forum for disabled people and those with lived experience to discuss issues and concerns in relation to matters that are within our remit.
- Give us access to the knowledge and lived experience of disabled people, and to improve our communication with individuals and organisations representing disabled people.

The role of a Disability Lived Experience Group member will involve:

- Attending the Disability Lived Experience Group meetings.
- Contributing to the work of the group, including providing input to consultation responses and other papers.
- Attending public meetings and events relevant to the group
- Meeting any deadlines set by the Chair - for example providing comments on a consultation response.

The definition of disability under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) in Northern Ireland states that a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Please note to be considered for membership of the group you must be a resident of the Mid and East Antrim borough and be 18 years of age or older.

## Appendix 3

While members will not be paid, any out-of-pocket expenses such as travel will be paid.

### About Us

The borough covers an area of just over 400 square miles extending from the River Bann in the west, to the beautiful Antrim coast in the east, and includes part of the Antrim Coast and Glens Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

There are 3 main towns, Ballymena, Carrickfergus and Larne, and a host of welcoming villages and rural communities, which are home to a population of just under 140,000 people.

Our vision for the borough sits at the heart of everything we do. Our Corporate Plan strives to achieve this vision under the four key pillars of People, Place, Planet and Performance.

For more information on our Corporate Plan please visit:

<https://www.midandeantrim.gov.uk/council/policies-and-documents/corporate-plan>

The work of the group will focus on the range of services that we are directly responsible for.

- Environmental Health, Animal Welfare and Dog Control
- Tourism, Arts, Culture, Events and Heritage
- Bin Collection and Recycling
- Planning and Building Control
- Parks, Cemeteries and Open Spaces
- Community Planning and Development
- Public Conveniences
- Off-street Parking
- Economic Development
- Leisure, Recreation and Sport
- Registration of Births, Deaths, Marriages and Civil Partnerships
- Licensing

There are some common misconceptions about what we are responsible for and unfortunately the services outlined below are not within our remit and will not be a focus of the group.

- Roads, potholes, footpaths, streetlights, bridges and on-street parking
- Water, sewerage and septic tank clearance
- Electricity
- Penalty Charge Notice issued at off-street parking
- Housing
- Flooding

## Appendix 3

### How to Apply

The application form and this document are available in a range of formats and languages, including BSL/ISL. You can submit your application in your preferred format, including in audio or video format, as long as you answer all the questions. You can also complete the application form over the telephone.

We are committed to making all the necessary adjustments to assist potential members to play a full part in the work of the group.

If you would like to discuss the support available for people applying to be a member, please contact Ellen Boyd or Liza Walker:

Telephone: 0300 124 5000

Email: [policy@midandeantrim.gov.uk](mailto:policy@midandeantrim.gov.uk)

### Knowledge and Experience

The application form asks you about your knowledge and experience. It is essential that you tell us how you meet all three criteria.

#### **1. You must be able to show a strong understanding of the key barriers disabled people face when accessing Council services.**

Please tell us your knowledge of the key issues that affect disabled people when accessing Council services. Tell us how you gained this knowledge. For example, it could be because you are a user of a Council service, or it may be through your work with disabled people. Please make sure you give specific examples of the types of barriers or difficulties encountered by disabled people when accessing a Council service.

#### **2. You must be able to represent the best interests of all disabled people.**

As a member of the group, you must be able to represent the best interests of all disabled people. This means that sometimes you will be required to place the broader interests of disabled people before your personal interests or the interests of organisations you may be involved with.

When answering this question, you must give specific examples from your own experiences where you have done this. This could include for instance:

- Other Committees or groups you sit on, particularly where you have worked with disabled people.

## Appendix 3

- Projects or events you have taken part in, particularly where you have worked with disabled people.

### **3. You must be able to meet the time commitment which includes attending meetings as well as contributing to the review of papers and related activities.**

You must be able to answer “yes” to this question to be considered for membership of the Disability Lived Experience Group.

## Selection Process

Members of the group will be selected by a panel of three people. The panel will select candidates who meet the three essential criteria. If there are more candidates meeting these criteria than places available on the group, the panel will use the following additional weightings based on current membership to help make a decision:

- The current balance of people with different disabilities
- The current gender balance
- The current geographical representation

## Data Protection

We will be collecting your personal information as part of the recruitment process for the Disability Lived Experience Group. We will keep your information secure, accurate, and for no longer than is necessary in accordance with data protection laws. If you wish to find out more about how we control and process your personal data and protect your privacy, please visit:

[www.midandeantrim.gov.uk/privacy-notice](http://www.midandeantrim.gov.uk/privacy-notice)

**Mid and East Antrim Borough Council**  
**Disability Lived Experience Group Application Form**

**Completing this application form**

This application form is available upon request in alternative formats and languages, including BSL/ISL. You may also submit your application in your preferred format (for example in audio or video format) as long as all questions are answered. Alternatively, you can complete the form over the telephone.

If you need any assistance with the form or have queries, please contact:

Liza Walker or Ellen Boyd

Telephone : 0300 124 5000

Email: [policy@midandeantrim.gov.uk](mailto:policy@midandeantrim.gov.uk)

This application form has 3 sections. Please read each page carefully and make sure you answer every question. You can continue any answer on separate sheets if you wish, but you must clearly mark each sheet with your name and the part of the form that it relates to. If handwritten, please use black ink.

You can return your completed application form to us by:

Email: [policy@midandeantrim.gov.uk](mailto:policy@midandeantrim.gov.uk)

Post: Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, 1-29 Bridge Street, Ballymena, BT43 5EJ

**Completed applications must be submitted by X pm on X.**

**Section One - Personal Details**

Title (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Other - please specify):

Surname:

First Name:

Contact address:

Telephone/Textphone Number:

Mobile Number:

Email address:

How would you like us to contact you (please specify):

Please Note:

The definition of disability under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) in Northern Ireland states that a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

To be considered for membership of the group you must be a resident within Mid and East Antrim Borough and 18 years of age or over.

**Section Two - Essential skills, knowledge and experience you must have**

It is very important that you demonstrate your skills, knowledge and experience under each of the following criteria.

Please read the guide sent as part of the application pack before you answer these questions.

- 1. You must be able to show a strong understanding of the key barriers disabled people face when accessing Council services.**

- 2. You must be able to represent the best interests of all Disabled people.**

- 3. Can you meet the time commitment which includes attending meetings as well as contributing to the review of papers and group related activities.**

Yes

No

**Section Three - Other information**

**How you heard about us?**

We want our recruitment to be open and accessible to as many people as possible. To help us do this we would be grateful if you could tell how you heard about becoming a member of the Disability Lived Experience Group:

Advertisement (please specify publication)

Contacted directly by Mid and East Antrim Borough Council

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Website

Other (please specify)

**Conflict of Interest**

Please give details below of any business or other interests or any personal connections which you may think we need to be aware of. Any potential conflicts of interest detailed here will not prevent your application being considered.

**Declaration**

I declare that the information given on this application is complete and correct to the best of my knowledge. If there is any change to my circumstances that affect the answers I have given, I will tell Council about this immediately.

Signed:

Date:

You can nominate a representative to sign this declaration on your behalf if applicable.

**Data Protection**

We will be collecting your personal information as part of the recruitment process for the Disability Lived Experience Group. We will keep your information secure, accurate, and for no longer than is necessary in accordance with data protection laws. If you wish to find out more

about how we control and process your personal data and protect your privacy, please visit: [www.midandeastantrim.gov.uk/privacy-notice](http://www.midandeastantrim.gov.uk/privacy-notice)

Are you content we hold the information in this application in line with our privacy notice?

Yes  No

<b>Council/Committee:</b>	Full Council
<b>Date:</b>	30 March 2026
<b>Report Title:</b>	Inclusive Summer Opportunities Grant Funding Scheme
<b>Publication Status:</b>	Open
<b>Author:</b>	Siobhan Fisher, Assistant Director Citizen Focus
<b>Approver:</b>	Laureen Donnan, Interim Director of Corporate & Support Services

## 1. Purpose

- 1.1. To inform and seek Council approval for the establishment of an Inclusive Summer Opportunities Grant Funding Scheme, designed to support organisations across the Borough to deliver accessible, inclusive summer activities for children and young people with disabilities.

## 2. Background

- 2.1. A report was presented to Members at the February meeting of the Inclusion & Equality Sub-Committee, outlining options for enhancing inclusive summer provision.
- 2.2. Members agreed that supporting existing organisations across the Borough to deliver targeted, localised assistance would be the most cost-effective and beneficial approach. Officers were asked to explore the most suitable mechanism to implement this.
- 2.3. In line with governance arrangements, officers have consulted the Finance and Grants teams and have been advised that a grant funding scheme is the most appropriate method.
- 2.4. A budget of £12,400 was secured through the rate setting process to support the scheme. An application process will be developed to enable funding to be allocated to suitable organisations to develop inclusive summer activities within Ballymena, Carrickfergus and Larne.

### **3. Key Issues for Consideration**

- 3.1. The scheme seeks to attract qualified, reputable organisations and charities with demonstrated experience supporting children and young people with complex disability needs.
- 3.2. Clear eligibility and selection criteria will be applied to ensure this standard is met. It will be essential that organisations and charities applying for the grant funding demonstrate how they meet these criteria with clear evidence provided of their experience.
- 3.3. The funding opportunity will be publicly advertised through the Council website, social media channels and via key stakeholders and community groups.
- 3.4. The funding call is expected to open in late April or early May, allowing adequate time for funds to be released before delivery of summer activities.
- 3.5. Following the successful assessment and appointment of delivery organisations, officers will develop a communications plan to raise awareness and showcase the partnerships.
- 3.6. Post-activity evaluations will be conducted to measure the success of the grant funding programme. Feedback will be gathered from delivery organisations as well as parents and caregivers of participating children and young people.

### **4. General Considerations / Implications**

- 4.1. Financial implications – the costs associated with the Inclusive Summer Opportunities Grant Funding Scheme will be met from existing budgets.
- 4.2. Alignment with Corporate Plan – Progression of EDI related work within Council aligns with the statutory duties of Council as a public authority and to the priorities contained within both the Community Plan and the Corporate Plan.

### **5. Proposed Way Forward**

- 5.1. Officers will proceed to design and implement the Inclusive Summer Opportunities Grant Funding Scheme.



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## **6. Recommendation or Decision**

- 6.1. Council is asked to approve the proposed approach set out within the report to allocate funding of £12,400 to reputable organisations and charities with demonstrated experience supporting children and young people with complex disability needs via a grants scheme.

## **7. Appendices / Link**

N/A