

February 16th, 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, 16th February 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 Monday 12 January 2026 - Circulated

[01-26 Full Council Mins Draft.pdf](#)

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1.4.2 Reconvened Council Meeting held on Wednesday 14 January 2026 - Circulated

[01-26 Reconvened Full Council Mins Draft.pdf](#)

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1.4.3 Special Council Meeting (Rates) held on Monday 9 February 2026 - Circulated (12.2.26)

[02.26 Special Council \(Rates\) Mins Draft.pdf](#)

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1.5 Mayor's Announcements

2 QUESTIONS

2.1 Members

None.

2.2 Public

None.

3 MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

3.1 Planning Committee held on Thursday 15 January 2026 - Circulated

[01.26 Planning Mins Draft.pdf](#)

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- 3.2 Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee held on Monday 19 January 2026 - Circulated**
📄 *01.26 CRPG Mins Draft.pdf* *Page 39*
- 3.3 Neighbourhoods and Communities Committee held on Tuesday 20 January 2026 - Circulated**
📄 *01-26 NC Mins Draft.pdf* *Page 47*
- 3.4 Environment and Economy Committee held on Monday 26 January 2026 - Circulated (11.2.26)**
📄 *01-26 EE Mins Draft.pdf* *Page 53*
- 3.5 Audit and Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday 27 January 2026 - Circulated**
📄 *01-26 Audit Scrutiny Draft.pdf* *Page 66*
- 4 POLICY FRAMEWORK AND BUDGET**
- 5 STRATEGIC ISSUES**
- 6 ITEMS FOR DECISION - OPEN COUNCIL**
- 6.1 Services to mark the 110th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme in France - Circulated (13.2.26)**
📄 *Somme Report.pdf* *Page 72*

📄 *Appendix 1 Travel Options Somme 2026.pdf* *Page 74*
- 6.2 Inclusion & Equality Sub Committee Update - Circulated**
📄 *Inclusion & Equality Sub-Committee Update.pdf* *Page 75*

📄 *Appendix 1 - Notes and actions from Inclusion & Equality Sub-Committee 2 February 2026.pdf* *Page 78*
- 7 MOTIONS**
- 7.1 Notice of Motion Proposed by Councillor R Beggs, Seconded by Alderman A Wilson**

"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."

7.2 Notice of Motion Proposed by Councillor M Collins, Seconded by Councillor B 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."

8 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)

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

9 STRATEGIC ISSUES - CLOSED

10 ITEMS FOR DECISION - CLOSED

10.1 Bonfire Consultation Outcome & Bonfire Management 2026 - Circulated

📄 <i>Bonfire Consultation Outcome & Bonfire Management 2026.pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>
📄 <i>Appendix 1 Proposal from ACT Initiative_Redacted.pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>
📄 <i>Appendix 2 ACT Initiative MEA Final Report.pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>

10.2 Tullygarley Playing Fields – Return of Expression of Interest - Circulated

📄 <i>Tullygarley Playing Fields - Return of Expression of Interest.pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>
📄 <i>Appendix 1 - Location plan.pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>
📄 <i>Appendix 2 - Brochure - Lands at Tullygarley Community Centre Ballymena.pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>
📄 <i>Appendix 3 - Summary of Tullygarley Survey responses.pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>

10.3 Lease of Antiville Playing Fields - Circulated

 <i>Lease of Antiville Playing Fields.pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>
 <i>Appendix 1 - Antiville Brochure.pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>
 <i>Appendix 2 Larne Community Football Limited Lease Boundary.pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>
 <i>Appendix 3 Antiville Changing Room Schedule of Condition.pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>

10.4 Proposed Sale of Derelict Barn at Tobergel Lane, Larne - Circulated

 <i>Proposed Sale of Derelict Barn at Tobergel Lane, Larne.pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>
 <i>Appendix 1 - Brochure Tobergel Lane Larne.pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>

10.5 UK Town of Culture - Circulated

[Link to UK Town of Culture Expression of Interest details](#)

 <i>UK Town of Culture Report.pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>
 <i>Appendix 1 UK Town of Culture Expression of Interest Form.pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>

10.6 Household Recycling Centres: Restricted Access for Commercial Vehicles - Circulated (12.2.26)

Links:

[The Waste and Contaminated Land \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1997](#)

[The Controlled Waste Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2002](#)

 <i>HRC - Restricted access for commercial vehicles.pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>
 <i>Appendix 1 - HRC Restricted Access FAQs.pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>
 <i>Appendix 2 - HRC Restricted Access DPIA Screening.pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>
 <i>Appendix 3 - HRC Restricted Access - Equality Screening.pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>
 <i>Appendix 4 - Household Recycling Centres [HRCs]_ Restricted Access for Commercial Vehicles Report.pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>
 <i>Appendix 5 - HRC Restricted Access - Rural Needs Impact Assessment.pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>

OPEN COUNCIL

MID AND EAST ANTRIM BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Minutes of Meeting held on Monday 12 January 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 B Ashe, MBE

Alderman R Glover
Alderman T Gordon
Alderman R Logan (to 9.24pm)
Alderman W McCaughey
Alderman S McDonald
Councillor M Armstrong
Councillor A Barr
Councillor R Beggs
Councillor D Clarke
Councillor B Ferris
Councillor I Friary
Councillor J Gibson
Councillor L Gray
Councillor B Hadden
Councillor C Harwood (from 6.40pm)
Councillor A Henry
Councillor C Jamieson
Councillor P Johnston
Councillor R Lawrence
Councillor B Lyness
Councillor G McKeen
Councillor L Philpott
Councillor R Quigley
Councillor A Rae
Councillor A Skinner
Councillor Mrs A Smyth
Councillor B Thompson
Councillor M Warwick

Present remotely: Alderman A Wilson
Councillor M Armstrong
Councillor A Clarke
Councillor M Collins
Councillor R Stewart

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
 Mrs C Grant, Acting Corporate Solicitor
 Mr S Shiels, Solicitor
 Ms C Connor, Governance & Democratic Services Officer
 Mrs C McIntyre, Governance & Democratic Services
 Officer
 Ms R Salt, Governance & Democratic Services Officer
 Ms D Carey, Waste Manager
 Ms A Millar, Service Support Officer

Attendance remotely: Mr S Morley, Interim Director of Operations

Press: There were no member of the press present

Public: There were no members of the public present.

Following a technical fault with the online live streaming of the meeting, the Interim Director of Corporate Services advised that 2.7 of Appendix 7 of the Standing Orders stated that 'if a technological fault is known prior to a meeting commencing which affects the live audio streaming to the public or the Councils information technology systems, the meeting will be adjourned until the technological fault is rectified.' The meeting was adjourned at 6.37pm

The meeting recommenced at 7.07pm.

Item Minute

1. FORMALITIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

1.1 Notice of Meeting

The Interim Chief Executive read the Notice of Meeting.

Council Skinner raised a Point of Order in relation to a Notice of Motion submitted on 15 December 2025 in advance of the cut off to be considered at the meeting stating that the motion met the requirements of Standing Orders 4.2 and 4.3 and therefore should have been included on the agenda.

In response the Interim Chief Executive explained that a report had already been tabled on the agenda regarding the subject matter and was therefore superfluous. The motion was subsequently rejected on the grounds that 'the wording or nature of the Motion was considered unlawful or improper.' (Standing Order 4.4) She also informed that an email response had been sent to that effect to Alderman Ashe prior to the meeting.

In response Councillor Skinner stated that this was incorrect on the basis that

- the NoM had three different elements, two of which were not included in the report and
- that it was not for the Chief Executive to decide if a motion submitted by Members was worthy of debate in the chamber. Standing Order 4.4 existed to ensure the wording of the motion was not unlawful or improper.

He requested that his objection be recorded.

The Interim Chief Executive apologised to Alderman Ashe for not responding to his correspondence in the first instance but that her decision still stood.

1.2 Apologies

Apologies were received from:

Alderman Mrs M Morrow
Alderman Ms G Mulvenna
Alderman P Reid
Councillor M Donnelly
Councillor J McKeown

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.

The following declarations were received:

Councillor Johnston in items
6.9 – Correspondence from the Department for Communities – Council Standing Orders and
10.6 – Regularisation of Title – Transfer of surplus Lands at St Patricks Link Road, Ballymena to Council as an employee of the Department for Communities

Councillor Hoey in item
10.3 – Expression of Interest on land adjoining Ahoghill Community Centre, Ahoghill due to links with the associated Community group.

1.4 Minutes of Council Meetings

1.4.1 Council Meeting held on 24 November 2025

On the proposal of Cllr Gibson, seconded by Councillor Ferris, it was

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 24 November 2025 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

1.5 Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor extended sympathies to the family and friends of Mr George Mitchell, who tragically passed away at a fire in his home.

Members stood for a minute's silence.

The Mayor extended congratulations to those included in HM King's New Year's Honours List.

Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE)

- Professor Maria McIlgorm, Chief Nursing Officer in the Department for Health. For services to nursing and midwifery in Northern Ireland.

Members of the Order of the British Empire (MBE):

- Mrs Rose Caldwell (Glarryford) Chief Executive Officer, Plan International UK. For services to International Humanitarian Aid and Development.
- Mrs Julie Erskine (Carrickfergus) Chair, Business Services Organisation. For services to Health and Social Care.
- Mrs Joanne Liddle (Larne) Managing Director of IPC Ltd. For services to the aerospace sector in Northern Ireland.
- Mr James Wallace McConachie (Ballynure) Owner of Westbank Group Ltd. For services to the electrical control industry in Northern Ireland.
- Mrs Elizabeth Agnes Purdy (Ballymena) Business Support Officer, Education Authority Northern Ireland. For services to education and to the Girls Brigade.

Medallists of the Order of the British Empire (BEM)

- Yvonne Carson (Ballymena) Health and Well Being Manager, NHSC. For services to tackling loneliness.

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

- Charlotte Dixon, World Indoor Rowing Champion at the Versa Challenge in Singapore.

Members requested that congratulations also be extended to the following:

- Josh Rock (Broughshane) for his achievements in the World Darts Championships and his qualification for the Premiere League of Darts.
- Ella McDonald (Bannside) on winning the Ulster 60kg Boxing Championships.

Councillor Rae requested that the Mayor hold a reception for the Bridini Oga (Glenravel) Senior Camogie Team who recently won the All-Ireland Championships.

2 QUESTIONS

2.1 Members

2.1.1 Tabled Question in the Name of Councillor A Barr

"Given the recent issue with Bryson Recycling regarding missed recycling collections, what actions can be taken by MEABC to ensure that Bryson Recycling rectify this situation."

Councillor Barr noted the response provided on Decision Time.

The Mayor asked that questions regarding this matter be raised at item 10.2.

2.2 Public

The Mayor advised that three eligible public questions had been received.

One question was rejected in accordance with the Protocol criteria.

Members of the public who had submitted public questions, were not present in the Chamber. The Mayor read their questions and the Interim Chief Executive provided the answers.

It was noted that details of all accepted questions and answers would be published within five working days on the Council website.

3 MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

3.1 Planning Committee held on 27 November 2025

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

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 27 November 2025, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted with an amendment to items 6.1 and 6.2.

- 6.1 That the line stating 'to note the Planning Appeals Commission decision' be amended to reflect that no decision was made.

- 6.2 That the lines stating 'to note the Planning Appeals Commission decision' specify whether the appeals were allowed or dismissed.

3.2 Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee held on 1 December 2025

The Interim Director of Operations requested that the report title at item 4.13 of Minutes be changed to Update on Asset Management Strategy 2025-2035.

On the proposal of Alderman McCaughey, seconded by Alderman Glover, it was

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Corporate Policy and Governance Committee held on 20 October 2025, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated powers to the Committee be approved and adopted, with an amendment at item 4.13.

3.3 Neighbourhoods and Communities Committee held on 2 December 2025

A Member requested that the typographical error in the spelling of Councillor Lawrence's name (item 8.2) be corrected.

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

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Neighbourhood and Communities Committee held on 2 December 2025, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated powers to the Committee be approved and adopted, with an amendment at item 8.2.

Councillor Armstong left the meeting at 7.30pm

3.4 Environment and Economy Committee held on 8 December 2025

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

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Environment and Economy Committee held on 8 December 2025, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated powers to the Committee be approved and adopted.

4 POLICY FRAMEWORK AND BUDGET

No items to consider.

5 STRATEGIC ISSUES

No items to consider.

6 ITEMS FOR DECISION – OPEN

6.1 Caoimhé's Law – Correspondence from Mid Ulster District Council and Derry City and Strabane Councils

A report was previously circulated which presented the correspondence received from Mid Ulster District Council and Derry City and Strabane District Council regarding the proposed piece of legislation, Caoimhé's Law, recommending that Council consider the correspondence

Members expressed their support for the Legislation with one Member speaking of his own personal experiences, urging Council to support the Legislation.

In response to a Member's query, the Interim Director of Corporate Services explained that under normal circumstances correspondence of this nature would not be brought before Council. However, it was considered on this occasion more efficient to present this correspondence to Council for decision.

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

RESOLVED: that Council acknowledge and accept the correspondence received from Mid Ulster District Council and Derry City and Strabane District Council seeking Council's support for Caoimhe's Law.

6.2 Corporate Plan Update April-September 2025

Report previously circulated which provided the Corporate Plan Update April – September 2025 for review and recommending approval to publish the report on the Council's website was discussed.

With reference to Freedom of Information (FOI) and Subject Access Requests (SARS) requests, a Member suggested adding a note for future reference to bring Councils return of 100% into line with the Commissioners standard of 95%.

In response to a query regarding FOI targets, the Assistant Director of Citizen Focus informed that Council set their own internal target of 100% because of legislative requirements and wasn't aware that there was a separate Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) target.

The Interim Chief Executive commended Council Officers on their work and noted that Council had made significant progress towards meeting target response times for FOI's and SARS describing this as a good news story.

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

RESOLVED: to approve the Corporate Plan Update April – September 2025 and to approve for publication of the report on the Council's website.

6.3 Inclusion and Equality Sub Committee Update

The report circulated provided an update from the Inclusion and Equality Sub-Committee.

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

6.4 Disability Lived Experience Sub-Committee Update

The report circulated provided an update from the Disability Lived Experience Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED: to note the update from the Disability Lived Experience Sub-Committee.

6.5 Draft Performance Improvement Plan 2026/27 Consultation Document

The report, circulated, asked Council to review and agree the Draft Performance Improvement Plan 2026/27 consultation document and to approve the launch of the public consultation.

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

RESOLVED: to agree the Draft Performance Improvement Plan 2026/27 consultation document, and to approve the launch of the public consultation.

6.6 Regularisation of Sea Cadets Title at Carrickfergus Marina

The report which sought approval for the transfer of Lands and authority for the sealing and execution of the Deed to rectify title at the Sea Cadet building in Carrickfergus Marina was discussed.

In response to a query, the Interim Chief Executive and Assistant Director of Business Support clarified that work was being carried out with the GIS Officer to regularise all Council's Titles for all assets.

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

RESOLVED: to

- (i) approve the transfer of lands from the Department for Communities, and;
- (ii) authorise the Mayor and the Chief Executive to execute and seal the Deed of Transfer.

6.7 Local Development Plan Update

A report was previously circulated to update Members on the progress of the Local Development Plan and to note the convening of a Local Development Plan briefing session for all Elected Members, to be delivered by the Planning Department.

In response to a query, the Acting Director of Development confirmed that Council would be investigating all potential restrictions on all parcels of land being zoned for development to give the best opportunity for growing and developing the Borough.

RESOLVED: to note the convening of a Local Development Plan briefing session for all Elected Members, to be delivered by the Planning Department.

6.8 Street Naming Policy Update

A report was circulated to provide an update on the development of Council's Street Naming Policy. Discussion ensued and

Councillor Johnston proposed that Council proceed with the Notice of Motion to rename Prince Andrew Way and that Council do not proceed with the development of a street renaming policy as the ability to name and rename streets already existed.

In response, the Acting Director of Development explained that Council developed policies to guide the implementation of legislation to establish a consistent framework that supported consensus in future decision making. He also advised that Council also did not currently have an Irish Language Policy in place, and therefore the policy under discussion would apply only to the naming and renaming of streets. He also confirmed that one of the first steps in the process of renaming Prince Andrew Way would be to have a public consultation on the suggested names.

Councillor Skinner seconded Councillor Johnston's proposal.

The Interim Chief Executive emphasised that it was best practice for Council to have a policy in relation to the renaming of streets, but she would be guided on this matter by Council. A discussion ensued and the Interim Chief Executive summarised as follows:

- the Council liaise with the Royal Household regarding a Royal themed name then;
- carry out a public consultation on the suggested Royal names;

- in the case that the Royal household did not want to be involved, then public would be consulted on a choice of name;
- that Council do not proceed with the development of a street naming policy, with the emphasis that this would be contrary best practice advice.

A discussion ensued and a vote was requested.

The Mayor put the proposal by Councillor Johnston, seconded by Councillor Skinner to the meeting. It was

RESOLVED: that Council proceed with the renaming of Prince Andrew Way, liaise with the Royal Household regarding the name and do not proceed with the development of a street naming policy.

Councillor Quigley left the meeting at 7.50pm

6.9 Correspondence from the Department for Communities - Council Standing Orders

The circulated report provided an update on the most recent correspondence issued by the Department for Communities relating to Council's Standing Orders and the continuing effect of Schedule 3 to the Local Government (Transitional, Supplementary, Incidental Provisions and Modification Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014.

RESOLVED: to note the content of the correspondence from the Department for Communities and the update relating to the High Court proceedings involving Belfast City Council.

7 MOTIONS

7.1 Notice of Motion Proposed by Councillor Philpott, seconded by Councillor Henry

Councillor Philpott proposed the following motion:

"That this Council support the Ask Angela scheme, actively encourage & familiarise our businesses to embrace this wonderful scheme designed primarily for the safety of women & girls but not exclusively. Violence Against women & Girls (VAWG) programmes are being circulated and supported and the Ask Angela Scheme which is already up and running and is a UK wide recognised safety scheme.

The scheme is only worthwhile if it is well known and understood which can only be done by publicising it. There are lots of information and training videos online for any business's wishing to learn more about the scheme with training for staff, how to obtain literature and how to register as a recognised Ask Angela business.

Ask Angela is promoted and supported by Hospitality Ulster & Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). Hospitality Ulster have a recognised training package that can be accessed on registration free of charge."

Councillor Philpott gave a detailed overview of the motion as set out in the notice of meeting:

Councillor Henry added that Ask Angela was a central and practical initiative that did not require new bureaucracy, legislation or expenditure. It relies instead on awareness, training and co-operation between businesses, the Council and Police to provide a discreet way for people, particularly women to seek help when they feel unsafe. This was not an untested idea and it did work.

She highlighted that the scheme and training was free and therefore did not impose additional burdens to Council but that the scheme would only be worthwhile if it was well known and well understood. She emphasised that awareness was crucial among venue staff, public.

She urged Council to actively promote the scheme, support businesses to engage and collaborate with partners expressing hope for support from all parties.

Members thanked Councillors for bringing the motion forward and the following suggestions were made:

- that Council maximise all available tools and resources to effectively raise awareness of the scheme across the Borough.
- that a local database be collated to help distribute information about the scheme to a wider range of businesses across the Borough with particular focus on those in the hospitality sector.
- that Council work with front line businesses such as Ballymena Bid, local bars and Taxi firms to encourage their involvement.

On the proposal of Councillor Philpott, seconded by Councillor Henry it was

RESOLVED:

"That this Council support the Ask Angela scheme, actively encourage & familiarise our businesses to embrace this wonderful scheme designed primarily for the safety of women & girls but not exclusively. Violence Against women & Girls (VAWG) programmes are being circulated and supported and the Ask Angela Scheme which is already up and running and is a UK wide recognised safety scheme.

The scheme is only worthwhile if it is well known and understood which can only be done by publicising it. There are lots of information and training videos online for any business's wishing to learn more about the scheme with training

for staff, how to obtain literature and how to register as a recognised Ask Angela business.

Ask Angela is promoted and supported by Hospitality Ulster & Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). Hospitality Ulster have a recognised training package that can be accessed on registration free of charge."

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.

8 SEALING

- (i) Mid & East Antrim Borough Council -and- Moore McDonald (Mini Competition ICT Services for Larne Leisure Centre Form of Deed)

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

RESOLVED: to authorise the Mayor and the Interim Chief Executive to execute and seal the contract.

In response to a Member's query the Interim Chief Executive advised that there had been an issue with the report for the sealing document which had been withdrawn from the agenda and that it would be brought the February Council Meeting.

On the proposal of Alderman Glover and seconded by Councillor Hoey, 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.

9 STRATEGIC ISSUES – CLOSED

No items to consider.

10 ITEMS FOR DECISION – CLOSED

10.1 Proposed Sale of 12-16 Bridge Street, Ballymena

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)

Report, previously circulated, recommending that Council approve the marketing of the property at 12-16 Bridge Street, Ballymena was discussed.

A Member questioned whether selling the site would not maximise its full potential given the prime location for residential development. He urged Officers to explore the option for submitting an outline planning permission application (at minimum) for residential development as a way of attracting people back into the town.

A Member advised that Officers check the zoning areas for residential areas and investigate what the long term plans would be for the neighbouring buildings. It was also suggested that the Planning Policy be reviewed to enable more development in the town as there are currently too many vacant premises.

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

RESOLVED: to further investigate options to maximise the value of the site / property at 12-16 Bridge Street, Ballymena and apply for a minimum of outline planning permission for residential development of the site.

10.2 Waste Harmonisation - Update - Reaffirmation of Council Decision based on Legal Challenge

The item was restricted as information fell under the prescribed exemptions:- Local Government Act (NI) 2014, Schedule 6, Part 1, Paragraph 4 – Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the council or a government department and employees of, or office holders under, the council.

If restricted from publication, the report would become unrestricted: Sometime in the future (when staff consultations had been completed).

A report was previously circulated providing Members with an updated report to reconsider its decision of 3 April 2025 afresh and reaffirm the decision to adopt a co-mingled waste collection model.

Members discussed the situation with the current recycling service and the potential to adopt a co-mingled waste collection model.

In response to a Member's query, the Interim Director of Operations outlined the reasons behind the ongoing issues with the current recycling contractor and explained Council procedures currently in place to address them. He advised that Council staff would be clearing up any waste backlog the following day in affected areas and would be flexible with black bins and side waste.

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

RESOLVED: to

- (i) Reconsider its decision of 3 April 2025 afresh, and
- (ii) Reaffirm the decision to adopt a comingled waste collection model.

Alderman Wilson left on teams at 8.40pm

Councillor Collins left on teams at 8.41pm

10.3 Expression of Interest on land adjoining Ahoghill Community Centre, Ahoghill

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, the report would become unrestricted: After Council decision made.

The report, previously circulated determine the future use of the former children's playground at Ahoghill Community Centre following responses to an Expression of Interest exercise and recommending

approval for marketing of the former children's playground at Ahoghill Community Centre was presented.

It was proposed by Alderman Gordon and seconded by Councillor Henry and

RESOLVED: to approve marketing of the former children's playground at Ahoghill Community Centre

10.4 ICT Procurement - Business Case of Waste System

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, the report would become unrestricted: Sometime in the future.

A report had been previously circulated, for approval to delegate authority to the Interim Chief Executive to approve and to award the ICT contract and to authorise the Mayor and Interim Chief Executive to execute and seal the relevant contractual and legal documents on behalf of Council

In response to Councillors' queries, the Interim Director of Operations informed that the current contract was coming to an end and that the new software would be more a user-friendly customer-based option with more functionality. He undertook to provide Members with a list of Councils who had been successfully using the system.

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

RESOLVED: to

- (i) delegate authority to the Interim Chief Executive to approve and to award the ICT contract for the procurement of Waste Services Software, and
- (ii) authorise the Mayor and Interim Chief Executive to execute and seal the relevant contractual and legal documents on behalf of Council

10.5 Execution and Sealing of Deed of Priority for All Saints GAC

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, the report would become unrestricted: Never

A report had been previously circulated, recommending approval for the sealing and execution of a Deed of Priority as provided for in the Letter of Offer dated 09 January 2015 issued by the legacy Ballymena Borough Council to All Saints GAC.

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

RESOLVED: to authorise the Mayor and Interim Chief Executive to execute and seal the Deed of Priority as provided for in the Letter of Offer dated 09 January 2015 issued by the legacy Ballymena Borough Council to All Saints GAC.

10.6 Regularisation of Title - Transfer of Surplus Lands at St Patrick's Link Road, Ballymena to Council

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, the report would become unrestricted: Sometime in the future.

A report had been previously circulated, which recommended approval of the transfer from the Department for Communities of the Freehold and Leasehold interest in Lands adjacent to the recently completed St Patrick's Link Road in Ballymena to Council and to authorise the Mayor and the Chief Executive to execute and seal the relevant Deeds

The Acting Corporate Solicitor confirmed that Council required the lands back for a future asset disposal.

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

RESOLVED: to

- (i) approve the transfer to Council of the Freehold and Leasehold interest in the lands adjacent to the recently completed St Patrick's Link Road in Ballymena, and
- (ii) authorise the Mayor and the Chief Executive to execute and seal the relevant Deeds.

10.7 Capital Plan - FY 2026-27

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, the report would become unrestricted: Sometime in the future.

The Acting Director of Community gave an overview of the report previously circulated to provide an update on the latest position on the draft Four Year Capital Plan and approval for the Capital Plan for 2026-2030.

He informed that a further change had been made to include the resurfacing of Ballymena Showgrounds to the FY 2026/27 plan that was not included in the written paper. The Interim Chief Executive explained the reasoning behind this and agreed to look at where funding could be found.

The Interim Chief Executive undertook to find an alternative saving on the Play park project.

In response to a query, the Acting Director of Community provided an overview of project 18 and advised that the current budget was insufficient. To progress with the project, substantial co-funding would be required.

Members raised their concerns about the late circulation of the report and requested more time to review with a detailed breakdown of items that were removed.

The Interim Chief Executive accepted the lateness of the report and emphasised the importance of identifying an alternative method of approving the capital plan for the next financial year.

The Interim Chief Executive informed that numerous workshops had been held with regard to the City Deal project and confirmed that the business plan had previously been circulated to Members.

A Member requested clarification on why management charges were not built into the costings and highlighted a typographical error at year 1 of the plan.

The Interim Chief Executive advised the Members that two lengthy gateway reviews had been carried out delaying commencement and pushing costs up,

but the set of financial plans presented to elected Members where a truthful account of finances.

After a discussion it was agreed that the Capital Plan FY 2026/27 would be deferred to a Council meeting on Wednesday 14 January 2026.

Councillor Lyness left the meeting at 8.54pm.

Councillor Friary left the meeting at 9.15pm

10.8 Title Issues with the Radar Tower, Carrickfergus

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, the report would become unrestricted: Sometime in the future.

The previously circulated report provided an update on the various issues with the Radar Tower, Carrickfergus.

Councillor Skinner requested that Council note concerns regarding dereliction of the structure and concerns as to when Councillors sought clarity.

Alderman Logan left the meeting at 9.24pm
Councillor Gibson left the meeting at 9.26pm

Following extensive discussion in relation to the legal complexities surrounding this long standing legacy issue, the Interim Chief Executive undertook to bring the new Barrister's opinion back to Members as soon as possible, along with the initial Barrister's opinion.

The Meeting was adjourned at 9.29pm.

..... Mayor

..... Interim Chief Executive

..... Date

MID AND EAST ANTRIM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Reconvened Meeting held on Wednesday 14 January 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 B Ashe, MBE
Alderman R Glover
Alderman T Gordon
Alderman R Logan
Alderman W McCaughey
Alderman S McDonald
Councillor M Armstrong
Councillor R Beggs
Councillor D Clarke
Councillor I Friary
Councillor L Gray
Councillor B Hadden
Councillor C Harwood
Councillor A Henry
Councillor C Jamieson
Councillor R Lawrence
Councillor G McKeen
Councillor L Philpott
Councillor A Rae
Councillor A Skinner
Councillor B Thompson
Councillor M Warwick

Present remotely: Alderman Wilson (until 7.20pm)
Councillor A Barr (until 7.19pm)
Councillor A Clarke
Councillor M Collins
Councillor B Ferris
Councillor J Gibson
Councillor P Johnston
Councillor Mrs A Smyth
Councillor R Stewart

In Attendance: Mrs V Watts, Interim Chief Executive
Mr J McVeigh, Acting Director of Community
Mr J McGrandle, Acting Director of Development
Mrs S Williams, Assistant Director - Business Support
Mrs C Grant, Acting Corporate Solicitor
Mrs M Hegarty, Assistant Director - Finance
Mr S Shiels, Solicitor

Mrs A Maguire, Communications Manager
 Ms C Connor, Governance & Democratic Services Officer
 Mrs C McIntyre, Governance & Democratic Services
 Mrs H McIlwaine, Corporate Support Services Officer

Attendance remotely: Mr S Morley, Interim Director of Operations
 Mr M Glasgow, IT Manager (until 6.45pm)

Press: There were no members of the press present

Public: There were no members of the public present.

As the meeting of the Full Council on Monday 12 January 2026 was adjourned in Closed Committee,

on the proposal of Alderman Glover, seconded by Councillor Harwood, it was:

RESOLVED: That the meeting returns to Open Council.

Item	Minute
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1.	FORMALITIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS
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1.1	Notice of Meeting
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The Interim Chief Executive read the Notice of Meeting.

1.2	Apologies
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Apologies were received from:

Alderman Mrs M Morrow
 Alderman Ms G Mulvena
 Alderman P Reid
 Councillor B Lyness

1.3	Declarations of Interest
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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 of interest were received.

On the proposal of Alderman Glover and seconded by Alderman Gordon, 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 ITEMS FOR DECISION - CLOSED Contd

2.1 Capital Plan - FY 2026-27 - Closed

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, the report would become unrestricted: Sometime in the future.

Members had previously been circulated with an updated report following the adjournment of the previous meeting and asked to approve the proposed four year Capital Plan for 2026-2030 which totals £52.357M.

The Acting Director of Community guided Members through the updated report and outlined a number of changes, including the addition of Ballymena Showgrounds and the increased provision for Larne Cemetery, along with the suggested solutions tabled in the report.

Members thanked Officers for work undertaken in bringing this plan to Council. They acknowledged that while they would generally welcome the inclusion of additional projects, they recognised the need for Council to make efficiencies and accepted that the plan remained a working document, with flexibility to adapt as circumstances arose.

Concerns were raised regarding the age of the waste management fleet and a number of alternative options were put forward by Members. The Interim Director of Operations confirmed the risks associated with the ageing fleet. The Chief Executive acknowledged the issues raised and assured Members that she would continue to monitor the situation with the waste management fleet.

There was a discussion around the City Deal projects including The Gobbins and i4C and it was requested that Officers continue to provide updated reports to Members on the progress. Members acknowledged that these projects are positive in that they attract significant external investment, which is always welcome. However, they also recognised that the associated additional costs create further pressures on the rates.

A Member pointed out that the new phase of the Gobbins would be more user friendly and suggested a workshop on the matter before any long-term decision was made. The Chief Executive confirmed that further workshops on City Deal projects would be arranged.

It was also noted that the Council was considering operator models for services such as leisure. Members recalled that an initial workshop had taken place; but it was noted no further update had been brought back to Council.

Alderman Logan raised a Point of Order regarding Members being allowed to speak more than once on an item.

In response to a request for a recess to allow Party Members to discuss the waste management fleet, the Interim Chief Executive advised that the decision Council was required to take was to approve the overall plan and that the matter of leasing versus owning would not be determined at this meeting.

The Mayor agreed to have a 5 minute recess.

Recess commenced at 7:15pm and ended at 7.11pm.

The Interim Chief Executive stressed the need to agree the Capital Plan before a decision was taken on borrowing.

Councillor McKeen proposed and Alderman Logan seconded to approve the proposed the four year Capital Plan for 2026-2030 which totals £52.357M.

Councillor Hadden requested a recorded vote.

For (19)	Against (15)	Abstention (0)
Deputy Mayor, Councillor T Hoey and Aldermen R Glover, B Ashe, W McCaughey, R Logan, T Gordon, Councillors I Friary, L Gray, G McKeen, A Clarke, P Johnston, Mrs A Smyth, A Skinner, M Donnelly, J Gibson, C Harwood, M Collins, R Lawrence, A Rae	The Mayor, Councillor J Minford, and Alderman S McDonald Councillors M Warwick, R Beggs, D Clarke, A Henry, M Armstrong, C Jamieson, B Ferris, A Wilson, R Stewart, B Hadden, L Philpott, B Thompson, A Barr,	

On a recorded vote, 19 Members voted for; 15 Members voted against; and 0 Members abstained.

The Mayor declared the motion carried.

RESOLVED: to approve the proposed four year Capital Plan for 2026-2030 which totals £52.357M.

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

RESOLVED: That the meeting returns to Open Council.

The Meeting ended at 7.17pm.

..... Mayor

..... Interim Chief Executive

..... Date

DRAFT

MID AND EAST ANTRIM BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Minutes of Special Council Meeting (Striking the Rate)
held on Monday 9 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 B Ashe, MBE
Alderman R Glover
Alderman T Gordon
Alderman R Logan
Alderman S McDonald
Alderman A Wilson
Councillor M Armstrong
Councillor A Barr
Councillor R Beggs
Councillor A Clarke
Councillor D Clarke
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 P Johnston
Councillor R Lawrence
Councillor B Lyness
Councillor G McKeen
Councillor J McKeown
Councillor L Philpott
Councillor R Quigley
Councillor A Rae
Councillor B Thompson
Councillor M Warwick

Present remotely: Alderman W McCaughey
Alderman Mrs M Morrow
Councillor M Collins
Councillor Mrs A Smyth
Councillor R Stewart

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 C Grant, Acting Corporate Solicitor
 Mr N Woodside, Transport Manager
 Ms C Connor, Governance & Democratic Services Officer
 Mrs G Carmichael, Governance & Democratic Services Officer
 Mrs C McIntyre, Governance & Democratic Services Officer

Attendance remotely: Mrs P McLaughlin-Donaghy, Governance & Democratic Services Manager

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 Ms G Mulvenna
 Alderman P Reid
 Councillor A Skinner

Councillor McKeen apologised for Alderman McCaughey's late arrival.

Alderman Mrs Morrow apologised in advance that she may have to leave the meeting early.

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.

No declarations were received.

On the proposal of Alderman Glover, seconded by Alderman Gordon, it was

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.

2 BUSINESS CASE – PURCHASE OF WASTE VEHICLES

The item was determined to fall within Closed business as information falls under the prescribed exemptions: Paragraph 4, Part 1, Schedule 6 Local Government Act (NI) 2014 – Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings applies. Publication of the report will become unrestricted: never.

The report, previously circulated, recommended that Council approve a business case to purchase 4no 26T refuse collection vehicles and 2no 16T refuse vehicles.

In response to a query, the Interim Chief Executive and Assistant Director-Finance respectively provided an overview of the business case as part of the rolling programme to update fleet and clarified further details in relation to budget provision.

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

RESOLVED: to approve a business case to purchase 4no 26T refuse collection vehicles and 2no 16T refuse vehicles.

At this point the Interim Chief Executive as Acting Chief Financial Officer, addressed the meeting outlining her legislative obligations in setting a rate by 15 February each year and summarised her responsibilities. She assured Members that all questions had been addressed during Rates Workshops already convened and provided an opportunity for any further final questions to be addressed.

4 CAPITAL ASSET STRATEGY 2026/27

The item was determined to fall within Closed business as information falls under the prescribed exemptions: Paragraph 4, Part 1, Schedule 6 Local Government Act (NI) 2014 – Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings applies. Publication of the report will become unrestricted: never.

The report, previously circulated, recommended that Council approve the Capital Asset Strategy for 2026/27.

In response to Members' queries, the Assistant Director-Finance confirmed that this Strategy provided a framework for the Capital Plan already approved by Council. She undertook to investigate the cost associated with provision of

equipment for maintenance of public areas which had been previously agreed as a Notice of Motion.

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

RESOLVED: to approve the Capital Asset Strategy for 2026/27.

Alderman McCaughey joined the meeting remotely at 6.47pm.

4 MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION POLICY REPORT 2026-27

The item was determined to fall within Closed business as information falls under the prescribed exemptions: Paragraph 4, Part 1, Schedule 6 Local Government Act (NI) 2014 – Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings applies. Publication of the report will become unrestricted: never.

The report, previously circulated, recommended that Council approve the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy and Statement for 2026/27.

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

RESOLVED: to approve the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy and Statement for 2026/27

5 TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY & STRATEGY 2026-27

The item was determined to fall within Closed business as information falls under the prescribed exemptions: Paragraph 4, Part 1, Schedule 6 Local Government Act (NI) 2014 – Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings applies. Publication of the report will become unrestricted: never.

The report, previously circulated, recommended that Council approve:

- (i) the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy for 2026/27 including the prudential indicators.
- (ii) the Authorised Borrowing Limit for 2026/27 of £71.8m.

The Assistant Director-Finance confirmed the figures for Council's authorised borrowing level.

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

RESOLVED: to approve

- (iii) the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy for 2026/27 including the prudential indicators
- (iv) the Authorised Borrowing Limit for 2026/27 of £71.8m.

6 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2026-2030

The item was determined to fall within Closed business as information falls under the prescribed exemptions: Paragraph 4, Part 1, Schedule 6 Local Government Act (NI) 2014 – Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings applies. Publication of the report will become unrestricted: never.

The report, previously circulated, recommended that Council approve:

- (i) the Medium-Term Financial Plan 2026-2030
- (ii) the Corporate Pricing Policy included in the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

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

RESOLVED: to approve

- (i) the Medium-Term Financial Plan 2026-2030
- (ii) the Corporate Pricing Policy included in the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

7 DISTRICT RATE FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2026/27

The item was determined to fall within Closed business as information falls under the prescribed exemptions: Paragraph 4, Part 1, Schedule 6 Local Government Act (NI) 2014 – Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings applies. Publication of the report will become unrestricted: never.

The report, previously circulated, provided the key financial information required to make informed decisions on the level of the district rate to be struck for 2026-27, the adequacy and sustainability of the Council's General Reserves and the updated Medium Term Financial Plan, which provided Members with a longer-term of the Council's financial position.

The Interim Chief Executive addressed the Chamber on the robustness of the estimates and adequacy of reserves. She thanked Members for their input during the Rates Workshops and detailed the content of the report in terms of budget forecasts, spend and how estimates had been determined. She was content that figures had been scrutinised internally and externally and that estimates had included any in-year uncertainties regarding delivery risks. Sufficient reserves had been provided against unexpected financial events. In conclusion she was satisfied on the robustness of the estimates and following assessment was satisfied that risks had been identified, assessed and considered.

Councillor McKeen proposed the recommendation with a reduced rate of a 2.95% increase and suggested ways that this could be achieved.

The Mayor called a short recess at 7.09pm

The meeting reconvened at 7.21pm

Following discussion, the Interim Chief Executive detailed the risks associated with setting a rate below inflation and its impact on the medium-term financial plan and Council reserves. The Interim Chief Executive and Interim Director-Finance clarified the associated implications of a further reduction in the rate increase

The Mayor called a short recess at 7.43pm

The meeting reconvened at 7.52pm

Proposed by Councillor McKeen seconded by Alderman Logan to approve:

- (i) the budget for FY 2026/27
- (ii) the increase in fees and charges of 3.6%
- (iii) a proposed rate increase for FY2026/27, amended at the meeting to 2.95%, with the budget in (i) adjusted accordingly
- (iv) the Department for Communities – General Estimates of Rates – to be revised to reflect the updated proposal to adjust the rate increase to 2.95%
- (v) a minimum General Reserve balance of £5,316,207
- (vi) statement by Chief Financial Officer on the Robustness of Estimates and Adequacy of Reserves, to be updated to reflect the amendments arising from the revised rate and budget noted above.

Councillor Armstrong requested a recorded vote.

For (19)	Against (17)	Abstention (1)
Aldermen: R Glover, B Ashe, W McCaughey, R Logan, T Gordon. Councillors: Deputy Mayor T Hoey, L Gray, I Friary, G McKeen, A Clarke, P Johnston, Mrs A Smyth, M Donnelly, J Gibson, C Harwood, M Collins, R Lawrence, A Rae, J McKeown	Aldermen: S McDonald, A Wilson, M Morrow Councillors: Mayor J Minford, M Warwick, R Beggs, D Clarke, A Henry, M Armstrong, C Jamieson, B Ferris, R Stewart, B Hadden, R Quigley, L Philpott, B Thompson, A Barr	Councillor B Lyness

On a recorded vote, 19 Members voted For; 17 Members voted Against; and 1 Member Abstained.

The Mayor declared the motion carried.

OPEN COUNCIL

On the proposal of Alderman Gordon, seconded by Councillor Jamieson, It was:

RESOLVED : That the meeting returns to Open Council.

7 DISTRICT RATE FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2026/27 – to make and strike cont'd the District Rate for the Financial Year 2026/27

The Mayor thanked Members for their contributions at the Budget Workshops, the Interim Chief Executive in the role of Chief Financial Officer, Senior Management Team and all their teams, especially the Assistant Director - Finance for the work done in bringing forward the information to allow Members to make an informed decision.

The Mayor sought a proposer and seconder to strike the District Rate for the Financial Year 2026/27.

It was proposed by Councillor McKeen and seconded by Alderman Logan that the District Rate for the financial year 2026/27 be made and struck, in line with the amended General Estimates of Rates, representing a 2.95% increase for both domestic and non-domestic ratepayers.

The Mayor put the motion to the vote.

Voting on the proposal was as follows –

For	Against	Abstain
19	17	1

The Mayor declared the motion carried.

The Meeting ended at 8.19pm.

Mayor

Interim Chief Executive

Date

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

**Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 15 January 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 S McDonald
Alderman P Reid
Councillor A Barr
Councillor T Hoey (to 10.48am)
Councillor J Minford (to 10.46am)
Councillor A Skinner
- 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
Mrs G Carmichael, Governance & Democratic Services
Officer
Ms R Salt, Governance & Democratic Services
Officer
- Also in attendance:** Tom Stokes, TSA Planning (to 10.35am)
Gareth Graham, Applicant (to 10.35am)
Ciaran Deazley, LIKE Architects (to 10.35am)
Conor O'Hara, RPS (to 10.35am)
- Also remotely:** Ally Olphert, Creative Architects
Chris Selwood, 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.

Those who had registered speaking rights would be given an opportunity to address the Committee in person or remotely. Each Member and Officer introduced themselves.

The Acting Director of Development read the Notice of Meeting.

2 Apologies

Apologies were recorded for 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.

There were no Declarations of Interests received.

4 Schedule of Planning Applications**4.1 Planning Application No. LA02/2024/0415/F – Lands 390 metres North of Prince Andrew Way, adjacent to Ulidia Integrated College and West of Victoria Rise, Dunluskin, Carrickfergus**

With the aid of visual display, the Senior Planning Officer detailed the planning application for the installation of Proposed residential development comprising of 403 no. dwellings (mix of affordable and private), consisting of a mix of two storey terraced, semi-detached and detached dwellings along with two and three storey apartments, two no. new site accesses, completion of link road, private and communal open space, car parking, landscaping, and all associated site works and upgrade of the Victoria Link Road as well as Prince Andrew Way / North Road Junction to provide a traffic signal-controlled junction with controlled pedestrian crossings.

The Officer drew Members' attention to the site location plan, site context and the proposed site layout, with the site boundary comprising of 16.2 hectares within Carrickfergus and the land previously zoned for housing within the Carrickfergus Area Plan.

Due to the size of the plans, the application fell within the Major category of development as set out in Section 25 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland)

2011. The Officer also noted that two schools; Ulidia Integrated College and Acorn Integrated Primary School were located to the southeast of the proposal. The Officer advised that the proposed plans included pathed linkages to the Bashfordwood and playing fields within proximity.

The Officer detailed the phases to the proposed project, with phase one completing the Victoria Link Road and signalling at Price Andrew Way prior to any building on site for the housing.

In conclusion, the Officer summarised the proposed the plans and listed the extensive consultations and assessments carried out, with no objections. 104 objections had been received and summarised as the following:

- Loss of natural habitat through works carried out on site prior to the submission of the planning application with trees and vegetation removed.
- Traffic and road safety concerns.
- Loss of open space within a built-up area.
- Concerns around sewage connections.
- Surface water flooding.
- Disturbance during construction due to noise, dust and traffic.
- Potential adverse impact on property values

All points had been fully considered by the Officers and were content that the increase in traffic due to this proposal would be sufficiently managed by the upgrades to the road and signalling at Prince Andrew Way.

The proposal accords with the Council's Local Development Plan and therefore Officers recommended approval, subject to conditions.

The Chair invited Mr Stokes and his team to present to the Committee.

Mr Stokes thanked Officers for the engagement throughout the process and highlighted some key points he wanted Members to consider:

- High quality development with a mix of both private and affordable homes;
- Well considered and high quality open spaces;
- Complete the long awaited Victoria Link Road;
- The plan met with all planning policies as set out the Local Development Plan as adopted in 2023;
- Commitment to deliver 81 affordable homes within the development, secured via Section 76;
- Further infrastructural improvements, such as the traffic signalised junction with pedestrian crossings in phase 1;
- 2.4 hectares of communal space, with a central linear park which would connect to the other proposed pockets and connected via paths and trunk trails;
- No objections had been lodged from all consultees and any objections have been considered through the conditions to the application;

- A phased development to allow with the affordable housing element;
- Significant funding towards pedestrian pathways connecting other housing developments through to Bashfordwoods.

Mr Stokes responded to Member’s queries regarding the following:

- several green space areas would be developed within the site,
- the adoption of the roads could be completed when phases have been progressed,
- 81 units would be affordable homes, which was secured due to the Section 76
- Liaising with the owner of the Equestrian Centre to date,
- Capacity for sewage from NI Water

Members sought and received clarification from the Planning Officer that the road would be constructed prior to any housing being erected and that Section 76 had been signed by the applicant.

Following a request from a Member, it was agreed to include Acorn Primary School to Condition 14 of the approval to the application.

Councillor Skinner proposed and Alderman Logan seconded the Officers’ recommendation to approve the application.

The Chair put the motion to the vote.

Voting on the proposal was as follows –

For	Against	Abstain
11	0	0

RESOLVED:

- (i) to accept the Officers’ recommendation to approve application no: Planning Application No. LA02/2024/0415/F – Lands 390 metres North of Prince Andrew Way, adjacent to Ulidia Integrated College and West of Victoria Rise, Dunluskin, Carrickfergus, and
- (ii) to authorise for the Mayor and Interim Chief Executive to execute and seal documents for the Section 76 legal agreement,

The registered speakers left the meeting at 10.35am.

4.2 Planning Application No. LA02/2024/0660/F – Lands at the St Patrick’s Regeneration site, adjacent and south of Demesne Avenue, approximately 100m to the Northeast of Castle Tower School, St Patricks Link, Ballymena, BT43 7FT

With the aid of visual display, the Acting Principal Planning Officer detailed the planning application for a new leisure, health and wellbeing centre to

include 8-lane pool, learner pool, 4 court sports hall, café, gym, spin studios, clip and climb, community hub, soft play area and spa facility.

The Officer advised of the site location, wider context and noted that the site was 1.7 hectares site, which was vacant and part of the wider regeneration site of the old St Patricks' Barracks, Ballymena.

He noted that the site was not within a flood risk and there were no protected area or species in the surrounding area.

Various external and internal artists impressions were shown of the proposed leisure centre including the parking provisions on site. The internal space extended to 8,000 square metres and the Officer highlighted the proposed layouts and contents.

In conclusion, the Officer recapped the proposal and highlighted that it had complied with all relevant planning policies, and no objections had been received from consultees, therefore on this basis, Officers recommended approval, subject to conditions

There were no questions for the Officer and Councillor Hoey proposed and Councillor Minford seconded the Office' recommendation to approve the application.

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. LA02/2024/0660/F – Lands at the St Patrick's Regeneration site, adjacent and south of Demesne Avenue, approximately 100m to the Northeast of Castle Tower School, St Patricks Link, Ballymena, BT43 7FT.

4.3 Planning Application No. LA02/2025/0580/F - 49 Waveney Road, Ballymena, BT43 5BB

Report, previously circulated, with a recommendation to approve Planning Application No LA02/2025/0580/F Change of use from dwelling to House in Multiple Occupation (HMO), containing 5 Bedrooms at 49 Waveney Road, Ballymena.

With the aid of visual display, the Principal Planning Officer detailed the planning application, which was a proposed change of use of an existing 2 and a half storey, 4-bedroom, mid terrace dwelling to a 5-bedroom house in multiple occupation.

The Principal Planning Officer detailed the surrounding area of similar design and scale. He summarised the surrounding context of the area, with many single-family dwellings having undergone conversion to apartments and HMOs and several purpose-built apartment developments under the management of housing associations. It was noted that the adjacent dwellings on either side of the property have been converted into apartments.

The application sought full planning permission to convert the property to an HMO by converting an existing ground floor living room into a bedroom with an en-suite, adding 2 en-suites to the 2 bedrooms on the first floor, as well as an additional bathroom for the use of one of the bedrooms on the second floor. On the second floor itself, a further en-suite is added to one of the two existing bedrooms. There are no external alterations proposed.

Planning assessment of Policy and other material considerations were referred with the following highlighted having been deemed acceptable in relation to section 5.8 of Ballymena Area Plan and Policies HOU1, HOU2 and Appendix D within the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Local Development Plan 2030 - Plan Strategy. The addition of one bedroom to the existing 4 bed dwelling was not considered to be a significant increase and as such the proposal would remain consistent with the overall established residential character of the area. No additional impact on neighbouring properties was anticipated and there was no change to the level of private amenity space.

The Officer noted that compliance was deemed acceptable in relation to Strategic Planning Policy Statement in promotion of sustainable patterns of development which reduced the need for motorised transport, encouraging active travel and facilitated travel by public transport in preference to the private car.

All consultees had responded with no objections with the exception of NI Water, who had indicated that there is no capacity for the discharge of sewage. The Department for Infrastructure (Roads) advised they could accept the proposal if the Planning Authority were minded to approve this application with sub-standard parking.

The Officer advised of the objections to date for this application, which related to density, character of the area, parking, traffic, HMO status and devaluation of properties in the area and had been fully considered. Two letters of support had been received including one from Ballymena Football Club who stated that they intended to house 5 of their players in the property.

The Planning Officer concluded by reminding Members that the recommendation was to approve the planning application, subject to the conditions outlined in the report.

Mr Olphert spoke in support of the application and advised that at the time of purchase the property was vacant and uninhabitable as it was in poor condition.

He advised the Committee that the applicants had 11 years HMO experience, no history of complaints and specialised in the regeneration of properties, providing quality accommodation for tenants. He noted that concerns over HMOs often related to unlicensed properties and that this application should be considered on its individual merits and in the context of adherence to regulatory controls.

Members highlighted their concerns in relation to density and lack of parking. In response to a Member's question relating to parking, the Principle Planning Officer advised that the impact would be limited as the change related to one additional bedroom. He agreed that the Department for Infrastructure (DFI) noted that the parking situation was sub-standard, however they did not refuse and as the property was located in close proximity to public transport, lower standards were acceptable.

The Chair sought a proposer for the Officers' recommendation. As there were no proposals to accept the recommendation, Alderman Reid proposed 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, Plan Strategy 2030.

Alderman Glover seconded the proposal.

The Chair put the motion to the vote.

Voting on the proposal was as follows –

For	Against	Abstain
5	3	1

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, Plan Strategy 2030.

5 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

5.1 Local Development Plan Timetable

The Principal Planning Officer gave a brief overview to Members regarding the revised Local Development Timetable, which had been previously raised at the Local Development Plan Working Group in November 2025, and sought the approval of the Planning Committee.

RESOLVED: To agree the revised Local Development Plan Timetable.

6 Planning Appeals Update

6.1 New Appeals

One new planning appeal was noted:

- **LA02/2025/0298/O - 15m NW of 96a Ballyconnelly Road, Cullybackey, BT42 1EW. Infill dwelling and Garage.**

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

6.2 Appeal Decisions

Three new appeal decisions.

- **LA02/2025/0406/O** – Approx 75m East/North East of No 54 Greenfield Road, Kells, BT42 3NG. Dwelling & domestic garage / Store (Dwelling on a farm) - Appeal Dismissed

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

- **LA02/2024/0841/F** - 20 Bankhall Road, Drumnadreagh, Larne, BT40 3JQ. Extension to agricultural building in a similar style to existing making use of existing structural walls from existing silage storage compound for extension - Appeal Partly Allowed

RESOLVED: to note the Planning Appeals Commission decision to partly allow this appeal.

- **LA02/2024/0871/F** - Land directly north of 83a Ballystrudder Road, Islandmagee, Larne. Proposed drying shed for the drying of wood chips and the storage of vehicles, and the provision of addition external parking for staff car parking and associated site works - Appeal Dismissed

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

- **LA02/2024/0154/O** - Lands 30 metres north of No.110 The Woods, Larne, BT40 1BD & 20 metres east of No.27 The Woods, Larne, BT40 1BF. Residential development for 10no. dwellings - Appeal Dismissed

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

- **LA02/2024/0172/O** - Lands 50 metres east of No.4 Blackcave Crescent, Larne, BT40 1TY & 40 metres north of No.222 The Woods, Larne, BT40 1BD. Residential development for 9no. dwellings - Appeal Dismissed

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

- **LA02/2024/0756/F** - 14 Victoria Road, Larne, BT40 1RN. House in multiple occupation - Appeal Dismissed

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

In response to a Member's query regarding the appeal that was partly allowed, the Acting Head of Planning advised that two conditions were dismissed and one was allowed.

Members wished to put on record their thanks to Officers in regard to their planning decisions being upheld by the Planning Appeals Commission.

7 CORRESPONDENCE

7.1 Strategic Planning Policy Statement Update

The Acting Head of Planning gave a verbal update to Members advising that the Department for Infrastructure had published a policy revision to the 'Strategic Planning Policy Statement' focusing on renewable and low carbon energy.

The meeting ended at 11.14am.

Mayor
 Interim Chief Executive
 Date

MID AND EAST ANTRIM BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE RESOURCES, POLICY & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

**Minutes of Meeting held on Monday 19 January 2026 at 6.30pm
in the Council Chamber, The Braid, 1-29 Bridge Street, Ballymena
and via remote access**

Chair: Alderman W McCaughey

Present: Alderman R Glover
Alderman A Wilson
Councillor R Beggs
Councillor M Donnelly
Councillor B Ferris
Councillor J Gibson
Councillor T Hoey
Councillor G McKeen
Councillor B Thompson

Present remotely: Councillor A Clarke
Councillor M Collins
Councillor C Harwood
Councillor A Henry
Councillor B Lyness

Attendance: Mrs L Donnan, Interim Director of Corporate Services
Mr S Morley, Interim Director of Operations
Mrs S Williams, Assistant Director - Business Support
Ms M Hegarty, Assistant Director - Finance
Mrs S Fisher, Assistant Director - Citizen Focus
Mrs C McIntyre, Governance & Democratic Services
Officer
Ms R Salt, Governance & Democratic Services Officer

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 Interim Director of Corporate Services read the Notice of Meeting.

2 Apologies

An apology was received from Councillor M Armstrong, Councillor L Gray and Councillor C Jamieson.

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.

No declarations were received.

The Chair advised that Item 4.10 Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy 2025-28, had been withdrawn.

4 **Items for Consideration / Decision**

4.1 **Adverse Possession of lands at Portmuck Harbour, Islandmagee**

Report, circulated, recommending that Committee note the adverse possession application in respect of the claimed lands at Portmuck Harbour, Islandmagee as part of the Legal Department's ongoing process to perfect Council title.

In response to a Member's query, the Assistant Director – Business Support undertook to ensure that Islandmagee Community Association was made aware of the application.

RESOLVED: to note the adverse possession application in respect of the claimed lands at Portmuck Harbour, Islandmagee as part of the Legal Department's ongoing process to perfect Council title.

4.2 **Procurement Strategy & Policy**

The Interim Director of Corporate Services was pleased to present for Members' approval under the Council's Scheme of Delegation the circulated draft Procurement Strategy and Policy which represented a significant step forward, setting out the principles and governance arrangements that would guide procurement in line with good practice.

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

RESOLVED: to approve the draft Procurement Strategy and Policy.

4.3 **Update to Public Questions Protocol**

The Assistant Director – Business Support presented the report, circulated, recommending that Committee approve the amendments to the Public Questions Protocol.

In response to a Member's queries the Officer confirmed that all questions and respective answers were approved by the Chief Executive and the Mayor. She undertook to investigate the potential for increasing public

awareness of the process and to ensure that answers addressed any factual inaccuracies in the questions.

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

RESOLVED: to approve amendments to the Public Questions Protocol.

4.4 Update on Notices of Motion

Report, circulated, recommending that Committee note the updates and a further update would be brought back in the next 6 months.

The Assistant Director – Business Support agreed to reformat and reissue the table to enable viewing and to address a typographical error in the table detailing the updates. She undertook to provide further updates in relation to the addition of defibrillators in Ballymena and Carrickfergus on the national register, annualising the Massed Bands event in Carrickfergus and renaming of Sandy Bay Centenary Sports Pavilion, Larne.

RESOLVED: to note the updates and that a further update would be brought back to the next Committee and thereafter, every 6 months.

4.5 Public Consultation Briefing Report

Report circulated, recommending that Committee note the public consultations in which Council was involved:

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

and to retrospectively approve the response to the Consultation on Disability and Work: A Strategy for Northern Ireland; approve the draft response to the Northern Ireland Census User Needs Consultation; approve the draft response to the consultation on the Data Protection Enforcement Procedural Guidance

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

RESOLVED: to

- (i) note the consultation summary report;
- (ii) retrospectively approve the response to the Consultation on Disability and Work: A Strategy for Northern Ireland;
- (iii) Approve the draft response to the Northern Ireland Census User Needs Consultation;
- (iv) Approve the draft response to the consultation on the Data Protection Enforcement Procedural Guidance.

4.6 Annual Report on the Workplace Charter on Domestic Violence

Report circulated recommending that Committee note the update on the successful Annual Review of Council's Workplace Charter on Domestic Violence, as assessed by ONUS in 2025, with the Council retaining its Platinum status and approve the actions outlined to retain and strengthen Council's Platinum Workplace Charter status.

It was proposed by Councillor Ferris, seconded by Councillor Donnelly and

RESOLVED: to

- (i) note the Annual Review outcomes;
- (ii) approve the actions outlined to retain and strengthen Council's Platinum Workplace Charter status.

4.7 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Update Report

Report circulated recommending that Committee note the update on Council's progress within its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) work and the fulfilment of its statutory duties.

RESOLVED: to note the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) update.

4.8 NIAO Performance Audit Assessment 2025-26

Report circulated recommending that Committee note the findings of the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) Audit and Assessment Report 2025-26.

In response to a Member's query, the Assistant Director – Citizen Focus, agreed to respond to the Member to clarify the use of the term 'written consent required' within the NIAO Report.

RESOLVED: to note the findings of the NIAO Audit and Assessment Report 2025-26.

4.9 Sickness Absence Mid-Year Update

Report circulated to update Committee on absence management from the period 01 April 2025 to 30 November 2025 and to highlight actions which Officers continued to implement in order to support a positive attendance culture.

Members commended a positive report and asked that the Assistant Director – Business Support investigate further initiatives which could be implemented to reduce absence including promotion of the UK Healthcare scheme to all staff as well as Elected Members.

The Interim Director of Corporate Services responded to confirm that the recognition of those staff who had not been absent was currently being considered by the Chief Executive.

In response to a Member's query, the Officer undertook to include the number of days lost per person per department in the next update.

RESOLVED to note the absence management update.

4.10 *WITHDRAWN* Elected Member Learning & Development Strategy 2025-2028

4.11 Work Experience and Placement Procedure – Update on Statutory Screenings

Report circulated recommending that Committee note the updated statutory screening exercises for the previously approved Work Experience and Placement Procedure.

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

RESOLVED: to

- (i) note the completed statutory screening outcomes.
- (ii) reapprove the Work Experience and Placement Procedure.

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.

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

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 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 was restricted until 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 8 November 2025 to 5 January 2026.

The Assistant Director – Finance undertook to confirm further details of the tender awarded for body cameras and associated software.

RESOLVED: to note the outcomes of Tenders, Direct Award Contracts (DACs) and contracts procured through Framework Agreements for the period 8 November 2025 to 5 January 2026.

7.2 Quarter 2 (April to September 2025) 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, with recommendation to note the management accounts for Quarter 2 (April to September 2025) providing an overview of the Council's current financial position.

The Assistant Director – Finance responded to provide clarity on a number of queries in relation to long-term debtors and annual budget/forecast variances relating to agency and capital charges.

RESOLVED: to note the management accounts of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council for Quarter 2 (April – September 2025).

7.3 Technology One Programme – Quarterly Update

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; sometime in the future.

The Assistant Director – Business Support provided a detailed quarterly update on the progress of the Technology One Programme included in the report, circulated, with recommendation to note a progress update on the re-implementation of the Council's Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, Technology One. It was noted that this was a significant programme of work that would affect all employees and Elected Members who would all be provided with training; the programme was on track for its first deadline at the beginning of April.

The Assistant Director – Business Support agreed to provide a larger version of the illustrative charts contained within the report.

RESOLVED: to note the progress of the TechOne programme.

7.4 IT Cybersecurity Update Report

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 the council holding that information). Publication of the report will become unrestricted: never.

Quarterly update report circulated to note that work is progressing to carry out a self-assessment and design a detailed programme of work for the Council to achieve the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) Cyber Assessment Framework over the next 3 years.

The Assistant Director – Business Support agreed to provide further information on the Microsoft security score as a measurement of Council's security posture, in a future update report.

RESOLVED: to note that work is progressing to carry out a self-assessment and design a detailed programme of work for the Council to achieve the NCSC Cyber Assessment Framework over the next 3 years.

8 Items for Recommendation to Council – Closed Committee

8.1 Lease of a football pitch at Ballykeel Recreation Facility Playing Fields

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 holding that information). Publication of the report will become unrestricted: on completion of the legal process for lease.

Report circulated with recommendation to

- (i) review and approve the lease of the football pitch at Ballykeel to Ballykeel Football Club.
- (ii) authorise the Mayor and Chief Executive to execute and seal the relevant contractual and legal documents on behalf of Council.

The Interim Director of Operations responded to Members' queries to confirm that the conditions of the lease in terms of maintenance had been discussed with the Club and that similar model arrangements with other Clubs across the Borough should be applied consistently.

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

AGREED: to recommend that Council

- (i) review and approve the lease of the football pitch at Ballykeel to Ballykeel Football Club.

- (ii) authorise the Mayor and Chief Executive to execute and seal the relevant contractual and legal documents on behalf of Council.

8.2 Lease of a football pitch at Castleview Road, Whitehead

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 holding that information). Publication of the report will become unrestricted: on completion of the legal process for lease.

Report circulated with recommendation to

- (iii) review and approve the lease of the football pitch at Whitehead to Whitehead Eagles Football Club; and
- (iv) authorise the Mayor and Chief Executive to execute and seal the relevant contractual and legal documents on behalf of Council.

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

AGREED: to recommend that Council

- (i) review and approve the lease of the football pitch at Whitehead to Whitehead Eagles Football Club; and
- (ii) authorise the Mayor and Chief Executive to execute and seal the relevant contractual and legal documents on behalf of Council.

OPEN COMMITTEE

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

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 23 February 2026 and the Forward Plan for the Committee

The Meeting ended at 7.29pm.

..... Mayor

..... Interim Chief Executive

..... Date

MID AND EAST ANTRIM BOROUGH COUNCIL

NEIGHBOURHOODS AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting held on Tuesday 20 January 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 B Ashe, MBE
Alderman R Glover
Councillor I Friary (Vice-Chair)
Councillor T Hoey
Councillor B Lyness
Councillor L Philpott
Councillor A Rae
Councillor B Thompson
- Present remotely:** Alderman S McDonald
Councillor M Donnelly
Councillor B Ferris (from 7.20pm)
Councillor J Gibson
Councillor R Lawrence
Councillor Mrs 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
Mrs G Carmichael, Governance and Democratic Services
Officer
- Also in attendance:** Michael Johnston, Event Support Liaison, Ulster Rally (to 7.01pm)
Ian Duff, Commercial Manager, Ulster Rally (to 7.01pm)
- 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:

Alderman Mrs M Morrow
Councillor M Armstrong
Councillor M Collins
Councillor L Gray
Councillor J Minford
Councillor B Ferris for her late arrival

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 Presentation from Representatives from the Ulster Rally 2026, Ballymena**

The Chair welcomed Mr M Johnston and Mr I Duff, representatives from the Ulster Rally 2026 to the meeting and invited them to present to the Committee, after which questions would be taken from Members.

Mr Johnston guided Members through the presentation and discussed the following:

- Purpose of the presentation
- About the Ulster International Rally
- The potential opportunities for Mid & East Antrim
- 2025 Event Outcomes
- Economic Impact – Evaluation from 2025
- Visitor & Participation Profile in 2025
- Community Engagement & Safety
- Media & Promotional Reach
- Alignment with Mid & East Antrim Borough Council Corporate Plan 2024 – 2028
- Why the Council's support matters

- Request from The Ulster Rally and what it could provide to Council

The Chair thanked the representatives for the presentation and wished to read a letter of support on behalf of the Mayor, Councillor Minford, as he had previously given his apologies and could not attend the meeting.

The Chair sought any remarks from the Members, who voiced their support for the Rally to be held in the borough. Mr Johnston also responded to the following topics:

- Dates of the event, 6 – 8 August 2026
- The hub for this event would be Ballymena, but consideration could be given in the future to holding stages in the Carrickfergus area. PR would also be staged in Carrickfergus for the event.
- Clarification of the support from Stormont, only for road closure permissions.
- Media and PR for the event through social media channels as well as local press and live TV coverage.
- Potential linkages as 2026 is the 400th anniversary of Ballymena, and
- Liaison with DfI Roads and other statutory bodies prior and post event.

The Chair once again thanked the representatives, and they left the meeting at 7.01pm.

The representatives from Ulster Rally 2026 left the meeting at 7.01pm.

4.2 Correspondence from DfI - Associated Parking Bay at Lay-by in front of House no. 11 Ashvale Park, Islandmagee

Members noted the previously circulated report, which advised of an Associated Parking Bay at a Lay-By in front of House no.11 Ashvale Park, Islandmagee.

RESOLVED: to note the parking bay at lay-by in front of House no. 11 Ashvale Park, Islandmagee.

4.3 Acquisitions for and donations officer to Council Museums

Report, previously circulated, which sought the Committee to consider items for acquisition and items offered for donation to Carrickfergus Museum, Larne Museum and Mid-Antrim Museum.

Proposed by Alderman Ashe, seconded by Councillor Donnelly and

RESOLVED: to

- (i) approve Acquisition 1
- (ii) Accept Offers 1 – 6 and 8 – 21 in full and

- (iii) Decline Offer 7, and part of offer 21.

4.4 **Community Health and Wellbeing Service Outcomes Report 2024/25**

Report, previously circulated, provided an update on the valuable work of the Council Community Health and Wellbeing Team. A summary outcomes report for 2024/25 was also previously circulated.

Members gave their thanks and support to the team and noted that it was a valuable and vital service within the community. Discussion ensued regarding the potential reduction to funding of these services from the Public Health Agency and if so, Members felt this should be brought to Council to discuss further.

RESOLVED: to

- (i) Recognise the valuable work delivered by council staff over a range of wellbeing initiatives within the Borough, largely funded by PHA, as per the attached outcomes report for 2024/25;
- (ii) Note the potential for funding shortfall for delivery of these projects going forward, and;
- (iii) Await a further report to consider options for this service going forward, once contract funding allocations from PHA become clearer.

5 **Items for Recommendation to Council**

There were no items to be discussed.

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 Alderman Glover, seconded by Councillor Hoey, 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.

Councillor Ferris joined the meeting remotely at 7.20pm.

7 Items for Recommendation to Council – Closed Committee

7.1 Tourism Marketing Strategic 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: Never.

The circulated report, provided an overview of Tourism Marketing and Business Support activity from September 2025 to December 2025.

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

The Officer responded to Members' queries regarding the following:

- Distribution of tickets for events
- Comparisons in footfall figures
- Analytics from website figures and
- Possible substitutes to cancelled events

RESOLVED: to note the works undertaken in delivering a wide and varied programme of tourism, marketing and business engagement activity and the benefit this brings to the Borough.

7.2 Dunfane Redevelopment Consultation

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: After Council decision.

The circulated report for noting, provided an overview of Dunfane Redevelopment Consultation.

Members discussed at length the consultation results. Members highlighted that the majority of the responses did not want housing at the playing fields in Dunfane but recognised the need for more housing generally.

Further options were discussed regarding potential usage of the land and carrying out consultation on these options. During the debate the Chair reminded Members of the upcoming rates setting meeting and the budget already ring fenced for the project which would not cover

some of the options being discussed. Members also noted that Council did not own the land.

The Officer and Interim Director of Community recapped the process to date advising that further consultations on the matter would be the next stage.

The Chair reminded Members of the recommendation which was to note the findings of the community consultation exercise and to approve officers to consider a development strategy for the area in light of public preferences expressed.

RESOLVED:

- (i) To note the findings of the community consultation exercise and;
- (ii) approve officers to consider a development strategy for the area in light of public preferences expressed.

8 ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL – CLOSED COMMITTEE

There were no items to discuss.

On the proposal of Councillor Hoey, seconded by Councillor Lyness, 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 24 February 2026.

The meeting ended at 7.42pm.

..... Mayor

..... Interim Chief Executive

..... Date

MID AND EAST ANTRIM BOROUGH COUNCIL**ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of Meeting held on Monday 26 January 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 B Ashe, MBE
Alderman McCaughey
Councillor A Clarke (Vice-Chair)
Councillor R Beggs
Councillor B Hadden
Councillor A Henry
Councillor C Jamieson
Councillor G McKeen
Councillor L Philpott
Councillor A Skinner
Councillor M Warwick

Present Remotely: Alderman R Logan
Alderman Mrs M Morrow
Alderman A Wilson
Councillor C Harwood
Councillor C Jamieson
Councillor P Johnston
Councillor R Stewart

Attendance: Mrs V Watts, Interim Chief Executive
Mr J McGrandle, Acting Director of Development
Mr J McVeigh, Acting Director of Community
Mrs U O'Loughlin, Head of Economic Development
Mr S Bailie, Facility Management and Maintenance Manager
Mrs D Carey, Waste Manager
Ms C Hunter, Acting Climate Change & Sustainability Manager
Ms C Black, Acting Head of Community Planning
Mrs L Kirkwood, Outdoor Recreation Officer
Mr D Anthony, HRC Manager
Mrs G Carmichael, Governance and Democratic Services Officer
Ms R Salt, Governance and Democratic Services Officer

Also in attendance: Ms K Fulton, Managing Director, Bryson Recycling
Ms A Monahan, Assistant Director, Bryson Recycling
Mr G Carson, Development Director, Bryson Charitable Group

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:

Alderman Logan declared an interest in item 7.2 – SEUPB PEACEPLUS “Smart Towns and Villages” Programme Screening Update and item 8.1 – Economic Appraisal for Connexus as a member of the PeacePlus Partnership.

4 Items for Consideration/Decision

The Chair sought the approval of the Committee, to change the order of business by taking Item 7.1 – Bryson Recycling Update, as the first item to be discussed. This was agreed by the Committee.

He sought a proposer and seconder to enter CLOSED Committee.

Discussion ensued from Members and some Members expressed the view that taking the item in Open session was in the public interest.

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

AGREED: to discuss item 7.1 in Open Committee.

4.1 Bryson Recycling Update

The Chair introduced the representatives from Bryson Recycling and invited them to take their seats on the dais.

Ms Fulton thanked the Committee for their time, and firstly acknowledged sincere apologies on behalf of Bryson, as their service over the recent weeks was not the standard they expected to provide to customers.

She continued to explain the issues that they had faced recently with regards to inclement weather, staffing issues and incidents. Ms Fulton reassured Members that this was being rectified and their aim was to have normal service resumed within the next 2 – 3 weeks with the actions taken, including pay increases, imminent recruitment and training of new drivers and a larger level of contingency of staffing.

Ms Fulton concluded that there would be an improvement of collections, that staff had been liaising with approximately 200 households to get feedback on impact of collections and how to improve the service to get it back on track.

The Chair thanked Ms Fulton and her team for their update and sought questions from the Committee.

Members were supportive and thanked the representatives for being present at the Committee and sought and received clarification on the following matters:

- Timeline of when normal services would resume
- Clearer and concise messaging for Elected Members to feedback to their local constituents
- Expansion in Antrim and Newtownabbey area did not have an effect to Mid and East Antrim services
- Appreciation of the staff from Bryson Recycling, especially in adverse conditions
- Suggesting that Council's Operations Department work more closely with Bryson regarding road cleaning/sweeping schedules and litter collection schedules.

The Chair once again thanked the representatives for their update, and they left the meeting at 6.55pm.

4.2 Environmental Benchmarking Survey Results 2025

Report and appendix previously circulated, which updated on the success of Council in the Northern Ireland Environmental Benchmarking Survey 2025.

Members gave their support and thanks to the Officer and their team for the work involved.

The Acting Climate Change Manager responded to Members queries regarding costs of implementation for the projects as well as the ratings of other Councils in comparison.

RESOLVED: to note the success of the 2025 survey results and encourage ongoing effective environmental management.

4.3 **Climate Change Sub Committee Notes 03 December 2025**

The notes of the Climate Change Sub Committee Meeting held on 3 December 2025 had been previously circulated.

It was proposed by Councillor Philpott, seconded by Alderman Wilson and

RESOLVED: to approve the Climate Change Sub Committee Notes, held on 03 December 2025.

4.4 **Portglenone Community Toilet Scheme**

A report had been previously circulated, which informed of a proposed new Community Toilet Scheme in Portglenone and to approve the delivery of the project over 2026 and 2027.

Members were largely in support of the pilot project and noted that this would be beneficial to the local residents of the area.

Following comments from Members, the Acting Climate Change Manager undertook to consider the criteria regarding a changing places space in the project as well as adding the agreed locations to the public toilet map.

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

RESOLVED: to approve the delivery of the MEA Portglenone Community Toilet Scheme for 2026 and 2027.

4.5 **NI Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Management Statistics 2024-25**

A Report was previously circulated, to provide an update on the annual NI Local Authority Municipal Waste Management Statistics 2024/25 issued on 11 December 2025.

The Waste Manager responded to queries from Members regarding comparisons with other Councils' performances. The Interim Chief Executive advised that Communications would be developed to show ratepayers how reducing waste and recycling would have a positive effect to reducing rates in the longer term.

RESOLVED: to note the update on the annual NI Local Authority Municipal Waste Management Statistics 2024/2025.

4.6 Response to Soil Association Stakeholder Consultation into DAERA's Forest Service NI Sites Annual Assessment

Report previously circulated, which contained Council's proposed response to the Soil Association's Forest Management Certification Stakeholder Consultation.

Members thanked the Officer and were content to approve the stakeholder consultation.

RESOLVED: to

- (i) Note the Soil Associations Consultation Document, and
- (ii) Approve the draft response to this consultation that in principal Council concur that FSNI are meeting their requirements in relation to producing timber at their sites. However, Council feel that more could be done to engage with the community, improve the visitor experience by investing more in maintenance of their sites and make their sites to be more biodiverse.

4.7 Greenisland Regeneration Elected Members Working Group Update

Report previously circulated, which provided an update on the Greenisland Regeneration Elected Members Working Group and to also seek approval for:

- The creation of a Greenisland Regeneration Working Group consisting of the five elected members from the Knockagh DEA, local community leaders and statutory sector representatives,
- That the working group is supported by Council Officers from the Community Directorate whose role and will include a review of the Greenisland Development Framework (2015) Action Plan, and
- A commitment to access additional resources to update the Greenisland Development Framework (2015).

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

RESOLVED: to approve:

- (i) The creation of a Greenisland Regeneration Working Group consisting of the five elected members from the Knockagh DEA, local community leaders and statutory sector representatives,
- (ii) That the working group is supported by Council Officers from the Community Directorate whose role and will include a review of the Greenisland Development Framework (2015) Action Plan, and
- (iii) A commitment to access additional resources to update the Greenisland Development Framework (2015).

4.8 Naming of residential development at Old Park Road, Ballymena

The previously circulated report sought a decision on the naming of a new residential development at Old Park Road, Ballymena.

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

RESOLVED: to approve the proposed development name of The Parks, for the new residential development at Old Parks Road, Ballymena.

4.9 Economic Development Activity Report

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

RESOLVED: to note the updated Economic Development Activity report.

4.10 Ballymena Business Improvement District Update

Previously circulated report, which provided an update on the result of the Ballymena Business Improvement District (BID) re-ballot.

RESOLVED: To note the success of the Ballymena BID re-ballot.

4.11 Local Economic Partnership Update

Report previously circulated to update on the ongoing work of Mid & East Antrim Local Economic Partnership.

RESOLVED: To note the updates and ongoing work of LEP to reach a final action plan.

4.12 Small Business Rates Relief Consultation Response

Previously circulated report to provide a draft consultation response to the Department of Finance's consultation paper 'Small Business Rates Relief (SBRR) options.

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

RESOLVED: to note Council's draft response to Department of Finance's consultation paper Small Business Rates Relief (SBRR).

4.13 NI Apprenticeship Week 2026

The previously circulated report updated for Members on activities being delivered by Council during NI Apprenticeship Week 2026.

RESOLVED: to note the proposed programme of activity for NI Apprenticeship Week 2026.

4.14 Town Centre Revamp Refresh Grant

The circulated report sought approval from the Committee for additional funds towards the delivery of the Town Centre Revamp Refresh Grant.

Members were generally supportive of the scheme; however, some Members voiced their concerns that each business would only receive a small sum, and it was suggested that the money might be better spent on a bigger programme of work.

Members also suggested that the scheme be extended to businesses outside of the town centre area, for example in the surrounding villages. It was also noted that one of the biggest problems retailers faced was that people in the local community were struggling financially and had little disposal income to spend.

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

RESOLVED: to approve an additional budget of up to a maximum of £40,000 to meet the demand under the Town Centre Revamp Refresh Small Grant Programme across the three Towns in Mid & East Antrim, to ensure businesses eligible under the scheme are supported.

5 Items for Recommendation to Council

There were no items for recommendation.

6 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.

On the proposal of Councillor Warwick, seconded by Councillor Philpott, 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 SEUPB PEACEPLUS “Smart Towns and Villages” Programme Screening 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.

A report had been previously circulated which sought approval for the screening documentation associated with the Connexus Project funded by the Special European Union Programmes Body (SEUPB) PEACEPLUS programme. The Officer asked Members to note that no issues had been identified through the screening process.

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

RESOLVED:

- (i) To note that the screening documents are complete and no issues have identified and
- (ii) To approve the screening documentation associated with the Connexus Project funded by the Special European Union Programmes Body (SEUPB) PEACEPLUS programme

Councillor Warwick left the meeting at 7.55pm.

7.2 Household Recycling Centres: Restricted Access for Commercial Vehicles

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:
Never

A report had been previously circulated, which outlined the rationale, implications and potential outcomes of recommending implementing restrictions on vans and large trailers visiting MEA Councils' Household Recycling Centres and reviewing of the effectiveness and impact of the restrictions after 6 months.

Members voiced their concerns regarding the timing of implementing such a process prior to the new Director taking up post. The Interim Chief

Executive responded advising that the restrictions could be implemented at the Council's Household Recycling Centres and she would be overseeing the work of the Operations Department in the interim. She advised that Officers would continue to monitor fly tipping.

Discussion ensued from Members and a proposal from Councillor Skinner to defer the item until the Director was in post was seconded by Councillor Harwood.

The Chair put the proposal to the vote

Voting on the proposal was as follows –

For	Against	Abstain
6	11	0

The Chair declared that the proposal had fallen.

Members further discussed the positives of the suggested restrictions. Following debate, it was proposed by Councillor Beggs to defer the item to the next Full Council Meeting.

The debate continued and it was proposed by Alderman Ashe and seconded by Councillor Hadden to approve the implementation of restrictions and approve a review of the effectiveness and impact of the restrictions after 6 months and also to take into consideration the concerns raised at the meeting.

Councillor Beggs' proposal was seconded by Councillor Skinner to approve the Officer's recommendation and to defer to Full Council Meeting for decision.

The Chair put the amendment to the vote:

Voting on the amendment was as follows –

For	Against	Abstain
9	8	0

The Chair declared that the amendment had carried.

RESOLVED: To defer to Council recommending:

- (i) the implementation of these restrictions, as outlined in Option 2, to reinstate the system used during Covid, as a necessary measure to protect the intended use of Council's HRC sites and;
- (ii) 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.

7.3 Foxy Tail Electricity Supply

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.

Previously circulated report sought direction in relation to the supply of electricity for the second vending unit at Carrickfergus promenade. It was recommended that Members revisit the potential for an additional supply until a new lease was issued in April 2026 to a successful tender.

Having previously sought and received permission for speaking rights from the Chair under Standing Order 2.47, Councillor Collins received clarification from the Acting Director of Development regarding the background to the tender and the costs.

The Acting Director of Development and the Facility Management and Maintenance Manager clarified for Members the possible options of the additional power point, other locations and options for re-couping costs when the tender would be issued in the next financial year.

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

RESOLVED: to proceed with the installation of a new electrical supply and that the cost of any future license agreement should be increased to recoup this cost back to Council.

8 Items for Recommendation to Council – Closed Committee

8.1 Economic Appraisal for Connexus

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 previously circulated recommending approval from the Environment and Economy Committee of the Connexus Projects

Economic Appraisal. The Officer recommendation was that procurement processes for associated services should commence in April 2026,

In response to queries from Members, the Acting Director of Community confirmed that Mid and East Antrim Borough Council were the admin hub for the project and would liaise with the relevant team regarding the equipment required for the project.

The Acting Director of Development also acknowledged that the error in the name of the legal representative within the Appendix 3 and with regards to the representatives from Community groups, this had not been decided yet.

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

RESOLVED: To recommend approval of the Economic Appraisal, as the programme is 100% externally funded by the SEUPB, which indicates strong positive economic benefits for MEABC.

8.2 Business Case – Carrick Harbour and Marina Security Contract

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:
Sometime in the future.

Report previously circulated to seek approval for a business case for the renewal of the Security Contract at Carrickfergus Marina & Harbour for 1 year to commence on 1st March 2026 with the option to extend for a further year to cover operational hours outside the normal business hours between 20:00hrs – 08:00hrs daily, 7 days per week, 365 days per year (including Bank and Public holidays).

In response to Members queries, the Facility Management and Maintenance Manager confirmed that the costs of the service would be covered by the Marina and not to ratepayers as well as confirming the competitive rate received.

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

RESOLVED: to recommend approval of the business case for the appointment of a Security Contract at Carrick Harbour & Marina.

8.3 **Economic Appraisal - M&E Remedial Works at The Braid and Carrick Amphitheatre**

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:
Never.

Report previously circulated to seek approval of Option 5 from the Economic Appraisal for the delivery of Mechanical and Electrical (M&E) remedial works at The Braid Arts Centre, Ballymena & Carrickfergus Amphitheatre. The Officer recommended that Members proceed with Option 5.

Members sought and received clarification from the Facility Management and Maintenance Manager regarding the phased closure periods of the Leisure Centre and would be liaising with the various teams at the centres to minimise disruptions.

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

RESOLVED:

- (i) To recommend approval of the proposed option 5 from the Economic Appraisal (New internal pool AHU, Air Source Heat Pump and replacement chiller at Carrick; Provision of new gas boilers and a dual heat pump system at the Braid) and
- (ii) To recommend to authorise officers to proceed with the tendering process for the replacement of M&E plant at both the Braid Arts Centre and Carrickfergus Amphitheatre.

8.4 ***Additional Item* Asylum Funding 2025-2026**

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 previously circulated for approval on an offer of funding from The Executive Office (TEO) with regard to Asylum, Refugee support and integration funding.

In response to Members' queries, The Acting Head of Community Planning detailed where the previous funding had been utilised in 2023/24 and also advised of possible options for the funding.

It was proposed by Councillor Hadden, seconded by Councillor Beggs to accept funding from TEO for delivery of support to minority communities in line with the TEO Integration and Support Hub Framework.

A recorded vote was requested by Councillor Henry.

The Chair put the proposal to the vote.

For (8)	Against (2)	Abstention (5)
Alderman: R Logan, Mrs M Morrow, A Wilson. Councillor: C Harwood, A Skinner, B Hadden, R Beggs, J Gibson.	Alderman: Councillor: C Jamieson, A Henry.	Alderman: B Ashe, MBE, W McCaughey, Councillor: G McKeen, P Johnston, A Clarke.

The Chair declared that the proposal had carried.

OPEN COMMITTEE

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

RESOLVED: That the Meeting returns to Open Committee.

9 Forward Plan for Environment & Economy Committee

Members noted the circulated Forward Plan and Agenda for the next Environment & Economy Committee scheduled for 2 March 2026.

The meeting ended at 9.33pm.

..... Mayor

..... Interim Chief Executive

..... Date

MID AND EAST ANTRIM BOROUGH COUNCIL

AUDIT & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Minutes of Meeting held on Tuesday 27 January 2026 at 6.30pm
via remote access**

In the Chair: Alderman B Ashe, MBE (Chair)

Present remotely: Alderman T Gordon
Alderman P Reid
Councillor A Barr
Councillor R Beggs
Councillor C Harwood
Councillor A Henry (Vice-Chair)
Mr E Kelly (Independent Member)

Attendance remotely: Mrs L Donnan, Interim Director of Corporate Services
Mrs S Fisher, Assistant Director – Citizen Focus
Ms M Hegarty, Assistant Director – Finance
Ms C Connor, Governance & Democratic Services Officer
Mrs C McIntyre, Governance & Democratic Services
Officer
Tomas Wilkinson, Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO)
Camille McDermott, Deloitte
Lisa McAvoy, Deloitte

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

An apology was received from Councillor R Quigley.

The Chair expressed on behalf of the Committee his sincere condolences to Councillor Quigley following his recent family bereavement.

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 (Deloitte)

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

C McDermott from Deloitte updated Members on progress for the year to date and advised that an update would be presented to the next Audit and Scrutiny meeting following completion of the final fieldwork for the following:

1. Cyber Security review,
2. Procurement review and
3. Waste Management review.

Members asked whether all the remaining IA would be completed on time in line with the IA plan. C McDermott noted that we were on track to complete the remaining reviews by the end of the year.

RESOLVED: to note the report.

4.2 Scrutiny Review Update Report

Report previously circulated to update on the progress of the Scrutiny Reviews undertaken to date along with the progress of the recommendations was noted.

The Interim Director of Corporate Services gave an overview of the report and commented on the sickness absence scrutiny review. She informed the Committee that although sickness absence levels were below the target for the first time, further improvement was still required. The reduction was attributed in part to the special project that was developed that was for a fixed period up until December 25. .

Members commented on the high levels of sickness compared with the private sector. In response the Interim Director of Corporate Services explained that Private sector employers usually had a less generous sickness policy meaning they could dismiss staff relatively quickly, whereas Council was required to comply with the Green Book. She also noted that Council had an ageing workforce which was likely to contribute to increased levels of long-term illness further exacerbated by pressure from extended NHS waiting times. The interim Director advised the Committee that sickness absence monitoring reports are presented to CRPG where Members could review and assess the relevant data.

Members were encouraged by the improvements and supported the decision to extend the pilot until the end of March.

RESOLVED: that the Committee note the progress of the Scrutiny Reviews undertaken to date along with the progress of the recommendations.

4.3 Annual Audit Letter 2024/25

Report previously circulated updating Elected Members on the 2024/25 Annual Audit Letter issued by the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) following the audit of the Councils 2024/25 financial statements was noted.

In response to the independent Member's query, the Assistant Director of Finance advised that Officers would review the recommendations set out in the Local Government Auditors (LGA) Report and present these to SMT, to determine which recommendations the Council would implement.

She undertook to bring a report back to a further Audit and Scrutiny Committee.

The NIAO representative clarified that the other recommendation section is included in the audit letter issued to each Council.

RESOLVED: that the Committee note the contents of this report and the 2024/25 Annual Audit Letter.

4.4 Corporate Risks

Report circulated updating Members on the current corporate risks, following its recent review by SMT was noted.

The Interim Director of Corporate Services advised that Corporate Risk Register and update on service risks would be discussed in Closed Council at item 7.1.

The Interim Director of Corporate Services commended the new Manager overseeing the Risk Register and noted the significant and ongoing improvements achieved.

RESOLVED: that the Committee note the contents of the update report on corporate risks.

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.

On the proposal of Alderman Reid, seconded by Alderman Gordon, 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 Corporate Risk Register (December 2025)

The item is 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 includes commercially sensitive information.

If restricted from publication, the report would become unrestricted: (officer to select) - Never

The report previously circulated to present Elected Members with the latest Corporate Risk Register, following its recent review by SMT and an update on service risks was discussed for noting

In response to Members' questions in relation to the newly assessed risk to Waste Management, the Interim Director of Corporate Services provided the following responses:

- that the Interim Chief Executive was addressing the corporate risk surrounding Waste and staffing matters were currently under review.
- that the Interim Chief Executive (with advice from SIB) was currently preparing a robust, fully costed model to address the Waste Management issue along with any issues regarding the Judicial Review.
- that she would undertake to provide further information on whether the date for completion of the Judicial Review was to be extended
- that a number of Waste Vehicles would be procured irrespective of the ongoing Judicial review and that a business case would be submitted promptly to Council.
- that she would advise the Interim Chief Executive of the request to amend the title of the Waste risk to include 'Ageing Fleet.'

In response to concerns about Health and Safety issues at a local Council facility, the Interim Director of Corporate Services reassured

Members that as far as she was aware the centre was safe to operate and that emergency cosmetic repairs were already underway.

RESOLVED: that Elected Members note the updated Corporate Risk Register and the analysis of service risks.

7.2 Reception Scrutiny Review Report

The item was determined to fall within Closed business 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). – as this item includes commercially sensitive information. Publication of the report would become unrestricted: Sometime in the future.

A report was previously circulated to provide Audit and Scrutiny Members with the draft report on the Reception Scrutiny Review and to seek approval of the recommendations and action in the Reception Scrutiny Review Proposed Improvements.

In response to Members' questions the Assistant Director of Citizen Focus provided the following responses:

- a monitoring report would be submitted to the Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee to update on progress of all Scrutiny Reviews.
- Council was reviewing the current website and assessing potential alternatives for a digital platform for Council.
- an electronic device was to be installed at the Braid to encourage more people to use Council's online functions such as Dog Licencing with guidance from staff to support customers to use online services.
- a Customer Charter is to be introduced which will outline expected standards.

The Assistant Director of Finance informed that the initial outlay for the new website would be funded from the Digital transformation reserve, and that ongoing recurring running costs would be added to the revenue budget and therefore to the rate.

Following further discussion, it, was proposed by Alderman Gordon, seconded by Councillor Beggs and

RESOLVED: that Audit and Scrutiny Committee Members approve the recommendations and actions in the Reception Scrutiny Review Proposed Improvements.

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 Reid, seconded by Alderman Gordon, it was

RESOLVED: that the Meeting returns to Open Committee.

10 FORWARD PLAN FOR AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

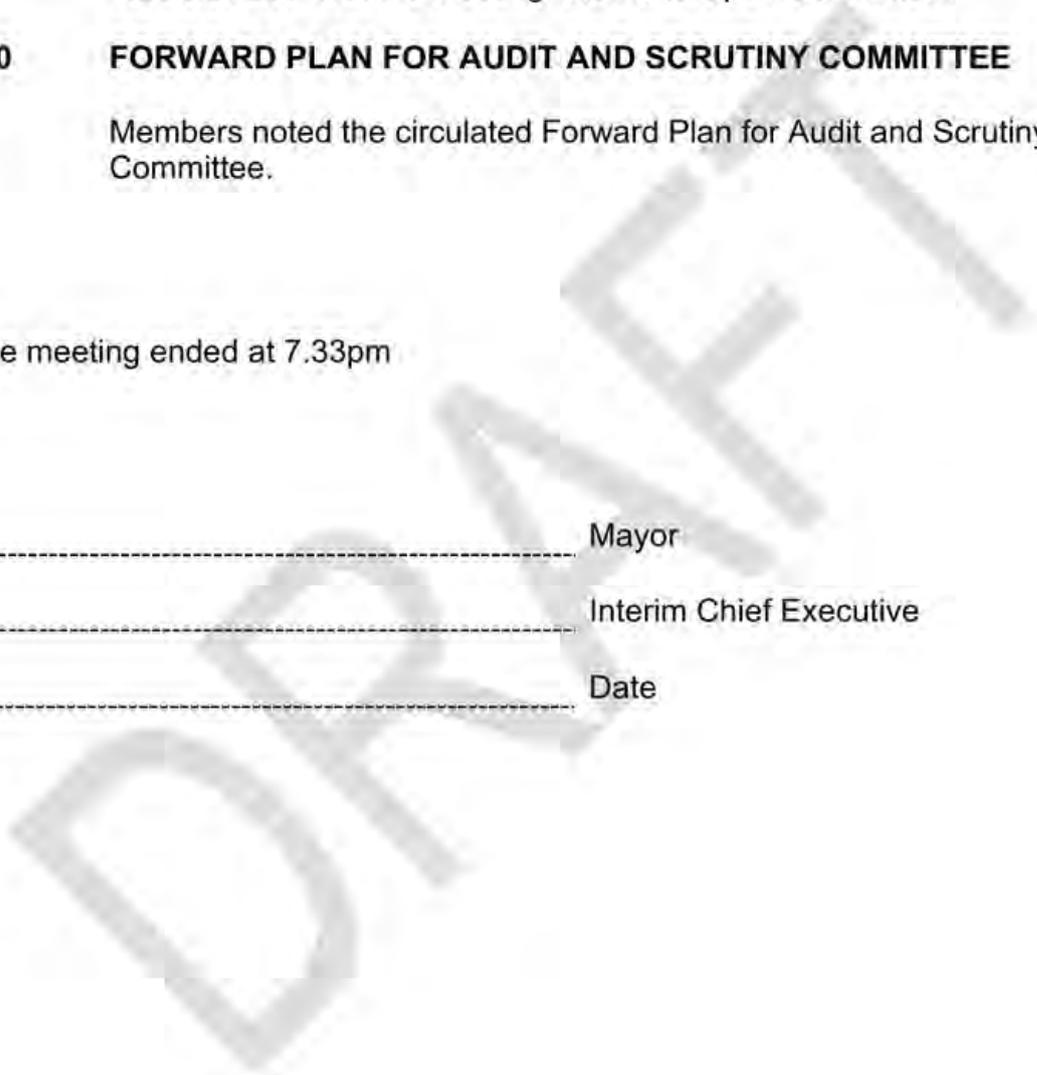
Members noted the circulated Forward Plan for Audit and Scrutiny Committee.

The meeting ended at 7.33pm

----- Mayor

----- Interim Chief Executive

----- Date



Council/Committee:	Full Council
Date:	16 February 2026
Report Title:	Services to mark the 110th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme in France
Publication Status:	Open
Author:	Sarah Williams, Assistant Director – Business Support
Approver:	Laureen Donnan, Interim Director of Corporate Services

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is for Elected Members to consider and make representation from Council to attend the services to mark the 110th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme event on 1 July 2026.

2. Background

- 2.1 The service for 110th anniversary of the Somme is currently planned at the Ulster Tower at 2.30pm on the 1 July 2026 followed by a planned service at the 16th (Irish) Division Memorial at 4.45pm. Other visits and events may be on offer, but more will not be known until nearer the visit. The Somme Association used to organise a coach that all Councils could use but this stopped some time ago and Councils now make their own arrangements for travel.
- 2.2 The Council has two representatives and a Reserve on The Somme Association. The current representatives are Alderman Ashe MBE, Councillor Barr and Councillor Warwick (Reserve)¹. In 2025 Council agreed to send the two Somme Association representatives plus a Council Officer to represent the Council at the commemorations. The Council Officer also assisted with arrangements at the site and to facilitate other visits. Councillor Barr and Councillor Warwick (as reserve) attended on behalf of the Council.
- 2.3 For 2026, we have ascertained that Councillor Barr is available and Alderman Ashe cannot confirm at present. Councillor Warwick is planning to be in France assisting with a group and will be attending the ceremonies.
- 2.4 In the event that the Somme Association representatives are not available to travel, the Council is asked to nominate a substitute for the two representatives.

¹ AGM is scheduled to take place on 1 June 2026 for nominations to the Somme Association

- 2.5 Last year a suggestion was made that other Members could travel to the commemorations at their own expense and make their own arrangements. Member Services make the travel and accommodation arrangements for the Council's nominated delegates only but can advise other Members on travel to and accommodation in the area.

3. Key Issues for Consideration

- 3.1 Member Services have researched costs for flights and accommodation ranging from £591 per person (from Dublin) or £664 per person (from Belfast) to Paris Beauvais or Paris Charles de Gaulle at time of this report. These options cover the period 30 June to 2 July 2026 and are set out at Appendix 1.
- 3.2 Council is asked to approve the number of the official delegation for 2026 as the two Elected Members who are nominated to The Somme Association and, if one or both is unavailable, for Council to nominate two substitutes (plus a Council Officer to accompany the Elected Members).

4 General Considerations / Implications

- 4.1 Financial Implications: These are set out at Appendix 1.
- 4.2 Human Resources: It is proposed that an Officer accompany Elected Members on this visit.
- 4.3 Equality Screening: Any equality or good relations implications will be identified using the Council's usual screening process.
- 4.4 Assets: N/A.
- 4.5 There is alignment with Corporate Priorities and Link to Corporate Plan; principally with objectives to develop Mid and East Antrim as a safe, inclusive, welcoming borough, where diversity and cultural differences are celebrated, and communities live in peace.
- 4.6 Rural Proofing and Environmental Impact: N/A

5 Recommendation or Decision

It is recommended that Council

- (i) approve the attendance of the two Elected Members nominated to The Somme Association and one officer
- (ii) nominates two substitutes in the event that both Elected Members are unable to travel.

6. Appendices / Links

Appendix 1 – Travel options

APPENDIX 1

Travel Options for 110th Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme – July 2026

1. Belfast International Airport – Paris Charles De Gaulle, 30 June – 2 July 2026

- Return flights, including hold suitcase = £367.00
- Hotel in Amiens, 2 nights bed and breakfast = £212.00
- Return train fare, between Paris CDG and Amiens = £85.50*
- Somme Association lunch TBC (in 2025 this cost £10)

Total approximately £664.50 (excluding internal travel costs, subsistence costs and Somme Association lunch).

2. Dublin Airport – Paris Beauvais, 30 June – 2 July 2026

- Return flights, including hold suitcase = £142.95
- Hotel in Amiens, 2 nights bed and breakfast = £212
- Hire car (no train service from Beauvais Airport) = £220
- Return bus, between Belfast and Dublin Airport = £17.00
- Somme Association lunch TBC (in 2025 this cost £10)

Total approximately £591.95 (excluding subsistence costs and Somme Association lunch).

Please note that prices are correct as of January 2026 but are subject to increase by time of booking.

**Please note that owing to the geographical locations of the two main memorials which are visited, train may be problematic*

Council/Committee:	Full Council
Date:	16 February 2026
Report Title:	Inclusion & Equality Sub-Committee Update
Publication Status:	Open
Author:	Siobhan Fisher, Assistant Director - Citizen Focus
Approver:	Laureen Donnan, Interim Director of Corporate Services

1. Purpose

- 1.1. To provide Council with an update from the Inclusion & Equality Sub-Committee.

2. Background

- 2.1. The Inclusion & Equality Sub-Committee was formed following a proposal by Councillor Armstong in July 2023, which was seconded by Councillor Donnelly.
- 2.2. The most recent meeting of the Sub-Committee was held on 2 February 2026.

3. Key Issues for Consideration

There were 6 main items on the agenda for discussion.

- 3.1. Waves (Welcome, Accept, Value, Enjoy, Shine), Community Disability Organisation

Members were given the opportunity to hear from representatives of WAVES regarding the current scope of the group's activities, associated costs and the types of support that would be most meaningful in enabling an expanded range of services. Representatives also outlined the key challenges facing the group, most notably the lack of permanent premises, which in turn limits their ability to access some funding opportunities.

It was resolved that officers investigate potential ways in which to support the group in relation to premises.

3.2. Allocation of Funding for Inclusive Summer Scheme

A report was circulated to Members for discussion outlining three options for improving the provision of inclusive summer scheme opportunities. The report highlighted limitations in current provision due to resource limitations and accessibility issues of Council leisure centres. It was noted that providing funding or support to already established organisations across the Borough would offer much-needed support at a localised level.

It was resolved that officers would explore options to identify and assess potential organisations to receive funding to deliver inclusive summer scheme opportunities at a local level and the best mechanism to facilitate this.

3.3. Capital Plan Discussion

Members were provided with an update on the confirmation of capital plan funding to progress plans for the development of a Changing Places facility within the Braid Centre. A report has been drafted proposing options for potential locations.

3.4. Update on Equality and Disability Action Plans from the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Network

Members were updated on the work of the EDI Network and progress against the actions included within Council's Disability and Equality action plans.

There are a total of 51 actions for year 3 in the Disability Action Plan. At the end of Q3, 55% have been achieved or are on track, 12% are delayed but progressing, 12% have not been achieved or have stopped, and 21% have been successfully closed off.

There are a total of 18 actions for year 3 in the Equality Action Plan, which is appended to Council's Equality Scheme. At the end of Q3, 28% have been achieved or are on track, 33% are delayed but progressing, 6% have not been achieved or have been stopped, and 33% have been successfully closed off.

3.5. Section 75 & Rural Screening and Training

Members were provided with an update of ongoing work to further embed Section 75 and Rural Needs screening. This included engagement with management to promote understanding of the importance of screening, associated processes and arrangements for upcoming training.

3.6. NI Executive Disability Strategy 2025 – 2035 Consultation

Members were provided with an update on the ongoing NI Executive Disability Strategy 2025 – 2035 consultation, noting that officers are preparing a corporate response which will take account of feedback from all core departments and Elected Members.

4. General Considerations / Implications

- 4.1. Financial implications – the Inclusion and Equality Sub-Committee is supported by staff from existing agreed budgets. There are no further financial implications at this stage.
- 4.2. Alignment with Corporate Plan – the work of the Inclusion & Equality Sub-Committee aligns with Council's corporate priorities and statutory duties.

5. Proposed Way Forward

- 5.1. The Inclusion & Equality Sub-Committee will meet on a quarterly basis, updates of which will be brought to Members at Full Council.

6. Recommendation or Decision

- 6.1. It is recommended that Elected Members note the update from the Inclusion & Equality Sub-Committee.

7. Appendices / Link

- Appendix 1: Notes and actions from Inclusion & Equality Sub-Committee 2 February 2026

NOTES AND ACTIONS – Inclusion & Equality Sub-Committee

Date: Monday 2 February 2026 at 6.00pm
In-Person, Learning Zone, Braid

Present**Elected Members:**

Cllr Matthew Armstrong (Chair)
 Cllr Maeve Donnelly (Vice Chair)
 Cllr Tyler Hoey
 Cllr Ruth Lawrence
 Cllr Archie Rae

Officers:

Siobhan Fisher - Assistant Director of Citizen Focus (SF)
 Laura-Jane McCloy - Policy, Performance & Partnership Manager (LJM)
 Ellen Boyd – Inclusion & Equality Manager (EB)

ITEM	ACTION
	NOTICE OF MEETING
	Cllr Donnelly read out the notice of the meeting.
1	WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS
	Cllr Donnelly commenced the meeting and welcomed the attendees.
2	APOLOGIES
	Apologies received from Cllr Bethany Ferris and Catherine Black, Acting Head of Community Planning & Development.
3	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
	Cllr Donnelly declared an interest, that she was a teacher at Roddensvale School. There were no additional declarations of interest noted.

NOTES AND ACTIONS – Inclusion & Equality Sub-Committee

4	NOTES AND ACTIONS FROM MEETING OF 17 NOVEMBER 2025
	<p>Cllr Donnelly happy to approve, seconded by Cllr Rae.</p>
5	WAVES (WELCOME. ACCEPT. VALUE. ENJOY. SHINE)
	<p>Representatives from the community group WAVES joined the meeting at this point. The lead representative gave an overview of their work to date, costs and their current challenges with provision. It was established that the fundamental challenge they face is the lack of a permanent residence or base. This can make applications for some funding streams problematic as often there is a requirement for a fixed abode. The group also welcomed opportunities for future collaboration and/or support from Council.</p> <p>Cllr Armstrong joined the meeting and resumed position of Chair and thanked Cllr Donnelly for leading the meeting as Vice Chair to that point.</p> <p>A discussion took place with LJM asking the lead representative if they had looked at any options for permanent residence. It was established that they had looked at several Council and private facilities, however due to issues with availability and funding they hadn't yet found a suitable solution. Several funding streams were discussed amongst the attendees.</p> <p>The Chair asked the lead representative if they had an ideal base in mind, to which they stated Ballykeel Community Centre which they currently use is a great location due to the nearby facilities such as the play park, but they are open to other options. They are faced with challenges such as availability of the building and the fact that they have to set-up/take-down each session requires additional time and incurs additional hire costs. A discussion took place around other potential locations and more permanent formats such as an SLA or preferential booking arrangement. The Chair thanked the representatives from WAVES for their attendance, and they left the meeting at this point.</p> <p>The Chair requested that officers investigate potential options for a more permanent arrangement for WAVES and bring forward an options paper in due course.</p>

NOTES AND ACTIONS – Inclusion & Equality Sub-Committee

	<p>Action: Officers to investigate potential options for a more permanent arrangement for WAVES and bring forward an options paper in due course.</p>
6	ALLOCATION OF FUNDING FOR INCLUSIVE SUMMER SCHEME
	<p>EB introduced the circulated report to the Sub-Committee which provided 3 potential options on moving forward to provide inclusive summer scheme opportunities. She covered limitations in current provision due to resource limitations and accessibility issues of Council leisure centres. The option of providing funding/support to already established organisations throughout the Borough would provide much needed support at a localised level.</p> <p>A discussion took place around providing opportunities through funding, and if an organisation(s) could be recommended to Council. It was also stated that it would be preferential to have an offering across the three main areas of the Borough.</p> <p>The Chair requested that officers investigate potential options for identifying an organisation(s) to receive funding to deliver an inclusive summer scheme opportunity at a local level.</p> <p>Action: Officers to investigate potential options for identifying an organisation(s) to receive funding to deliver an inclusive summer scheme opportunity at a local level and the mechanism to best facilitate this.</p>
7	CAPITAL PLAN DISCUSSION
	<p>EB provided an update on the confirmation of capital plan budget to take forward plans to develop a Changing Places Facility within The Braid Museum & Arts Centre. An SMT report has been drafted to propose options for the location. The group expressed satisfaction with the progress to date and welcomed further updates on expected delivery timeframes.</p> <p>The Chair asked if expected timeframes for delivery could be ascertained and an update provided by email.</p> <p>EB updated the group that following a recommendation at the last meeting a letter has been sent from the Interim Chief Executive to DfC to encourage reinstatement of Access & Inclusion Funding. If a response is received the group will be further updated.</p> <p>The Chair added that he had also written to DfC concerning reinstatement of this funding. He believed he had received a response and would update the group at the next meeting.</p>

NOTES AND ACTIONS – Inclusion & Equality Sub-Committee

	<p>Action: Officers to ascertain the delivery timeframes for the Changing Places project and provide an email update to Members. In addition, The Chair will provide an update at the next meeting regarding a response received from DfC to his letter.</p>
8	<p>UPDATE ON EQUALITY AND DISABILITY ACTIONS PLANS FROM THE EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION NETWORK</p>
	<p>The Chair invited comments about the circulated Equality (EAP) and Disability (DAP) Action Plan progress reports.</p> <p>Cllr Donnelly requested an update of progress with the Placement Insights Programme for Roddensvale. EB stated she would seek clarity on this and feedback to Cllr Donnelly in due course.</p> <p>Action: EB to provide an update to Cllr Donnelly, via email, on the progress with the Placement Insights Programme for Roddensvale School.</p>
9	<p>SECTION 75 & RURAL SCREENING AND TRAINING</p>
	<p>EB provided the group with an update of ongoing work to further embed the importance of Section 75 and Rural Needs screening. This has included meetings with management to promote the understanding and importance of screening, associated processes and the arrangements for upcoming training. The group expressed collective thanks for efforts to date.</p>
10	<p>NI EXECUTIVE DISABILITY STRATEGY 2025-2035 CONSULTATION</p>
	<p>EB provided the group with an update regarding the ongoing NI Executive Disability Strategy Consultation. Council is preparing a corporate response which will take account feedback from all core departments and Elected Members. It was requested that if Members have anything to add that they provide feedback before lunchtime on Thursday 5 February.</p> <p>The group requested that the email be resent to enable their consideration. EB confirmed that she would have this re-issued to Members. SF suggested having it sent out via the Members WhatsApp by Communications.</p>

NOTES AND ACTIONS – Inclusion & Equality Sub-Committee

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	Action: EB to have the consultation re-issued to the Members via WhatsApp.
11	ANY OTHER BUSINESS
	None.
12	DATE OF NEXT MEETING
	The Chair advised that the next meeting is scheduled for 27 April 2026.