

June 5th, 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, 8th June 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 11 May 2026 - Circulated

Attachment: 05-26 Full Council Minutes.pdf

Page 1

1.4.2 Annual Meeting held on 1 June 2026 - Circulated (05.06.26)

Attachment: 06-26 Draft AM minutes.pdf

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1.5 Mayor's Announcements

2 QUESTIONS

2.1 Members

2.2 Public

A period of up to 15 minutes will be available to allow questions that have been submitted by members of the public who live, work or study in the Borough. Any questions not answered within the timescale will be provided with a written response.

3 MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

3.1 Planning Committee held on 14 May 2026 - Circulated

Attachment: 05.26 Planning Minutes.pdf

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3.2 Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee held on 18 May 2026 - Circulated

Attachment: 05.26 CRPG Mins draft.pdf

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3.3	Neighbourhoods and Communities Committee held on 19 May 2026 - Circulated	
	<i>Attachment: Draft 05-26 NC Mins.pdf</i>	<i>Page 42</i>
3.4	Audit and Scrutiny Committee held on 26 May 2026 - Circulated (05.06.26)	
	<i>Attachment: 05-26 Audit Scrutiny Minutes F.pdf</i>	<i>Page 50</i>
3.5	Environment and Economy Committee held on 27 May 2026 - Circulated (4.6.26)	
	<i>Attachment: 05-26 Mins EE draft.pdf</i>	<i>Page 57</i>
4	POLICY FRAMEWORK AND BUDGET	
4.1	Performance Improvement Plan 2026/27 - Circulated	
	<i>Attachment: Performance Improvement Plan 2026-27 - FC.pdf</i>	<i>Page 66</i>
	<i>Attachment: Appendix 1 - Draft Performance Improvement Plan 2026-27.pdf</i>	<i>Page 69</i>
	<i>Attachment: Appendix 2 - Equality Screening PIP 2026-27.pdf</i>	<i>Page 83</i>
	<i>Attachment: Appendix 3 - Rural Needs Impact Assessment PIP 2026-27.pdf</i>	<i>Page 102</i>
	<i>Attachment: Appendix 4 - Sustainability Screening PIP 2026-27.pdf</i>	<i>Page 115</i>
	<i>Attachment: Appendix 5 - Data Protection Impact Assessment PIP 2026-27.pdf</i>	<i>Page 116</i>
4.2	Corporate Plan Update 2025/26 - Circulated	
	<i>Attachment: Corporate Plan Update 2025-2026.pdf</i>	<i>Page 122</i>
	<i>Attachment: Appendix 1 - Corporate Plan Update 2025-26.pdf</i>	<i>Page 124</i>
5	STRATEGIC ISSUES	
6	ITEMS FOR DECISION - OPEN COUNCIL	
6.1	Srebrenica 31st Anniversary Commemorations - Circulated (04.06.26)	
	<i>Attachment: Srebrenica Anniversary Commemorations 2026.pdf</i>	<i>Page 159</i>

7 MOTIONS

7.1 Notice of Motion Proposed by Councillor T Hoey, seconded by Councillor M Armstrong

"Sensory Toy Boxes in Council Buildings across Mid & East Antrim.

This Council notes that:

Many residents, particularly those who are autistic, neurodivergent, or have sensory processing difficulties, can find busy public environments challenging. Simple sensory aids such as fidget toys and calming objects can help individuals regulate sensory overload and access public services with greater comfort and dignity.

This Council believes that:

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council should ensure its buildings are welcoming and accessible to everyone in our community, particularly those with hidden disabilities. Providing sensory supports is a small, low-cost step that can make a meaningful difference for families and individuals accessing council services.

This Council resolves to:

Request that officers assess the feasibility and modest cost of introducing sensory toy boxes in publicly accessible Council-owned buildings, and report back with recommendations for implementation in order to improve accessibility and inclusion across the borough."

7.2 Notice of Motion Proposed by Councillor A Smyth, Seconded by Councillor M Collins

"That this Council recognises the importance of accessible summer scheme provision for children and young people with Special Educational Needs, particularly those with complex needs who benefit from structured activities and familiar support during the school holiday period.

Council notes that many families rely on such schemes for both support and respite, yet access to appropriate provision can be limited.

Accordingly, Council agrees to request that officers undertake a review of current SEN summer scheme provision across the Borough, including Council-supported, school-

based and community schemes, and engage with parents, carers and local organisations to identify gaps and barriers to participation.

Council further agrees to engage with other councils across Northern Ireland to identify best practice in delivering inclusive summer provision and to report back with recommendations on how Mid and East Antrim Borough Council can strengthen and expand opportunities, ensuring that our most vulnerable children and young people are supported and included."

8 SEALING

(i) Mid & East Antrim Borough Council -and- Work Connections (Department for Communities partially-funded project - Labour Market Partnership Action Plan 2025-2027)

(ii) Mid and East Antrim Borough Council -and- Arlingclose Ltd (Treasury Management Services)

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 *Additional Item* Update on Title issues with the Radar Tower, Carrickfergus - To follow

Open Council

OPEN COUNCIL

MID AND EAST ANTRIM BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Minutes of Meeting held on Monday 11 May 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 Mrs M Morrow
Alderman P Reid
Alderman A Wilson
Councillor A Barr
Councillor R Beggs
Councillor B Carson-Ferris
Councillor D Clarke
Councillor M Collins
Councillor M Donnelly
Councillor J Gibson
Councillor L Gray
Councillor A Henry
Councillor R Lawrence
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
Alderman S McDonald
Alderman W McCaughey
Councillor C Jamieson
Councillor P Johnston

Present remotely: Councillor A Clarke
Councillor B Lyness
Councillor C Harwood

In Attendance: Mrs V Watts, Interim Chief Executive
Mr M McDowell, Director of People
Mr R Moore, Director of Place
Mr R Black, Director of Growth and Major Projects
Mrs S Williams, Assistant Director of Business Support
Ms C Grant, Acting Corporate Solicitor

Mrs A Maguire, Communications and Marketing Manager
Ms M Bowe, Waste Operations Manager
Mr D Anthony, HRC Manager
Mrs L Houston, Parks and Open Spaces Manager
Ms C Connor, Governance & Democratic Services Officer
Ms R Salt, Governance & Democratic Services Officer

Attendance remotely: Mrs S Fisher, Assistant Director, Citizen Focus
Mr J McVeigh, Head of Capital Works

Press: There were no members of the press present

Public: There was one member of the public present.

Item Minute

1. FORMALITIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

1.1 Notice of Meeting

The Interim Chief Executive read the Notice of Meeting.

The Mayor, encouraged all Members to complete their Annual Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Evaluation that had been recently emailed to them as soon as possible

He also encouraged all Elected Members to attend the Rural Needs Awareness Training on Wednesday 13 May 2026, 6:15PM to 7:15PM. This would now be delivered virtually to further promote attendance.

1.2 Apologies

Apologies were received from:

- Councillor Armstrong
- Councillor Hadden
- Councillor Stewart
- Councillor McKeown
- Councillor Friary

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.

There were no declarations of Interest received.

1.4 Minutes of Council Meetings

1.4.1 Council Meeting held on Monday 30 March February 2026

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

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 30 March 2026 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 Jim Wylie, who tragically lost his life in a recent motorcycle crash last month.

Members stood for a minute's silence.

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

- Mrs Marian Maguire, Chairperson of Glenravel & District Community & Residents Association, on receiving the Community Champion award at the Housing Executive Rural Community Awards.
- Ballymena based company travel agent, 'Travelmax' on being named TTG Top Travel Agency UK & Ireland, alongside additional awards for Top Travel Agency, Northern Ireland and the TUI Community Hero Award
- MEA Outdoors team for the successful delivery of the annual Bluebell Festival at Portglenone Forest
- Ballymena Integrated Nursery School on becoming the first nursery in Northern Ireland to receive the Togetherness Gold Standard accreditation
- Three local Businesses on winning awards at the Musgrave NI Store of the Year Awards – McCools Super Valu (Kells), Lusty's Centra (Larne) and McCann's Mace (Greenisland).
- Wrightbus on celebrating its 80th anniversary
- Elite Lighting & Interiors on celebrating 25 successful years in business.
- Dougies Goodies on opening its 100th stockist location
- Colin Agnew on reaching the final of BBC Northern Ireland's Greatest Gardens
- Lucy Adair and Sophie-Jo Smyth on their success at the All-Ireland Line Dancing Championships.

Councillor Thompson, on behalf of the UUP party, congratulated the Mayor on being selected as UUP Member of the Year for 2026. He commended him on the dedication and professionalism he demonstrated throughout his term as Mayor, and the high standard he set during his tenure. Councillor Thompson also acknowledged the support provided by the Mayor's wife and daughter and expressed thanks for his commitment in attending numerous functions and events.

2 QUESTIONS

2.1 Members

There were no tabled questions received this month.

2.2 Public

There was one eligible public question submitted.
One member of the public was in attendance to read out the question.

During the timeslot available, a member of public read out their question, and the Interim Chief Executive provided the answer.

Details of all accepted question and answer would be published within five working days on the Council website.

The Member of the Public left the meeting at 6.43pm.

3 MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

3.1 Planning Committee held on 2 April 2026

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

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 2 April 2026, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

3.2 Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee held on 13 April 2026

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

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee held on 13 April 2026, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

A Member raised concerns that changes to policies were being made which were only accessible to, and approved by, Members of the Corporate Resources and Policy Committee. The Interim Chief Executive undertook to investigate further and report back.

The Assistant Director - Business Support further advised that, going forward Officers were exploring options to provide all Members with access to reports for the three main committees (CRPG, N&C and E&E).

In response to a query regarding delegated authority at Committee level, the Assistant Director - Business Support advised that the Interim Chief Executive would be discussing training in relation to this as part of the annual review of governance with Group Party Leaders to ensure that both Members and officers have a clear understanding of which decisions can be made at Committee level and which require a recommendation to Council.

3.3 **Neighbourhoods and Communities Committee held on 14 April 2026**

The Mayor informed Members that a request had been received by Councillor McKeen regarding item 8.8 of the Minutes – Play Park Investment. As the matter being raised was in closed session during the meeting it was also heard in closed council.

On the proposal of Councillor McKeen and seconded by Councillor Glover, 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.

Councillor McKeen referred to the minutes of the Committee and to item 8.8, Play Park Investment. He expressed disappointment that the Officer's recommendation had not been accepted and felt that the balance of investment was not equal across the Borough regarding Play Parks.

Councillor McKeen proposed an amendment that Council fund Whitehead Play Park for 2026/27 investment. He then requested a recorded vote.

Councillor Donnelly seconded the amendment and asked for it to be noted how much dissent there had been at the Neighbourhoods and Communities Committee Meeting on the matter and that this had not been reflected in the minutes circulated.

Following queries raised by Members regarding the Committee's recommendation the Acting Corporate Solicitor advised that the report taken to the Committee was for Committee to make a recommendation to the Full Council and that no decision was made by the Committee. The Director of People who was in attendance at the meeting advised that the recommendation from the Committee was agreed by all members present and at that point two objections were received.

The Chief Executive advised that a technical issue with the Microphones had been fixed.

The Chair stated that there was a proposal on the floor and the recorded vote requested by Councillor McKeen would have to be taken.

The Chair put the proposal to the vote:

For (20)	Against (13)	Abstention (1)
Alderman R Glover, P Reid, B Ashe, W McCaughey, A Wilson, Councillors R Beggs, L Gray, G McKeen, A Clarke, P Johnston, Mrs A Smyth, B Carson-Ferris, A Skinner, M Donnelly, R Logan, R Quigley, L Philpott, M Collins, T Gordon, T Hoey	Alderman S McDonald, Mrs M Morrow Councillors M Warwick, D Clarke, A Henry, C Jameison, J Gibson, C Harwood, A Rae, B Lyness, B Thompson, A Barr, J Minford	Councillor R Lawrence

The Chair declared the proposal carried.

The Chair of Neighbourhoods & Communities apologised for any inadvertent errors in relation to procedures and voting.

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

RESOLVED: that the Meeting goes into Open Council

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

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Neighbourhoods and Communities Committee held on 14 April 2026, omitting matters in respect of which the

Council has delegated powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted, subject to the amendment to item 8.8 Play Park Investment.

In response to a query from a Member, the Interim Chief Executive agreed to discuss the powers of the Committee/Council outside of the Chamber.

Members concerns were noted regarding Governance and Standing Orders at Council Meetings.

3.4 Environment and Economy Committee held on 20 April 2026

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

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Environment and Economy Committee held on 20 April 2026, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

3.5 Audit and Scrutiny Committee held on 21 April 2026

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

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee held on 21 April 2026, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted with the amendment of typographical error at item 4.3.

3.6 Personnel Committee held on 28 April 2026

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

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Personnel Committee held on 28 April 2026, 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 COUNCIL

6.1 Inclusion & Equality Sub-Committee Update

Previously circulated report which provided an update on the Inclusion and Equality Sub Committee was

RESOLVED: To note the update on the Inclusion and Equality Sub Committee

A Member welcomed the relocation of the changing places pod (to support inclusion of people with complex needs) to the Larne Market Yard.

6.2 Memorial Sub Committee Notes – 1 October 2025

Previously circulated notes from the Memorial Sub Committee held on the 1 October 2025

Members were pleased to see previously delayed items being progressed again.

Members requested that the Council's new GIS mapping service be promoted on social media. The service, one of the first of its kind in the UK, provides an accessible online map of the Borough's memorials and war graves via the Council's website.

In response to a query regarding the notice of motion for memorial plaques for Prince Philip and Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, the Chair of the Memorial Sub-Committee advised that the proposed design had not aligned with the requirements outlined in the motion, but he reassured Members that the direction of travel with this going forward was positive.

The Interim Chief Executive agreed to bring an urgent report to Council outlining the most appropriate means of commemorating the late Alderman Beth Adger in recognition of her service.

RESOLVED: To note the Memorial Sub Committee Notes of 1 October 2025

Due to a technical fault the Chair requested a 10-minute recess from 7.31pm – 7.41pm.

6.3 Memorial Sub Committee Notes – 24 April 2026

Previously circulated notes from the Memorial Sub Committee held on the 24 April 2026

RESOLVED: To note the Memorial Sub Committee Notes of 24 April 2026

6.4 **The Use of the Council Seal**

Previously circulated report which provided Elected Members with an update on the use of the Council Seal and the legal requirement to use the Seal in certain transactions.

In response to a query from a Member the Acting Corporate Solicitor advised that where a report or decision to award a contract includes approval for the contract to be signed and sealed, it is not necessary for the matter to be referred back to Council for authorisation to seal. This would also typically apply in the case of property transactions.

RESOLVED: to note the content of this report.

7 **MOTIONS**

7.1 **Notice of Motion Proposed by Councillor M Donnelly, seconded by Alderman R Logan.**

In accordance with the notice on the agenda, it was proposed by Councillor Donnelly, seconded by Alderman Logan ;

"That this council notes that Mid and East Antrim Borough Council is in the minority of local government areas in Northern Ireland in closing all leisure facilities during bank holidays; recognises that access to leisure facilities brings a wide range of health, wellbeing and social benefits; further recognises that leisure services may be particularly welcomed during bank holidays by families and those with young children; and requests that officers bring a report on options for delivering a leisure facilities offering in Mid and East Antrim during bank holidays, taking account of the perspective of providers and their staff."

There was broad support for the motion; however, it was suggested that demand in each area be assessed and opening hours for facilities in each Borough to be considered accordingly.

Councillor Barr, while supporting the motion, emphasised that a thorough financial assessment would be required prior to progressing. He proposed an amendment to include at the end of the motion the words:

"The report will also include a full financial impact assessment and associated staffing resource implications of any proposed changes together with a review of opening and closing times across all Leisure facilities within Mid and East Antrim Borough Council to ensure fairness, equality and consistency of provision throughout the Borough."

Councillor Beggs seconded the amendment.

The Director of Place advised Members that a comprehensive financial scrutiny and assessment would be undertaken, alongside a wider review of leisure modernisation and transformation. Officers would examine both expenditure and income to address the associated costs. He further noted that the operating model would be reviewed and a report would be presented to a future meeting.

The request for Councillors' input on this was noted.

The Interim Chief Executive reminded Members that while they agreed cuts in Leisure in order to lower the rate, any decision based on forthcoming reports would add pressure to next year's rate.

A Member further added that this motion was not solely about the financial cost, but about people and families who rely on the service for mental health and wellbeing.

RESOLVED: That the amended motion was carried:

"That this council notes that Mid and East Antrim Borough Council is in the minority of local government areas in Northern Ireland in closing all leisure facilities during bank holidays; recognises that access to leisure facilities brings a wide range of health, wellbeing and social benefits; further recognises that leisure services may be particularly welcomed during bank holidays by families and those with young children; and requests that Officers bring a report on options for delivering a leisure facilities offering in Mid and East Antrim during bank holidays, taking account of the perspective of providers and their staff. The report will also include a full financial impact assessment and associated staffing resource implications of any proposed changes together with a review of opening and closing times across all Leisure facilities within Mid and East Antrim Borough Council to ensure fairness, equality and consistency of provision throughout the Borough."

Officers to take the proposal forward with the relevant financial and equality assessment, and that this comes back to a future Council meeting for a final decision on implementation.

7.2 Notice of Motion Proposed by Councillor C Harwood, seconded by Councillor J Gibson.

In accordance with the notice on the agenda, it was
Proposed by Councillor Harwood,
Seconded by Councillor Gibson:

"That this council strongly condemns the blocking of the establishment of an Independent Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) by the DUP in the

Assembly and Executive; further condemns the hypocrisy of those who express concern over the Lough Neagh crisis, the illegal dump at Mobuoy and wider environmental degradation, but refuse to support plans to enhance environmental accountability and safeguards; notes that a commitment to an IEPA was contained within the New Decade, New Approach Deal; agrees that it is undemocratic for an IEPA to be unilaterally vetoed by one party which represents a minority in the Assembly as a whole; agrees to write to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to ask him to urgently convene a process of institutional reform, in consultation with the Irish Government and local parties, to remove blockages and vetoes from Stormont's system of government; and to ask the Secretary of State to take meaningful steps to ensure that commitments in New Decade, New Approach are implemented."

Members discussed the motion at length noting comments that the creation of an additional external environmental agency would only shift the accountability away to an agency who is not accountable to the assembly and that the investment required would be better put to use elsewhere on areas such as wastewater infrastructure or practical environmental improvements on farms. Concerns were raised regarding the New Decade, New Deal approach and the request that the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland steps in to convene a process of institutional reform, in consultation with the Irish Government. Some Members felt that this motion was also an attack on another party for decisions that were taken at Stormont.

At the request of Councillor McKeen, a recorded vote was taken.

For (6)	Against (28)	Abstention (0)
Alderman R Logan Councillors L Gray, A Skinner, M Donnelly, J Gibson, C Harwood	Alderman S McDonald, R Glover, P Reid, B Ashe, T Gordon, W McCaughey, A Wilson, Mrs M Morrow Councillors M Warwick, R Beggs, G McKeen, D Clarke, A Henry, C Jamieson, Mrs A Smyth, A Clarke, P Johnston, B Carson-Ferris, R Quigley, L Philpott, M Collins, R Lawrence, A Rae, B Lyness, B Thompson, A Barr, T Hoey, J Minford	

The Mayor declared the motion lost.

RESOLVED: That the motion was lost.

8 SEALING

- (i) Mid and East Antrim Borough Council and CivCo Ltd (Painting works at Dunluce Street, Larne)
- (ii) Mid and East Antrim Borough Council and Hall Black Douglas (The Contract for ICT Services for Carnfunnock Country Park LUF)
- (iii) Mid and East Antrim Borough Council and Design ID Consulting Limited (ICT Services for Carrickfergus Marina Public Realm Feasibility Project)

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

RESOLVED: to approve that Council authorise the Mayor and the Interim Chief Executive to execute and seal the documents.

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

There were no strategic items this month

10 ITEMS FOR DECISION – CLOSED

10.1 Business Case for 3 x Compact Sweepers

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

If restricted from publication, the report would become unrestricted: Never

Report previously circulated, seeking approval for the Business Case to purchase 3 new Compact Road Sweepers.

It was noted that there was no business case attached with the report for this item and therefore Members could not approve.

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

RESOLVED: that the item be brought to the next Environment and Economy Committee on 27 May 2026 and that Council grant delegated authority to the Committee to make a decision.

10.2 HRC Booking System

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

If restricted from publication, the report would become unrestricted: Never

Report previously circulated advising Council that, following the Environment and Economy Committee on 20 April 2026, amendments had been made to the draft policy for van and commercial vehicle access to MEA Council's Household Recycling Centre. The report asked Members to note and approve the draft Policy and Procedures

In response to a Members' query the Director of Place confirmed that pickups with single or double cabs could be included in the same category as cars in the Larne Lough / Glenarm area.

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

RESOLVED: To note the amendments and approve the attached HRC Booking System Policy and Procedures.

10.3 Local Economic Partnership Action Plan

The item is restricted as information fell under the prescribed exemptions: Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information) as it contains commercially sensitive budgetary information that could create advantage for perspective tender bidders

If restricted from publication, the report would become unrestricted when all the necessary procurement processes have been finalised.

Report previously circulated seeking approval for the Mid and East Antrim Local Economic Partnership Action Plan 2026-2028 and associated appendices for submission to DfE and to approve the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding and return to DfE with Action Plan submission

also noting the ongoing work in developing Council screenings in line with the statutory responsibilities.

Members commended Officers on the work put into this report and thanked the Director of Growth and Major Projects for this excellent opportunity for investment into the Borough.

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

RESOLVED: To

- (i) Approve the MEA Local Economic Partnership Action Plan 2026-2028 and associated Appendices 1-4 for submission to DfE.
- (ii) Approve the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding and return to DfE with Action Plan submission.
- (iii) Note the ongoing work in developing Council Screenings in line with statutory responsibilities.

10.4 Contract Award – Inspection, Maintenance and Repairs of Air Conditioning Units, Heat Recovery Units, Fire Dampers,

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, the report will become unrestricted: never

Report previously circulated seeking approval to issue and award letter to enter a contract with Source Air Conditioning (NI) Ltd for a period of 12 months from the date of award (with the possibility of a maximum of 3 x 12-month extensions dependent on satisfactory performance) and to authorise the Mayor and Chief Executive to execute and seal the relevant contractual and legal documents on behalf of Council.

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

RESOLVED: To

- (i) Approve the issue of an award letter to enter into a contract with Source Air Conditioning (NI) Ltd for a period of 12 months from the date of award (with the possibility of a maximum of 3 x 12-month extensions dependent on satisfactory performance).
- (ii) Authorise the Mayor and Chief Executive to execute and seal the relevant contractual and legal documents on behalf of Council.

10.5 Contract Award – Provision of Security Guarding Service at Carrickfergus Harbour & Marina Complex

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, the report will become unrestricted: never

Report previously circulated seeking approval to issue of an award letter to enter into a contract with Cobra Security Services for a period of 2 years from the date of award and Authorise the Mayor and Chief Executive to execute and seal the relevant contractual and legal documents on behalf of Council.

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

RESOLVED: To

- (i) Approve the issue of an award letter to enter into a contract with Cobra Security Services for a period of 2 years from the date of award.
- (ii) Authorise the Mayor and Chief Executive to execute and seal the relevant contractual and legal documents on behalf of Council.

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

RESOLVED: that the Meeting goes into Open Council.

The Mayor thanked everyone for their support over his past year in Office.

The Meeting ended at 8.56pm.

..... Mayor

..... Interim Chief Executive

..... Date

MID AND EAST ANTRIM BOROUGH COUNCIL**Minutes of Annual Meeting held on Monday, 1 June 2026 at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber, The Braid, 1-29 Bridge Street, Ballymena**

- In the Chair:** Councillor J Minford, Mayor
Alderman T Gordon, Mayor
- Vice Chair:** Councillor T Hoey, Deputy Mayor
Councillor B Carson-Ferris, Deputy Mayor
- Present:** Alderman B Ashe, MBE
Alderman R Logan
Alderman R Glover
Alderman W McCaughey
Alderman S McDonald
Alderman Mrs M Morrow
Alderman A Wilson
Councillor M Armstrong
Councillor M Donnelly
Councillor I Friary
Councillor L Gray
Councillor B Hadden
Councillor C Harwood
Councillor A Henry
Councillor C Jamieson
Councillor P Johnston
Councillor R Lawrence
Councillor G McKeen
Councillor J McKeown
Councillor L Philpott
Councillor R Quigley
Councillor A Skinner
Councillor B Thompson
Councillor M Warwick
- Present remotely:** Alderman Ms G Mulvenna
Alderman P Reid
Councillor A Barr
Councillor A Clarke
Councillor M Collins
Councillor J Gibson
Councillor Mrs A Smyth
- Attendance:** Mrs V Watts, Interim Chief Executive
Mr R Black, Director of Growth & Major Projects
Mr M McDowell, Director of People
Mr R Moore, Director of Place
Mrs S Williams, Assistant Director – Business Support

Ms C Grant, Solicitor
 Mrs A Maguire, Strategic Communications Manager
 Ms J Casson, Senior Communications Officer
 Mrs G Carmichael, Governance & Democratic Services Officer
 Ms C Connor, Governance & Democratic Services Officer
 Mrs C McIntyre, Governance & Democratic Services Officer

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

Public: There were 5 members of the public present.

Press: There were no members of the press present.

Item Minute

1 NOTICE OF MEETING

The Interim Chief Executive read the Notice of Meeting.

2 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from:

Councillor R Beggs
 Councillor D Clarke
 Councillor B Lyness
 Councillor A Rae
 Councillor R Stewart

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 OUTGOING MAYOR'S REMARKS

The outgoing Mayor reflected on the many wonderful experiences, events and initiatives that he had had the privilege to be part of during his mayoral term.

He gave his thanks to the Ulster Unionist Party and colleagues, the Interim Chief Executive, Senior Management Team and staff, the Deputy Mayor and his family for their support throughout the year, as well as his team in the Mayors Office.

In closing, the Mayor wished his best to the incoming Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

5 OUTGOING DEPUTY MAYORS REMARKS

The outgoing Deputy Mayor recapped on his year in position which he felt was a great honour and detailed some of his highlights from his term. He also gave his thanks to the outgoing Mayor, his Party colleagues and to the residents of Bannside for their support throughout his term.

In closing, he gave his congratulations to the incoming Mayor and Deputy Mayor, wishing them a successful year in office.

Alderman McDonald and Councillors Armstrong and Jalmeson entered the meeting at 6.47pm.

6 NOMINATIONS TO POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY

Members had been provided with the schedule of Positions of Responsibility for 2023-2027 which had been agreed at the Annual Meeting in 2023..

At this point in the meeting, the outgoing Mayor and Deputy Mayor vacated their seats at 6.49pm.

The Interim Chief Executive confirmed the Nominating Officers for the respective parties, as follows:

- DUP – Councillor McKeen
- UUP – Alderman Wilson
- AP – Councillor Gray
- TUV – Councillor Armstrong
- SF – Councillor Ian Friary
- Councillor Hadden would act as his own Nominating Officer
- Councillor Quigley would act as his own Nominating Officer
- Councillor Philpott would act as his own Nominating Officer

6.1 Appointment of Mayor and Deputy Mayor

The Interim Chief Executive advised that the office of Mayor for the year 2026/27 would be held by a DUP Member.

She called upon Councillor McKeen, as Nominating Officer, to present the nominee to be appointed to the position of Mayor. He gave his thanks to the outgoing Mayor and Deputy Mayor over the past 12 months and was pleased to nominate Alderman Gordon as the Mayor for the 2026/27 year.

The Interim Chief Executive invited the newly appointed Mayor to receive his Chain of Office and Alderman Gordon took the position of Chair at 6.50pm.

The Mayor addressed the Chamber noting the honour to have been selected to serve as the First Citizen of the Borough. He also paid tribute to his predecessor and the outgoing Deputy Mayor and expressed his excitement for the opportunity to meet local community groups, charities, businesses and organisations throughout his incoming term. In closing, he thanked colleagues for the wonderful opportunity and looked forward to serving the people of Mid and East Antrim.

The Interim Chief Executive advised that the office of Deputy Mayor for the year 2026/27 would be held by a UUP Member. Alderman Wilson, as Nominating Officer, nominated Councillor Carson-Ferris as the Deputy Mayor for the 2026/27 year.

The Interim Chief Executive invited the newly appointed Deputy Mayor to receive her Chain of Office and Councillor Carson-Ferris took the position of Vice Chair at 7.04pm

The Deputy Mayor addressed the Chamber, extending her best wishes to the outgoing Mayor and Deputy Mayor. She expressed her thanks to her Party colleagues for the opportunity and looked forward to working with Council staff and local communities during her term.

In closing, she expressed her excitement for the year ahead and working with the Mayor during this term.

6.2 Appointment of Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs

The schedule of of nominations received for the positions of responsibility for 2025-2026, had been previously circulated, which resulted as follows:

Position	Year 4 – 2026/27 / Party	Member
Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Chair	DUP	Councillor G McKeen
Neighbourhoods and Communities Chair	DUP	Alderman B Ashe, MBE
Environment and Economy Chair	UUP	Alderman A Wilson
Planning Chair	UUP	Councillor A Barr
Audit & Scrutiny Chair	AP	Councillor C Harwood
Personnel Committee Chair	TUV	Councillor M Armstrong
Standards Committee Chair	DUP	Alderman W McCaughey
Ad Hoc 1 - Preliminary Investigation Committee Chair	AP	Councillor L Gray
Ad Hoc 2 - Investigation & Disciplinary Committee Chair	TUV	Councillor C Jamieson
Ad Hoc 3 - Appeals Committee Chair	UUP	Alderman Mrs M Morrow

Ad Hoc 4 - Grievance Committee Chair	AP	Councillor J Gibson
Ad Hoc 5 - Grievance Appeals Committee Chair	SF	Councillor J McKeown
Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Vice-Chair	IND (Q)	Councillor R Quigley
Neighbourhoods and Communities Vice-Chair	AP	Councillor L Gray
Environment and Economy Vice-Chair	AP	Councillor A Skinner
Planning Vice-Chair	SF	Councillor J McKeown
Audit & Scrutiny Vice-Chair	DUP	Alderman P Reid
Personnel Committee Vice-Chair	DUP	Alderman W McCaughey
Standards Committee Vice-Chair	TUV	Councillor M Warwick
Ad Hoc 1 - Preliminary Investigation Committee Vice-Chair	IND (H)	Councillor B Hadden
Ad Hoc 2 - Investigation & Disciplinary Committee Vice-Chair	AP	Alderman R Logan
Ad Hoc 3 - Appeals Committee Vice-Chair	DUP	Councillor M Collins
Ad Hoc 4 – Grievance Committee	DUP	Alderman T Gordon
Ad Hoc 5 – Grievance Appeals Committee	IND (Q)	Councillor R Quigley

6.3 Other Positions of Responsibility

The schedule of appointments to other positions of responsibility, made on a four-year term basis had been circulated as follows:

Position	Year 4 2026/27 Party	Member
Partnership Panel	UUP	Alderman Mrs M Morrow
NI Housing Council	AP	Councillor A Skinner
RFCA 1 (Veterans Champion)	DUP	Alderman B Ashe MBE
RFCA 2 (Deputy Veterans Champion)	TUV	Councillor M Warwick
PEACEPLUS Partnership Chair	DUP	Alderman P Reid
PCSP 1	AP	Councillor M Donnelly
PCSP 2	DUP	Councillor T Hoey
PCSP 3	DUP	Councillor M Collins
PCSP 4	TUV	Councillor A Henry
PCSP 5	AP	Councillor L Gray
PCSP 6	SF	Councillor I Friary
PCSP 7	DUP	Councillor G McKeen
PCSP 8	UUP	Councillor B Thompson

PCSP 9	DUP	Councillor Mrs A Smyth
PCSP 10	UUP	Councillor R Beggs
arc21 -A	IND (Q)	Councillor R Quigley
arc21 -B	DUP	Councillor G McKeen
arc21 -C	UUP	Alderman Mrs M Morrow

7 APPOINTMENT TO COMMITTEE AND AD HOC COMMITTEE PLACES 2026/27

The Chief Executive referred to the previously circulated schedule of of appointments for 2026/27, which resulted in the following:

Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance (6 DUP, 4 UUP, 4AP, 3TUV, 2SF, Ind Q)

Chair:	Councillor G McKeen
Vice-Chair:	Councillor R Quigley
Members:	Alderman R Glover
	Alderman W McCaughey
	Alderman A Wilson
	Councillor M Armstrong
	Councillor R Beggs
	Councillor A Clarke
	Councillor M Collins
	Councillor M Donnelly
	Councillor B Carson-Ferris
	Councillor J Gibson
	Councillor L Gray
	Councillor C Harwood
	Councillor A Henry
	Councillor T Hoey
	Councillor C Jamieson
	Councillor B Lyness
	Councillor J McKeown
	Councillor B Thompson

Neighbourhoods and Communities Committee (7 DUP, 4 UUP, 3 AP, 3 TUV, 3 SF)

Chair:	Alderman B Ashe MBE
Vice-Chair:	Councillor L Gray
Members:	Alderman R Glover
	Alderman S McDonald
	Alderman Mrs M Morrow
	Councillor M Armstrong
	Councillor M Collins
	Councillor M Donnelly
	Councillor B Carson-Ferris
	Councillor I Friary
	Councillor J Gibson
	Councillor T Hoey

Councillor R Lawrence
 Councillor B Lyness
 Councillor G McKeen
 Councillor J Minford
 Councillor A Rae
 Councillor Mrs A Smyth
 Councillor B Thompson
 Councillor M Warwick

Environment and Economy (6 DUP, 4 UUP, 4 AP, 3 TUV, 2 SF, Ind H)

Chair: Alderman A Wilson
Vice-Chair: Councillor A Skinner
Members: Alderman B Ashe, MBE
 Alderman R Logan
 Alderman W McCaughey
 Alderman Mrs M Morrow
 Councillor R Beggs
 Councillor A Clarke
 Councillor B Hadden
 Councillor C Harwood
 Councillor A Henry
 Councillor J Gibson
 Councillor C Jamieson
 Councillor P Johnston
 Councillor B Lyness
 Councillor G McKeen
 Councillor J McKeown
 Councillor M Collins
 Councillor R Stewart
 Councillor M Warwick

Planning (5 DUP, 2 UUP, 2 AP, 2 SF, 1 TUV)

Chair: Councillor A Barr
Vice-Chair: Councillor J McKeown
Members: Alderman R Glover
 Alderman T Gordon
 Alderman R Logan
 Alderman S McDonald
 Alderman P Reid
 Councillor T Hoey
 Councillor J Minford
 Councillor A Rae
 Councillor A Skinner
 Councillor Mrs A Smyth

Audit and Scrutiny (3 DUP, 2 UUP, 1 AP, 1 TUV, Ind Q)

Chair: Councillor C Harwood
Vice-Chair: Alderman P Reid

Members: Alderman B Ashe, MBE
Alderman T Gordon
Councillor A Barr
Councillor R Beggs
Councillor A Henry
Councillor R Quigley

Personnel (2 DUP, 1 UUP, 1 AP, 1 TUV)

Chair: Councillor M Armstrong
Vice-Chair: Alderman W McCaughey
Members: Councillor L Gray
Councillor R Lawrence
Councillor R Stewart

Standards (3 DUP, 1 UUP, 1 AP, 1 TUV, 1 SF, Ind H)

Chair: Alderman W McCaughey
Vice-Chair: Councillor M Warwick
Members: Alderman B Ashe, MBE
Alderman R Glover
Councillor B Hadden
Councillor J McKeown
Councillor A Skinner
Councillor B Thompson

Ad Hoc 1 - Preliminary Investigation Committee (2 DUP, 1 UUP, 1 AP, Ind H)

Chair: Councillor L Gray
Vice-Chair: Councillor B Hadden
Members: Councillor P Johnston
Councillor A Barr
Councillor Mrs A Smyth

Ad Hoc 2 – Investigation & Disciplinary Committee (2 DUP, 1 UUP, 1 AP, 1 TUV)

Chair: Councillor C Jamieson
Vice-Chair: Alderman R Logan
Members: Alderman B Ashe MBE
Councillor J Minford
Councillor T Hoey

Ad Hoc 3 – Appeals Committee (2 DUP, 1 UUP, 1 AP, 1 SF)

Chair: Alderman Mrs M Morrow
Vice-Chair: Councillor M Collins
Members: Alderman P Reid
Councillor I Friary
Councillor A Skinner

Ad Hoc 4 - Grievance Committee (2 DUP, 1 UUP, 1 AP, 1 TUV)

Chair: Councillor J Gibson
Vice-Chair: Alderman T Gordon

Members: Alderman S McDonald
Councillor G McKeen
Councillor J Minford

Ad Hoc 5 - Grievance Appeals Committee (1 DUP, 1 UUP, 1 AP, 1 SF, Ind Q)

Chair: Councillor J McKeown
Vice-Chair: Councillor R Quigley
Members: Councillor B Carson-Ferris
Councillor C Harwood
Councillor R Lawrence

8 APPOINTMENT TO SUB-COMMITTEES

The schedule of appointments to sub-committees had been previously circulated. The Interim Chief Executive requested that any amendments to the names of the memberships, be forwarded to Democratic Services.

9 REPRESENTATIVES TO VARIOUS OUTSIDE BOARDS/COMMITTEES/PARTNERSHIPS/GROUPS 2023-2027

The schedule of appointments to various outside bodies for the four-year term 2023-2027 had been previously circulated

The Interim Chief Executive requested that any amendments to the names, be forwarded to Democratic Services.

10 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

Members noted the previously circulated schedule of meetings for the incoming year.

The Mayor reminded Members of the upcoming Chair and Vice Chair training on 4 June as well as Standing Orders Training on 11 June, which he strongly encouraged all Members attend.

The meeting ended at 7.11pm.

..... Mayor

..... Interim Chief Executive

..... Date

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

Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 14 May 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
Councillor J McKeown
Councillor J Minford
- Present remotely:** Alderman S McDonald
Alderman P Reid
Councillor A Barr
Councillor A Skinner
- Attendance:** Mr R Moore, Director of Place
Mr K Patterson, Acting Head of Planning & Building Control
Mr G McGuinness, Principal Planning Officer
Mr H McAlister, Senior Planning Officer
Mr S O'Kane, Senior Planning Officer
Mr K Irwin, Planning Officer (Observing)
Mr S Shiels, Solicitor
Mrs G Carmichael, Governance & Democratic Services Officer
Mrs C McIntyre, Governance & Democratic Services Officer
- Also in attendance:** Mr T Stokes, TSA Planning
Mr N Jones, Architect
Ms B Boyd, Massereene Developments
Mr A McClean, EP Ballylumford
Mr K Tubridy, EP Ballylumford
Mr A Larkin, Gravis Planning Agent
Mr J Dundee, bell | rolston
Ms P McGrath, bell | rolston
Ms H Wilson, bell | rolston
Ms L Coulter, bell | rolston
- Also in attendance remotely:** Mr J Stewart, MLA

Public: No 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 Director read the Notice of Meeting.

2 Apologies

Apologies were received from:

Councillor T Hoey

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.

Declarations were received from:

Alderman Reid regarding item 4.4 - Planning Application No. LA02/2025/0766/F - Lands approx. 150m SE of No. 37 Ballyhampton Road, Larne, BT40 2ST, as the owner of the land was an elder in his church.

4 Schedule of Planning Applications

4.1 Planning Application No. LA02/2024/0899/F – Lands to the North of Premier Inn Hotel and East of Rodgers Quay, Carrickfergus Waterfront, Carrickfergus BT38 8BE & Planning Application No. LA02/2024/0900/DCA – Lands to the North of Premier Inn Hotel and East of Rodgers Quay, Carrickfergus Waterfront, Carrickfergus BT38 8BE

The Acting Head of Planning drew attention to the late representations received in relation to Planning Application nos. LA02/2024/0899/F and LA02/2024/0900/DCA.

He noted that the Planning Department were aware of the submissions and that due process had been followed, including their publication on the Planning Portal.

He also advised that the issues raised in these representations were not new and had been previously submitted, considered, and addressed during the application process.

The Principal Planning Officer introduced the Planning Report by way of visual aid presentation to the Committee, noting that Planning Application Nos. LA02/2024/0899/F and LA02/2024/0900/DCA would be presented together.

The Officer drew Members' attention to the site location plan, surrounding context, and the current land use, known as 'Swifts Bar'. He gave a brief overview of the previous application which had been refused and the subsequent Planning Appeal Commissions decision. Following these decisions, the Officer acknowledged that the applicant had made significant changes to the application and referred to the block plan and proposed elevations of the design, highlighting the proposal contained 33 apartments over 3 and half storeys, which had been reduced.

The Officer detailed that over 900 letters of objection had been received, and summarised the issues raised such as:

- No need for more apartments and other more suitable sites available;
- Better suited for community/leisure/tourism use; something to rejuvenate the area;
- No benefit to the local community;
- Designated as commercial use;
- Would erode conservation area;
- Out of character;
- Building too tall/excessive height and will distract from views of the Castle;
- Increased traffic;
- Risk to individuals with mobility if the existing footpath adjacent to the Swift Restaurant is no longer accessible to the public.
- Impact on utilities/ sewage system inadequate
- Objectors were told they would have uninterrupted views of the Castle and Belfast Lough;
- Wider neighbour notification required;

- Action should be taken against the owners of the property under public health and health and safety issues. Letting the site fall into disrepair

The Officer detailed that the proposal was acceptable in terms of design and appearance and it was an appropriate development having due regard to the policy context of the Local Development 2030 – Plan Strategy and all other material considerations, the applications were recommended for approval.

Representations in respect of a number of objections to the Officer's recommendation were presented by Mr J Stewart, MLA who was in attendance remotely.

Further representations in support of the Officer's recommendation were presented by Mr T Stokes, Agent, accompanied by Mr N Jones, Architect and Ms B Boyd, Applicant, who were available for questions in the Chamber.

Members' queries were addressed by the Mr Stokes, in relation to parking, anti-social behaviour and the differences in the previous application which was refused compared the current application.

The Principal Planning Officer responded to queries from Members in relation to zoning of the land, confirmation of external departments agreement to the proposed applications and clarification regarding the previous decision upheld by the Planning Appeals Commission.

During the meeting, Alderman Reid experienced connection issues and rejoined the meeting at various times. Alderman Reid was not present for the voting.

It was proposed by Councillor McKeown seconded by Alderman Gordon, to approve the applications.

The Chair put the motion to the vote.

Voting on the proposal was as follows –

For	Against	Abstain
7	3	0

RESOLVED:

- to accept in accordance with the Officers' recommendation to approve, subject to the conditions outlined in the report, and
- to authorise for the Mayor and Interim Chief Executive to execute and seal documents for the Section 76 legal agreement.

Mr Stewart left the meeting remotely at 10.52am.

Councillor Skinner left the meeting remotely at 10.52am.

Mr Stokes, Mr Jones and Ms Boyd left the Chamber at 10.52am.

4.2 **Planning Application No. LA02/2026/0140/F - 119 Broughshane Street Ballymena, BT43 6EE**

The Principal Planning Officer introduced the Planning Report by way of visual aid presentation to the Committee, advising that the application proposed for a change of use from Dwelling to House of Multiple Occupation with a second-floor rear extension.

The Officer confirmed that all consultees were satisfied, subject to the conditions laid out in the report and that 12 objections were received, regarding a variety of reasons such as, alteration of the character of the area, loss of a large family home, insufficient parking/more demand on on-street parking, traffic congestion/road safety, overcrowding, precedent for further Houses in Multiple Occupation, anti-social behaviour and noise impacts and devaluation of properties.

The Officer stated that property value and anti-social behaviour issues were not planning considerations.

The Officer responded to Members queries in relation to lack of parking, parking standards in Town Centres and safety concerns regarding parking.

There were no proposers to support the Officer's recommendation to approve the application.

A Member proposed to refuse the application contrary to the Officer's recommendation on the grounds that, the proposed development was contrary to the following Planning Policies of the Mid and East Antrim Plan Strategy, 2030, namely, HOU1, HOU2, GP1 and TR6.

It was proposed by Alderman Glover, seconded by Councillor Mrs Smyth to refuse the application.

The Chair put the motion to the vote.

Voting on the proposal was as follows –

For	Against	Abstain
7	3	0

RESOLVED: to refuse Planning Application No. LA02/2026/0140/F - 119 Broughshane Street Ballymena, BT43 6EE, contrary to the Officer's recommendation on the grounds that, the proposed development is contrary to the following Planning Policies of the Mid and East Antrim Plan Strategy, 2030:

- HOU1,
- HOU2,

- GP1 and
- TR6.

Councillor Barr left the meeting remotely at 11.15am.

4.3 Planning Application No. LA02/2025/0590/F - Ballylumford Power Station Ferris Bay Road, Islandmagee, Larne, BT40 3RS

The Planning Officer introduced the Planning Report by way of visual aid presentation to the Committee, advising that the application proposed 300MW Battery Energy Storage System [BESS] facility comprising containerised battery units, transformer units, switch rooms, associated 275kv substation and control room building and all associated plant, equipment, machinery, drainage, underground cabling [including connection to existing 275kV NIE substation], internal access roads, CCTV, site fencing and ancillary development and Officers recommended approval.

He drew Members' attention to the site location, photography of the existing site as well as the proposed site plan and diagrams. Consultees were all satisfied and the Officer noted that one objection had been received regarding potential increase to noise.

Representations in support of the application were presented by Mr A McClean on behalf of the applicant. He noted that the Battery Energy storage would be located on lands owned by the applicant, which would store additional energy to be released to the grid and could prevent turning windfarms off when full capacity has been reached.

Mr McClean responded to a Member's query regarding the contamination reports for the site.

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

The Chair put the motion to the vote.

Voting on the proposal was as follows –

For	Against	Abstain
9	0	0

RESOLVED: to approve Planning Application No. LA02/2025/0590/F - Ballylumford Power Station Ferris Bay Road, Islandmagee, Larne, BT40 3RS, subject to the conditions outlined in the report.

Mr McClean etc left the meeting at 11.20am
 Alderman McDonald left the meeting remotely at 11.20am.

4.4 **Planning Application No. LA02/2025/0766/F - Lands approx. 150m SE of No. 37 Ballyhampton Road, Larne, BT40 2ST**

Alderman Reid previously declared an interest in this item and left the meeting remotely at 11.20am.

The Planning Officer introduced the Planning Report by way of visual aid presentation to the Committee, advising that the application proposed Battery Energy Storage System [BESS] facility up to 17MW (4hr-duration) (amendment to previously approved BESS LA02/2022/0739/F) including electricity substation compound, access and ancillary development/site works and Officers recommended approval.

The Officer drew Members' attention to the site location, context and views of the site. Consultees were all satisfied and the Officer noted that 19 objections had been received regarding visual impact, noise and disturbance, light spill, traffic congestion, construction disruption, environmental impacts and impact on archaeology.

The Chair advised that representatives in support of the application were present for questions. No questions were forthcoming.

It was proposed by Councillor McKeown, seconded by Alderman Gordon, to approve the application.

The Chair put the motion to the vote.

Voting on the proposal was as follows –

For	Against	Abstain
7	0	0

RESOLVED: to approve Planning Application No. LA02/2025/0766/F - Lands approx. 150m SE of No. 37 Ballyhampton Road, Larne, BT40 2ST, subject to the conditions outlined in the report.

Mr Dundee, Ms McGrath and Ms Coulter left the meeting at 11.26am.

4.5 **Planning Application No. LA02/2025/0183/F - Lands at Lovers Lane, adjacent & South of 49 Gortgole Road, Portglenone**

The Planning Officer introduced the Planning Report by way of visual aid presentation to the Committee, advising that the application proposed a sports and community hub comprising multipurpose pavilion, 4G playing field, play park, 2no. spectator terraces, car parking, landscaping, floodlighting, new access onto and upgrading of Lovers Lane, fencing and ancillary site works.

The Officer referred to the proposed site plan along with drawings and 3D images of the proposed pavilion, 4G pitch, car park, play park and terraces.

In summary, the Officer advised that the development meets exception within the Flood Plain and DfI Rivers, consultees were addressed, subject to conditions and the application fulfilled Planning Policy.

The Chair advised that representations in support of the application were present for questions by Ms H Wilson.

Ms Wilson responded to Members' queries regarding the Memorial Garden, which was included in the previous application and was now replaced by the play park and also concerns regarding pedestrian safety.

It was proposed by Alderman Logan seconded by Councillor McKeown, to approve the application.

The Chair put the motion to the vote.

Voting on the proposal was as follows –

For	Against	Abstain
6	1	0

RESOLVED: to approve Planning Application No. LA02/2025/0183/F - Lands at Lovers Lane, adjacent & South of 49 Gortgole Road, Portglenone, subject to the conditions outlined in the report.

Ms Wilson left the meeting at 11.36am.

5 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

5.1 Local Development Plan Progress – Elected Members Briefing

The Acting Head of Planning updated Members on the recently facilitated briefing sessions for Elected Members and noted that the sessions had been useful.

He added that these workshops would be added at key stages in the Local Development Plan process moving forward and Committee would be updated in due course.

RESOLVED: to note the Local Development Plan progress.

6 PLANNING APPEALS UPDATE

6.1 New Appeals

Two new planning appeal submissions were noted:

- **LA02/2026/0087/F** - Site Adjacent to 64 Mansefield Heights, Portglenone, BT44 8JR – Infill Townhouse
- **LA02/2023/0287/CA** - Land at 38 Lisnahilt Road, Broughshane, BT42 4OT - Alleged unauthorised change of use from 1st floor games room in domestic garage to apartment

RESOLVED: to note two new appeal submissions to the Planning Appeals Commission.

6.2 Appeal Decisions

One new appeal decision.

- (a) **LA02/2024/0203/F** - east of 79 Middle Road, south of 1 Town Lane and north and northeast of 1, 3 & 5 Gobbins Road, Ballystrudder - Appeal Dismissed

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

7 ITEM FOR CONSIDERATION/DECISION

7.1 Revised Statement of Community Involvement

The Acting Head of Planning gave a brief overview of the Statement of Community Involvement highlighting the progress made in preparation of the Local Development Plan and Operational changes.

It was proposed by Councillor Minford, seconded by Councillor McKeown and it was

RESOLVED: To approve the revised Statement of Community Involvement.

8 CORRESPONDENCE

8.1 DfC Letter – Historic Environment and Site Selection in Local Development Plan Process

The previously circulated letter was noted by Members.

RESOLVED: to note the correspondence received from the Department for Communities.

As this was the last Planning Committee before the Annual Meeting, the Chair and Vice Chair gave their thanks to each other for their professionalism and support, and also to the Planning Officers and the Committee during this term.

The meeting ended at 11.39 am.

.....
.....
.....

Mayor

Interim Chief Executive

Date

DRAFT

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

**Minutes of Meeting held on Monday 18 May 2026 at 6.30pm
in the Council Chamber, The Braid, 1-29 Bridge Street, Ballymena
and via remote access**

Chair: Alderman W McCaughey

Vice Chair: Councillor J McKeown

Present: Alderman R Glover

Councillor L Gray
Councillor T Hoey
Councillor C Jamieson
Councillor G McKeen
Councillor R Quigley
Councillor B Thompson

Present remotely: Alderman A Wilson
Councillor M Armstrong
Councillor R Beggs
Councillor A Clarke
Councillor M Collins
Councillor M Donnelly
Councillor J Gibson

Attendance: Mrs S Williams, Assistant Director - Business Support
Ms M Hegarty, Assistant Director - Finance
Mr S Bailie, Facilities Management and Maintenance
Manager
Mrs C McIntyre, Governance & Democratic Services
Officer

Press: No members of the Press were in attendance.

Public: No members of the public were in attendance.

ITEM MINUTE

The Chair thanked the Committee and staff for their support during his role as Chair over the past year.

1 Notice of Meeting

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

2 Apologies

Apologies were received from:

Councillor C Harwood
Councillor A Henry
Ms L Donnan, Interim Director of Corporate Support Services

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.

4 Items for Consideration / Decision**4.1 Information Governance - Quarterly Update**

Report previously circulated, which provided a quarterly update on Council's Information Governance Programme of work, including the performance overview for quarter four (January to March) of the 25/26 year as well as a year-end overview for the 25/26 year.

RESOLVED: To note the quarterly performance information outlined in the report.

4.2 Public Consultation Briefing

Report previously circulated, which updated on the public consultations in which Council was involved, namely:
(a) those where the Council is a stakeholder and submitting a response; and
(b) those where the Council is responsible for conducting the consultation.

RESOLVED: To note the content of the consultation summary report.

4.3 HR & OD Training: Six Monthly Update

The Assistant Director-Business Support provided an overview of the report, previously circulated, which provided an update on Organisational Development (OD) and Learning and Development (L&D) activity delivered between October 2025 and March 2026 (quarter 3 and quarter 4), including progress against the OD and Learning strategic priorities and details of next steps.

RESOLVED: To note the update on Organisational Development (OD) and Learning and Development (L&D) activity delivered between October 2025 and March 2026 (quarter 3 and quarter 4), including progress against the OD and Learning strategic priorities.

4.4 Committee Chamber ICT Infrastructure Upgrade

The Assistant Director-Business Support provided an overview of the report, previously circulated, which outlined the proposed approach for a hardware refresh, as a matter of urgency to address technical issues, of the IT infrastructure used to deliver Council and Committee meetings.

Following debate, the Assistant Director undertook to ensure that Members be consulted via e-mail for views which would be included in a specification to procure and award a contract within Council's procedures, taking into consideration related running costs, in-house capacity and considering the systems used by other Councils. The Chair asked that Members respond to the consultation.

A Member noted that previously an ad hoc Chamber Design Working Group had convened to re-design the Council chamber and could be reconstituted to expedite the upgrade. The Assistant Director noted that the work needed to be taken forward as a matter of urgency, committed to emailing Members to ensure all issues with the current set up were captured and if any major decisions were required during this process that Members would be advised at that stage.

RESOLVED: To note the need for a refresh of Council Chamber hardware and software to enable a move to a simplified and more resilient integrated solution and that the Assistant Director - Business Support, the ICT team and Democratic Services will, as a matter of urgency, finalise a specification (to include email consultation with Elected Members), procure and award within Council's procedures.

5 ITEM FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

5.1 ICT Strategy

The Assistant Director-Business Support provided an overview of the report, previously circulated, to recommend to Council to approve the draft ICT Strategy 2026 - 2029.

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

RECOMMENDED: that Council approve the ICT Strategy 2026-2029, including the four strategic pillars (ICT Infrastructure, Cyber Security, Data Driven Decision Making, and Capability & Innovation) and the proposed governance and annual delivery approach.

6 TABLED QUESTIONS

No questions had been submitted.

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

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

RESOLVED: That the Meeting goes into Closed Committee.

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

7 ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION/DECISION – CLOSED COMMITTEE

7.1 Procurement Update

The item 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) (commercially sensitive information).

The report would become unrestricted from publication sometime in the future.

Report, circulated, updating Members of the outcomes of Tenders, Direct Award Contracts (DACs) and contracts awarded through Framework Agreements for the period 4 April 2026 to Friday 8 May 2026.

RESOLVED: To note the appointments made in the report.

Alderman Wilson left the meeting remotely during Item 7.2.

7.2 Bad Debt Write Offs

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 the information) (commercially sensitive information).

The report would never become unrestricted.

Report, previously circulated, to update members on the Council's current position regarding outstanding debts and bad debt write-offs for the Financial Year ended 31 March 2026.

The Chair advised of an error within the report and additionally, sought approval from the Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee to write off one bad debt above £3,000.

The Assistant Director-Finance agreed to respond following a Member's request for the reasons for a variation in >30-day debts over a two financial year period since 31 March 2024.

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

RESOLVED: To

- (i) note the Council's current position on outstanding debts and bad debt write-offs; and
- (ii) approve the formal write-off of one bad debt balance of £3,307.09, as detailed in the report which falls within the delegated threshold.

7.3 Technology One Programme – Quarterly Update

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

The report would become unrestricted from publication sometime in the future.

The Assistant Director-Business Support provided an overview of the report, previously circulated, updating on the re-implementation of the Council's Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, Technology One, paying tribute to the teams involved and advised that work had commenced on implementation of HR Phase 2 and the Enterprise Asset Management (EAM) within the Technology One programme.

RESOLVED: To note the progress on the TechOne programme.

8 ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL – CLOSED COMMITTEE

8.1 Deed of exchange - Ballykeel Community Centre and playing fields

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

The report would become unrestricted on completion of the legal process.

The previously circulated report asked that Members recommend to Council to approve a deed of exchange with the Education Authority of land at Ballykeel Community Centre and playing fields.

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

RECOMMENDED: that Council

- (i) approve the deed of exchange; and
- (ii) authorise the Mayor and Chief Executive to execute and seal the relevant legal documents on behalf of Council.

8.2 Revised Credit Card Policy

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) (commercially sensitive information).

The report would never become unrestricted from publication.

The previously circulated report asked that Members recommend to Council to approve the revised Credit Card Policy.

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

RECOMMENDED: that Council approve the revised Credit Card Policy.

OPEN COMMITTEE

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

RESOLVED: That the Meeting returns to Open Committee.

9 FORWARD PLAN FOR CORPORATE RESOURCES, POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Members noted the Agenda for the next Committee Meeting to be held on 15 June 2026 and the Forward Plan for the Committee.

The Chair again thanked all for their participation and contribution to the meeting.

The Meeting ended at 7.04pm.

..... Mayor

..... Interim Chief Executive

..... Date

DRAFT

MID AND EAST ANTRIM BOROUGH COUNCIL

NEIGHBOURHOODS AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting held on Tuesday 19 May 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:** Councillor I Friary (Vice Chair)
Alderman B Ashe
Alderman R Glover
Councillor L Gray
Councillor R Lawrence
Alderman S McDonald
Councillor J Minford
Councillor A Rae
Councillor B Thompson
- Present remotely:** Councillor B Lyness
Councillor M Donnelly
Councillor M Collins
Councillor B Carson-Ferris
Councillor J Gibson
Alderman M Morrow
- Attendance:** Mr R Moore, Director of Place
Mr M McDowell, Director of People
Mr C Kennedy, Environmental Health Manager
Ms J Brown Kerr, Bann Maine West Community Group
Ms R Salt, Governance and Democratic Services Officer
- In Attendance remotely:** Mrs L Cowan, Strategic Tourism and Regeneration Manager
Ms L Houston, Parks and Open Spaces Manager
Mr K Bloomfield, NI HMO Manager
- Press:** No members of the press were present.
- Public:** No members of the public were in attendance.

ITEM MINUTE

1 NOTICE OF MEETING

The Director of People read the Notice of Meeting.

2 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from:

Councillor M Armstrong
Councillor Mrs A Smyth
Councillor T Hoey

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.

Councillor Gibson declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 8.2 - The Galgorm Collection - Proposal for Council Sponsorship of Golf Events. He was not present for discussion of this item.

4 PRESENTATION

4.1 Presentation from Bann Maine West Community Group

The Chair welcomed Ms Brown Kerr, representative from Bann Maine West to the meeting and invited her to present to the Committee, after which questions would be taken from Members.

Ms Brown Kerr guided Members through the presentation and discussed the following:

- Background of the Cluster concept and the areas covered
- Participation and role of Member Groups
- Benefits of the Community Group and cluster model
- Delivery of current projects, partnerships and community relations
- The role of 'The Hub'
- Funding success and future plans for working more closely with groups across the Borough.

The Members thanked Ms Brown Kerr for the presentation and voiced their support and encouragement for the Community Group.

Ms Brown Kerr left the meeting at 6.50pm.

5 ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION/DECISION

5.1 Gobbins Sub-Committee Adoption of Minutes from 6 November 2025

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

RESOLVED: To approve the adoption of the minutes from The Gobbins Sub-Committee meeting of 6 November 2025.

5.2 Acquisitions, Donations and Dispersals for Council Museums

Report, previously circulated, sought approval of the acquisition and donation of items to Carrickfergus Museum, Larne Museum and Mid-Antrim Museum, as well as the transfer of one item from Larne Museum.

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

RESOLVED: To

- (i) Approve Acquisitions 1 and 2;
- (ii) Approve the acceptance of Offers 11 - 16 in full;
- (iii) Approve the transfer of Dispersal 1.

5.3 Proposed Increase in HMO License Fees

Report, previously circulated, asking Elected Members to consider a request to increase the fee charged to licence a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO), and the fee charged to vary an HMO licence in accordance with the Houses in Multiple Occupation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016.

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

RESOLVED: To

- (i) Approve the increase of the HMO licence application fee from £45 to £62 per person per year, from 1 April 2026.
- (ii) Approve the increased costs of varying an HMO licence.

- (iii) Note that the Chair of SOLACE will write to the DfC Permanent Secretary regarding the risk being carried by Councils and the need to bring forward legislation on this matter within the current mandate; and
- (iv) That council write to the Minister for Department for Communities to the Minister to enquire who would be responsible for the shortfall in funding.

5.4 Service Level Agreements for Houses in Multiple Occupation Service

Report, previously circulated, sought approval for the signing of the updated Service Level Agreement (SLA) for the delivery of the Northern Ireland Houses in Multiple Occupation (NIHMO) service, and to note the associated Service Level Agreements relating to Legal Services and ICT support.

It was proposed by Alderman Ashe, seconded by Councillor Carson-Ferris and

RESOLVED: To

- (i) Approve the signing of the updated Service Level Agreement (SLA) relating to the delivery of the Northern Ireland Houses in Multiple Occupation (NIHMO) service.
- (ii) Note the Service Level Agreements relating to Legal Services and ICT support.

5.5 President Arthur Homestead Entrance Charges

Report, previously circulated, sought approval to discontinue entrance charges at President Arthur Homestead, Cullybackey.

A member had questions around the income reported being inconsistent with the reported footfall. In their view, charges should be implemented at both cottages in the Borough as Council should be generating income and investing as much as possible; this income could then be used to invest in marketing the locations and the narrative in the area about our American connections.

The Strategic Tourism and Regeneration Manager explained that the figure for footfall also included workshops which were charged differently. She noted that some tourists did not carry cash and internet availability at the site was sporadic which made card transactions unreliable. They were still given limited access to the site and were counted in footfall figures.

The Director of People observed that once fees were dropped at the Andrew Jackson Cottage in Carrickfergus, footfall increased. It was noted that income generation potential at the sites were negligible and there was a cost to lodging cash and paying for card transaction technology.

Councillor Gray noted that the report stated a push to link the two Cottages, that lots of research had been done by Officers.

Following discussion it was proposed by Councillor Gray, seconded by Councillor Donnelly and

RESOLVED: To approve the discontinuation of entrance charges at President Arthur Homestead, Cullybackey for a one-year pilot.

5.6 Alderman Ashe and Alderman McDonald voiced their objection.
Correspondence from Dfl - Prohibition of No U-Turn Movement on A8 Belfast Road, Between Ballyrickard RBT, and Drumahoe Road RBT, Larne

Members noted the correspondence, previously circulated, proposing the Prohibition of No U-Turn Movement on A8 Belfast Road, Between Ballyrickard RBT, and Drumahoe Road RBT, Larne.

Members noted how busy the road is and that this prohibition would be welcome.

A Member suggested that the gaps should be closed entirely and the roundabouts at each end would facilitate turning direction.

It was agreed to take this suggestion back to the Department for Infrastructure.

5.7 **Correspondence from Dfl - Accessible Parking Bay – No 36 Maine Park, Galgorm Ballymena**

Members noted the correspondence, previously circulated, with proposals to introduce an accessible parking bay outside No. 36 Maine Park, Galgorm, Ballymena.

6 **ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL**

There were no items for recommendation to Council.

7 **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 Thompson it was:

RESOLVED: That the Meeting goes into Closed Committee.

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

8 ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION/DECISION– Closed Committee

8.1 Visitor Information Provision

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

Councillor Gibson left Teams at 7.15pm.

The circulated report sought approval from Elected Members for the continued provision and development of visitor information services across the Borough.

It was proposed by Alderman Ashe, seconded by Councillor Carson-Ferris and

RESOLVED: To

- (i) Approve a 3-year Service Level Agreement to continue operating the Ballymena Visitor Information Centre at Midtown Makers until 31 March 2029.
- (ii) Extend the Service Level Agreement for one final year with the Book Nook at the previously approved amount with the agreement concluding at the end of this term
- (iii) Approve a 3-year Service Level Agreement for each Neighbourhood Visitor Information point until 31 March 2029.

8.2 Galgorm Collection Proposal for Council Sponsorship of Golf Events

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

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

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

A Member queried whether there should be an application submitted for sponsorship which would include data on predicted bed nights across the borough, in order to encourage competition and give more businesses the opportunity to apply.

The Director of People noted there was a difference between grants and sponsorship, there was a separate grant fund which had to be applied for. This request was recommended due to the wider economic benefits of bringing people to the Borough.

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

RESOLVED: To approve £45,000 in sponsorship to The Galgorm Collection for the Legends Tour to be held at Galgorm Castle Golf Club.

8.3 Carnfunnock Country Park Redevelopment Project

The item is restricted as information falls under the prescribed exemptions:

Part 1, Schedule 6 Local Government Act (NI) 2014 - commercially sensitive information

If restricted from publication, when will the report become unrestricted:
- After redevelopment of CCP completed.

The circulated report sought to update Elected Members on progress of Carnfunnock Country Park development project.

RESOLVED: To note the update contained within this report for Carnfunnock Country Park Redevelopment.

On the proposal of Alderman Glover, seconded by Councillor Rae, 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 16 June 2026.

The meeting ended at 7.30pm.

----- Mayor

----- Interim Chief Executive

----- Date

DRAFT

**MID AND EAST ANTRIM BOROUGH COUNCIL
AUDIT & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of Meeting held on Tuesday 26 May 2026 at 6.30pm
in the Council Chamber, The Braid, 1-29 Bridge Street, Ballymena
and via remote access**

- In the Chair:** Alderman B Ashe, MBE
- Present:** Alderman T Gordon
Councillor R Quigley
Mr E Kelly, Independent Member
- Present remotely:** Councillor R Beggs
Councillor C Harwood
Councillor A Henry (Vice Chair)
Alderman P Reid
- Attendance:** Mrs V Watts, Interim Chief Executive
Mr M McDowell, Director of People
Ms M Hegarty, Assistant Director – Finance
Ms C McDermott, Deloitte representative
Ms L McEvoy, Deloitte representative
Ms Connor, Governance & Democratic Services Officer
- Attendance remotely:** Mr Conor Sheilds, NIAO representative
- 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 Chief Executive read the Notice of Meeting.

2 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mr T Willinson (NIAO).

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

Mrs C McDermot from Deloitte gave an overview of the previously circulated progress report on Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, Audit and Scrutiny Committee which was tabled for noting and advised that all was progressing as planned.

RESOLVED: to note the Mid and East Antrim Audit Progress Report.

4.2 Audit Committee Self-Assessment

Report previously circulated to present to the Committee the draft self-assessment of its effectiveness, which had been completed by the Chair.

The Chair took Members through the checklist and asked Members to read the comments in the column to the right.

In response to a Member's request for clarification on point 1.1 'The Chair is a non-executive Board Member and possess an appropriate level of relevant experience', the Assistant Director of Finance advised that the response should be recorded as "No" as in a Council setting the Chair is an elected councillor rather than a non-executive board member.

It was further requested that additional clarification be included to note that the selection of Board Members/Elected Members is undertaken through the D'Hondt process.

The following items on the checklist were discussed and comments reviewed. All Members agreed with the following advised changes from the Assistant Director - Finance:

1.10 Conflicts of Interest Policy – Response should be 'No' as Council does not currently have a standalone Conflicts of Interest Policy.

1.2 Appointments – Response should be 'Yes.'

2.6 Skills Mapping – Response should be marked as 'not applicable.' The comment should be amended to note that although there is no formal skills-mapping process, political groups generally consider Members' skills and experience when nominating them to committees.

2.12 The Interim Chief Executive advised that this should be marked as 'Yes.'

2.15 Emerging developments – All Members agreed with the comments.

2.16 Public sector content - Response should be marked as 'Yes' and referred to the notes. All agreed.

2.17 – Cross Government networking. In response to a query the Assistant Director advised that all Members of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee were invited to attend the NILGA/NIAO Audit Committee training webinar on 26 November 2025. The independent member confirmed he had attended the training.

2.21 Response should be marked as 'Not Applicable' as Councils are not subject to the Greening Government Commitments or mandatory ESG disclosure standards at present.

2.22 – 2.23 The Interim Chief Executive advised that these should be marked as 'Not Applicable' as climate related matters are addressed through the Council's Climate and Sustainability Action Plan and the Climate Adaptation Plan both of which report to the Environment and Economy Committee and not Audit and Scrutiny. All Members agreed.

The following items on the checklist were reviewed and agreed by all Members - 2.24, 3.4, 3.13, 3.14, 3.22 – 3.24, 3.26-3.28, 3.30-3.33, 3.36, 3.37, 3.41, 3.42, 3.46, 3.59, 3.60, 4.14, 4.42, 6.1, 6.4, 6.5, 6.7-6.9

6.1 – to be marked as not applicable

6.7 – to be marked as not applicable

6.8 – to be marked as not applicable

6.9 – to be marked as not applicable

All Members agreed with comments and suggestions made regarding the Self-Assessment Checklist. The Assistant Director – Finance will update the checklist in line with the amendments discussed at the meeting.

RESOLVED: To agree the finalised Audit and Scrutiny Committee's Self-Assessment Checklist incorporating the amendments discussed.

Alderman Reid left the meeting on Teams at 6.36pm.

5 ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

There were no items for recommendation.

6 TABLED QUESTIONS

No questions had been received.

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

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

RESOLVED: that the Meeting goes into Closed Committee.

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

7 ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION/DECISION – CLOSED COMMITTEE

7.1 Annual Governance Statement

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

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

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

The Independent Member Mr Kelly noted that in his view disclosures were appropriate and that he had no concerns.

It was proposed by Mr Kelly, seconded by Councillor Quigley and

RESOLVED:

- (i) To approve the draft Annual Governance Statement that will form part of the 2025/26 Statement of Accounts, and to note that the Chair of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee will sign the Statement on behalf of the Committee and,
- (ii) That the Committee delegates authority to the Assistant Director – Finance, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, to make any further minor amendments to the Annual Governance Statement, both for inclusion in the unaudited Statement of Accounts and, following audit, in the final audited version.

7.2 Annual Chair of Audit & Scrutiny Committee Report

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

If restricted from publication, the report would become unrestricted:
Never.

The 2025-2026 Report on the Work of the Audit & Scrutiny Annual Chair's Report previously circulated to Members for noting was;

RESOLVED: to note the 2025-2026 report on the Work of the Audit & Scrutiny Annual Chair's Report.

7.3 Procurement DAC Update

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

If restricted from publication, the report would become unrestricted:
Never.

Report previously circulated asking the Committee to note the DACs awarded in Quarter 4 of 2025-26, as outlined in the report, and to note the full list of DACs issued during 2025–26 was;

RESOLVED: to note the DACs awarded in Quarter 4 of 2025-26, as outlined in the report, and to note the full list of DACs issued during 2025–26 as set out in the report.

7.4 Corporate Risk Register – Consideration of New Risk

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

If restricted from publication, the report would become unrestricted:
Never.

Report previously circulated for Members to note the report and the approach to managing this risk and consider its inclusion in the Corporate Risk Register was discussed.

The Independent Member Mr Kelly noted that the report was very constructive and that the new risk for consideration was a valid risk for Council.

It was proposed by Mr Kelly, seconded by Councillor Quigley and

RESOLVED: To note the report and the approach to managing this risk and consider its inclusion in the Corporate Risk Register.

Councillor Quigley left the meeting at 6.57pm.

7.5 Annual Report on Fraud (including NFI Update) Annual Report on Fraud (including NFI Update)

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

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

The report previously circulated requested that Members note the report and confirm their agreement for the Fraud & Bribery Policy and Fraud Response plan to be submitted to Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee for approval.

It was proposed by Alderman Gordon, seconded by Mr Kelly and

RESOLVED: to note the report and confirmed their agreement for the Fraud & Bribery Policy and Fraud Response plan to be submitted to Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee for approval.

8 ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL – CLOSED COMMITTEE

There were no items for recommendation to Council

9 TABLED QUESTIONS – CLOSED COMMITTEE

No questions were received.

On the proposal of Alderman Gordon, seconded by Mr Kelly, 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 Chair thanked the Committee for their contributions throughout his year as Chair and gave his appreciation to Officers for their work over the year.

The meeting ended at 7.00pm

..... Mayor

..... Interim Chief Executive

..... Date

DRAFT

MID AND EAST ANTRIM BOROUGH COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY COMMITTEE

**Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday 27 May 2026 at 6.30pm
in the Council Chamber, The Braid, 1-29 Bridge Street, Ballymena
and via remote access**

In the Chair: Councillor A Clarke (Vice Chair)

Present: Alderman B Ashe, MBE
Alderman R Logan
Alderman W McCaughey
Alderman Mrs M Morrow
Councillor R Beggs
Councillor B Hadden
Councillor G McKeen
Councillor L Philpott
Councillor M Warwick

Present Remotely: Alderman A Wilson
Councillor A Henry
Councillor P Johnston
Councillor A Skinner

In Attendance: Mr R Black, Director of Growth & Major Projects
Mr R Moore, Director of Place
Mrs U O'Loughlin, Assistant Director
Mr J McVeigh, Assistant Director
Ms C Hunter, Acting Climate Change & Sustainability
Manager
Mrs C McIntyre, Governance and Democratic Services
Officer

Also in attendance: Tom Wiggins, CEO, Ballymena Area Chamber of
Commerce
Roy Smyth, Chair, Business Improvement District (BID)
Emma McCrea, Manager, Business Improvement District
(BID)
Mr A Cassels, Strategic Investment Board NI

Press: No members of the Press were in attendance.

Public: No members of the Press were in attendance.

ITEM MINUTE

1 Notice of Meeting

The Director of Growth and Major Projects read the Notice of Meeting.

2 Apologies

Apologies were received from:

Councillor Gibson
Councillor Stewart

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 declaration was received:

Councillor Johnston, declared an interest in item:
5.10 Department for Communities Town Centre Revitalisation Programme Update in relation to his employment with Gordon Lyons MLA (Department for Communities).
The Member did not leave the meeting remotely during this item but did not participate in discussion.

4 PRESENTATION

4.1 Joint Presentation – Ballymena Area Chamber of Commerce & Industry and Ballymena Business Improvement District

The Chair introduced the representatives from Ballymena Chamber of Commerce and Ballymena Business Improvement District (BID) and welcomed their attendance, especially in light of current celebrations marking Ballymena beginning as a market trading town 400 years ago.

With the support of visual aids, representatives provided an overview of the work of both bodies working in collaboration to support local businesses by way of representing business interests, providing direct business feedback, supporting economic confidence and promoting Ballymena positively. The challenges and strengths of providing collaborative support to address specific business needs were detailed as well as a drive to increase vibrancy, supporting local, everyday upkeep priorities and parking and accessibility were highlighted. Suggested actions and long-term goals to help build confidence collaboratively with Council support were detailed.

In response to Members' questions, the representatives detailed how both bodies were funded and confirmed that business was strong in Ballymena at present. Both welcomed improved collaboration with local Councillors and local businesses going forward, not only in the Ballymena area but Borough-wide, within the Town Centre Task Force to address local issues eg. CCTV, cleaner streets, promoting good news media posts, realistic

rates increases and speedy planning processes etc. Representatives also agreed to consider increasing opening to enhance the night-time economy of the town and to continued promotion of businesses on local social media platforms.

A Member asked that Councillors are made aware by Officers of all invitations to local events.

The Chair thanked the representatives for their update, and they left the meeting at 7.06pm.

5 ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION / DECISION

5.1 Environmental Performance and Carbon Footprint Report 2025/26

The Acting Climate and Sustainability Manager provided an overview of the report, previously circulated, to update Elected Members on Council's environmental performance and carbon emission output for 2025/26 and to seek approval to upload the report and the environmental objectives performance summary 2025/26 for public access on the Council website.

In response to a Member's query, the Acting Climate Change and Sustainability Manager agreed to work with local community groups in terms of sign-posting to funding opportunities for potential installation of solar panels on community centre buildings and to investigate current lease agreement arrangements.

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

RESOLVED: To

- (i) Note the performance of the Council's environmental objectives and targets 2025/26 and 4% carbon footprint reduction compared to 2024-25 and 21.4% reduction from 2019/20 baseline year; and
- (ii) Approve the upload of Council's Carbon Footprint Report 2025/26 and Council's Environmental Objectives Performance Summary 2025/26 for public access on the Council website.

5.2 Operations Sub Committee Minutes held on 18 March 2026

The draft Notes, previously circulated, from the Operations Sub Committee held on 18 March 2026 for approval.

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

RESOLVED: To approve the Operations Sub Committee Minutes held on 18 March 2026.

5.3 **DAERA: From Waste to Worth: NI Waste Prevention Programme Consultation Response**

The report, previously circulated, updated Elected Members on the DAERA "From Waste to Worth: Northern Ireland Waste Prevention Programme" consultation and sought approval for the draft response.

Andrew Cassells, Waste Specialist, Strategic Investment Board responded to a Member's concern over the availability of potential funding schemes, especially for long-term projects, and agreed to note this within the response.

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

RESOLVED: To approve the circulated DAERA From Waste to Worth: NI Waste Prevention Programme draft Consultation response to include concerns in relation to how the Programme will be funded.

5.4 **Commercial Waste Collection Policy - Review**

The report provided an overview of the report, previously circulated, to seek Members' approval of the Commercial Waste Collection Policy which would provide separate Policies for Commercial and Domestic Waste Collections.

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

RESOLVED: To approve the circulated Commercial Waste Collection Policy.

Alderman Wilson left the meeting remotely at 7.17pm.

5.5 **Glenarm Regeneration Sub Committee Minutes held on 26 March 2026**

The draft Notes, previously circulated, from the Glenarm Regeneration Sub Committee held on 26 March 2026 for approval.

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

RESOLVED: To approve the actions from the Glenarm Regeneration Sub Committee of 26 March 2026.

5.6 Economic Development Activity Report

The report, previously circulated, provided an update on current Economic Development Activity.

RESOLVED: To note the updated Economic Development Activity Report.

5.7 PEACEPLUS Update

The Assistant Director provided a detailed overview of the report, previously circulated, to update Members on the implementation of the Mid and East Antrim PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan.

In response to a Member's query, the Assistant Director agreed to review Council's mailing list of community groups to ensure an up-to-date database for borough-wide promotion of all community related initiatives/opportunities. She also confirmed that a full staffing compliment was now in place for implementation of the PEACEPLUS Programme.

RESOLVED: To note the progress made to date in delivering the PEACEPLUS Action Plan and the proposed way forward.

5.8 Augmenting Business Growth through Stakeholders Supports

The Assistant Director provided an overview of the report, previously circulated, to update Members on the support that Officers had leveraged for local businesses through stakeholder working relationships to augment their growth and development during 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.

RESOLVED: To note the updates on the significant support leveraged for local businesses through stakeholder working relationships to augment their business growth and development during 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.

5.9 Ballymena Business Excellence Awards

The Assistant Director provided an overview of the report, previously circulated, which sought Elected Members' approval for the costs associated with sponsoring the Ballymena Chamber of Commerce and Industry's 2026 Ballymena Business Excellence Awards.

In response to a Member's query, the Assistant Director advised that a further report would be tabled to consider delivery of the Carrickfergus and Larne Business Awards.

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

RESOLVED: To

- (i) Approve the principal sponsorship request from Ballymena Chamber of Commerce and Industry for £6,000 towards the 2026 Ballymena Business Excellence Awards event.
- (ii) Approve that Members wishing to attend can express their interest through Members Services.
- (iii) Note that a further report will be tabled to consider delivery of the Carrickfergus and Larne Business Awards.

5.10 Department for Communities Town Centre Revitalisation Programme Update

The report provided an update on the Department for Communities (DfC) funded Town Centre Revitalisation Programme, in support of the Town Centre Investment plans and Town Centre Strategies for the 2025/26 and 2026/27 financial years.

In response to Members' queries, the Assistant Director advised that Officers continued to lobby the Department for Communities to consider extension of the current town centre boundaries in order to provide opportunities for businesses in areas outside of the immediate town centres. A Member asked that the Carrickfergus town centre markings be clearly defined as a number of boundaries currently existed.

The Director of Growth and Major Projects undertook to look into a query raised by Ald Ashe relating to a previous procurement exercise.

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

RESOLVED: To

- (i) Note the progress on projects delivered and ongoing projects in FY26/27.
- (ii) Note the ongoing development and research of new regeneration projects by Officers, including early engagement with the Department for Communities, to identify future funding opportunities.
- (iii) Approve Officers continue the further development of additional Enhanced Seasonal Lighting and Street Art projects for delivery in FY26/27 and progress the submission of grant applications to DfC towards their delivery.

Councillor Skinner left the meeting remotely at 7.29pm.

6 ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

There were no items for recommendation.

7 TABLED QUESTIONS

No tabled questions had been received.

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

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

RESOLVED: That the Meeting goes into Closed Committee.

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

8 ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION/DECISION – CLOSED COMMITTEE

8.1 Business Case – Supply of 3 X Compact Sweepers

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) (commercially sensitive information).

The report would never become unrestricted.

The report, previously circulated, sought Members' approval for a Business Case to purchase 3 new Compact Sweepers. At Full Council on 11 May 2026 Members approved to carry this item forward to the 27 May 2026 meeting of the Environment and Economy Committee, with delegated authority granted to the Committee to make the decision.

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

RESOLVED: To approve the Business Case for purchase of 3 new Compact Sweepers.

8.2 Rural Business Development Programme

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).

Correspondence received from DAERA on 13 April 2026 noted that: "This proposal is subject to approval of the Scheme Business Case and Ministerial approval to proceed so with that in mind this matter could be

considered by Council's committee(s) as a confidential item. Any publicity in advance of Ministerial approval would have negative consequences".

The report would become unrestricted sometime in the future.

The report, previously circulated, updated Members on the proposed launch of another round of the Rural Business Development Grant Scheme (RBDGS) which was proposed to commence during May/June 2026.

RESOLVED: to

- (i) Note the proposed opening of the Scheme during May/June 2026 and the opportunity available to local rural businesses.
- (ii) Note that Officers will progress the proposed opening of the Scheme for applications during a 4-week period commencing May/June 2026 in partnership with DAERA.

8.3 Capital Plan – FY 2025/26 Quarter 4 Update

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

The report would become unrestricted from publication sometime in the future.

The report, previously circulated, updated Members on the delivery of the Financial Year (FY) 2025/26 Capital Plan at the end of Quarter 4 (period ending 31 March 2026).

The Assistant Director answered a Member's query concerning the issues surrounding works to enable the reopening of Cranny Falls.

RESOLVED: To note the update on delivery of the Capital Plan at the end of Quarter 4 (period ending 31 March 2026).

9 ITEM FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL – CLOSED COMMITTEE

9.1 Economic Appraisal – Carrickfergus Harbour Project

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

The report would never become unrestricted for publication.

The report, previously circulated, which sought Member's approval for a recommendation to Council to approve Option 2 from the circulated Economic Appraisal to progress remedial works at Carrickfergus Harbour.

A Member sought assurances from the Director of Growth and Major Projects that the pier would be opened, albeit temporarily, in anticipation of the imminent Royal Landing event at the Harbour. The Director agreed to pick this up and come back to the Member directly.

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

RECOMMENDED: to

- (i) approve the proposed Option 2 from the circulated Economic Appraisal.
- (ii) authorise Officers to proceed with progressing remedial works to the piers.

OPEN COMMITTEE

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

RESOLVED: That the Meeting returns to Open Committee.

10 FORWARD PLAN FOR ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY COMMITTEE

Members noted the circulated Forward Plan and Agenda for the next Environment & Economy Committee scheduled for 22 June 2026.

The meeting ended at 7.46 pm.

----- Mayor

----- Interim Chief Executive

----- Date

Council/Committee:	Full Council
Date:	8 June 2026
Report Title:	Performance Improvement Plan 2026/27
Publication Status:	Open
Author:	Laura-Jane McCloy - Policy, Performance & Partnership Manager
Approver:	Siobhan Fisher – Assistant Director Citizen Focus

1. Purpose

- 1.1. To provide Council with the draft Performance Improvement Plan for 2026/27 for review and approval, prior to publication.

2. Background

- 2.1. Councils have a duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions under the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014. Improvement is defined as an activity that enhances the sustainable quality of life and environment for ratepayers and communities.
- 2.2. Councils are required to set Improvement Objectives and to publish them in a Performance Improvement Plan by 30 June each year. These objectives must be set in the interest of citizens. The plan is subject to a 12-week public consultation and requires Full Council approval prior to publication.

3. Key Issues for Consideration

- 3.1. The draft Performance Improvement Plan for 2026/27 is attached at Appendix 1. The Improvement Objectives are:
 1. **People:** Increase access to activities that support health, wellbeing and inclusion.
 2. **Place:** Create safe, accessible and attractive places that enhance wellbeing and support town centres, local businesses and employment.
 3. **Planet:** Create a cleaner, greener borough by improving recycling services and enhancing public services.

- 3.2. In line with legislation and statutory guidance these objectives are:
- Legitimate: Contribute to one or more of the recognised Aspects of Improvement set out in the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, including strategic effectiveness, service quality, service availability, fairness, sustainability, efficiency and innovation.
 - Clear: Set out the improvements people can expect to see.
 - Robust: Supported by clearly defined measures to assess success.
 - Deliverable: Aligned with service plans and budgets, recognising that delivery will depend on available resources and external factors.
 - Demonstrable: Supported by clear and objective evidence.
- 3.3. The objectives also incorporate the statutory indicators and standards set out in the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (NI) 2015.
- 3.4. A wide range of information sources were considered in the development of the Improvement Objectives, including a 12-week public consultation, which was carried out from January to April 2026. The key findings are summarised within the plan.

4. General Considerations / Implications

- 4.1. Equality – The Council must have due regard to promoting equality of opportunity and good relations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The screening, included at Appendix 2, did not identify any adverse impacts, therefore, a full equality impact assessment was not required.
- 4.2. Rural Needs – Under the Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, the Council must consider rural needs. The screening, included at Appendix 3, did not identify any adverse impacts, and the Plan is expected to have a positive borough-wide impact.
- 4.3. Sustainability – The Council has a statutory duty to promote sustainable development. The screening, included at Appendix 4, demonstrates that the Plan supports short and long-term positive outcomes for greenhouse gas emissions, climate adaptation and resilience, biodiversity, land use, waste management, health and wellbeing, education and engagement, local economy and careers, and equity.

- 4.4. Data Protection – The screening, included at Appendix 5, concluded that a full Data Protection Impact Assessment was not required.
- 4.5. Alignment with Corporate Priorities and Link to Corporate Plan – Aligns with the Council's statutory duties as a public authority and supports the priorities outlined within both Community Plan and the Corporate Plan.

5. Proposed Way Forward

- 5.1. On notice of approval the report will be published on the Council's website before the statutory deadline.

6. Recommendation or Decision

- 6.1. Council are asked to review and approve the draft Performance Improvement Plan for 2026/27, prior to publication before the statutory deadline of 30 June 2026.

7. Appendices / Link

- Appendix 1: Draft Performance Improvement Plan 2026/27
- Appendix 2: Equality Screening PIP 2026/27
- Appendix 3: Rural Needs Impact Assessment PIP 2026/27
- Appendix 4: Sustainability Screening PIP 2026/27
- Appendix 5: Data Protection Impact Assessment PIP 2026/27

Our Plan to Work Better

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council's Performance Improvement Plan 2026/27

Contents

- About the Plan
- Developing our Plan
- Improvement Objectives
- Monitoring Progress
- Get Involved

Other formats: If you would like this plan in a different way, like large print or another language, please email: communications@midandeastantrim.gov.uk

About the Plan

Welcome

Welcome to our Performance Improvement Plan for 2026/27. This plan outlines how we will enhance our services to continue improving the area, and the quality of life for everyone who lives, works and visits Mid and East Antrim.

I would like to thank everyone who contributed to its development. I also encourage citizens to stay engaged and play an active role in shaping their local communities. Together, we can build a positive and sustainable future for Mid and East Antrim.

Valerie Watts
Interim Chief Executive

Duty to Improve

Councils are required to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement. This is set out within the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014. Improvement means delivering meaningful benefits for local people and the local environment. To meet this duty, councils must set Improvement Objectives each year and ensure appropriate arrangements are in place to achieve them.

Arrangements to Secure Continuous Improvement

Our Performance Management Framework sets out how we drive continuous improvement by aligning the Council’s strategic priorities with employee objectives. These arrangements are reviewed each year by the Northern Ireland Audit Office.

Table: Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Performance Management Framework

<p>Mid and East Antrim Community Plan- “Putting People First” (2017-2032)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This 15-year plan sets a long-term vision for the area: a strong, vibrant, safe and inclusive community where people work together to improve the quality of life for all. The plan was developed with partners from public services, businesses and voluntary organisations and is led by the Council. To view the plan, visit: Mid and East Antrim Community Plan
<p>Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Corporate Plan (2024-2028)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This 4-year plan follows the Community Plan vision and sets our priorities through four main themes: People, Place, Planet and Performance. To view the plan, visit: Mid and East Antrim Corporate Plan
<p>Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Performance Improvement Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This plan sets out our Improvement Objectives for the coming year and supports the goals in the Community Plan and Corporate Plan.
<p>Business Plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business plans set out what each service area will work on over the year, including their main priorities and targets. They support the Corporate Plan and the Performance Improvement Plan.
<p>Personal Development Review</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These annual reviews support discussions on performance and development, align individual objectives with the Corporate and Business Plans, and identify training or development needs.

Developing our Plan

We developed our Performance Improvement Plan by balancing the needs of local communities with what the Council can realistically deliver.

Three draft improvement objectives were identified, informed by a broad evidence base. This included findings from the 2022 Citizen Survey, regional and national data, the Northern Ireland Programme for Government, the Community Plan, and our Corporate Plan. We also took account of previous consultation feedback, legislative requirements, performance and audit reviews, benchmarking with other councils, and input from Council management and officers.

Draft Improvement Objectives

Our draft objectives for 2026/27 were:

1. People: We will work with others to improve the lives of citizens.
2. Place: We will maintain and improve our local areas.
3. Planet: We will reduce our environmental impact and improve sustainability.

Public Consultation

We carried out a 12-week public consultation from January to April 2026.

Participants were invited to indicate their support for the draft objectives, consider examples of how these could be delivered, and share their own ideas for improvement.

The consultation was delivered both online and in person across Ballymena, Carrickfergus and Larne town centres, as well as the Council's three leisure centres.

It was widely promoted through emails to key stakeholders, including Council staff, Elected Members, Section 75 consultees, local businesses and community groups, as well as through social media and local newspapers.

Hard copies were available at main Council reception areas, and an Easy Read version was provided to support accessibility.

Key Consultation Findings:

- A total of 160 people took part, with strong support (93%) for each objective.
- Most respondents (86%) were borough citizens: 38% lived or worked in the Ballymena area, 34% in the Carrickfergus area, and 20% in the Larne area.
- The age profile included 26% aged 15–39, 49% aged 40–64, and 25% aged 65 and over.

Key priorities identified through consultation grouped under the Corporate Plan themes:

People

- Supporting children and young people
- Improving health and wellbeing
- Promoting accessibility and inclusion
- Strengthening collaboration and communication

Place

- Maintaining and enhancing parks and open spaces
- Supporting vibrant town centres
- Encouraging local businesses and employment

Planet

- Improving recycling
- Keeping the borough clean
- Protecting and enhancing green spaces

Performance

- Delivering value-for-money services
- Ensuring meaningful engagement with citizens and stakeholders

Outcome:

In summary, the consultation, supported by wider research, confirmed strong support for the three draft objectives. These were refined through community feedback and input from senior management and officers to form the final Improvement Objectives for 2026/27.

While the objectives may not address every need or issue identified, the findings of the consultation and research will be shared across the Council to inform service-level improvements.

Improvement Objectives

Our objectives for 2026/27 are:

1. **People:** Increase access to activities that support health, wellbeing and inclusion.
2. **Place:** Create safe, accessible and attractive places that enhance wellbeing and support town centres, local businesses and employment.
3. **Planet:** Create a cleaner, greener borough by improving recycling services and enhancing public spaces.

In line with legislation and statutory guidance, our Improvement Objectives are:

- **Legitimate:** Contribute to one or more of the recognised Aspects of Improvement set out in the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, including strategic effectiveness, service quality, service availability, fairness, sustainability, efficiency and innovation.
- **Clear:** Set out the improvements people can expect to see.
- **Robust:** Supported by clearly defined measures to assess success.
- **Deliverable:** Aligned with service plans and budgets, recognising that delivery will depend on available resources and external factors.
- **Demonstrable:** Supported by clear and objective evidence.

The objectives also incorporate the **statutory indicators and standards** set out in the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (NI) 2015.

Screening

All policies, including strategies and plans, are screened to assess potential impacts on Equality, Rural Needs, Data Protection and Sustainability. This process helps identify impacts at an early stage and ensures compliance with statutory obligations.

- **Equality:** The Council must have due regard to promoting equality of opportunity and good relations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The screening process did not identify any adverse impacts, therefore a full equality impact assessment was not required.

- **Rural Needs:** Under the Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, the Council must consider rural needs. The screening process did not identify any adverse impacts, and the Plan is expected to have a positive borough-wide impact.
- **Data Protection:** Screening concluded that a full Data Protection Impact Assessment was not required.
- **Sustainability:** The Council has a statutory duty to promote sustainable development. Screening demonstrated that the Plan supports short and long-term positive outcomes for greenhouse gas emissions, climate adaptation and resilience, biodiversity, land use, waste management, health and wellbeing, education and engagement, local economy and careers, and equity.

Improvement Objective 1

People: Increase access to activities that support health, wellbeing and inclusion.

What we know - Community, Health and Wellbeing:

- The population profile of Mid and East Antrim shows the largest age group is 40–64 (34%), followed by 15–39 (29%), 65+ (20%), and 0–14 (17%) (Census 2021).
- A significant proportion of citizens live with long-term health conditions or disabilities, affecting 25% of individuals and 45% of households (Census 2021).
- There is strong demand for affordable, safe and inclusive activities, particularly for children and young people. These enhance wellbeing and can help reduce anti-social behaviour.
- Citizens would like increased funding for sports organisations and more targeted health and wellbeing programmes, however, barriers to participation remain, including access and the availability of suitable facilities.
- Survey findings show relatively low satisfaction with physical and emotional health, with one in four citizens not taking part in weekly exercise (Citizens Survey 2022).

To address these needs, we will:

- Enhance health and wellbeing outcomes, particularly for children and young people, through targeted programmes and support for sports organisations.
- Reduce barriers to participation and improve accessibility across Council services and facilities.

How we will measure success:

- Progress the Amateur & Grassroots Sporting Organisations Improvement Fund by 31 March 2027.
- Deliver the Inclusive Summer Opportunities Grants Scheme by 30 September 2026.
- Establish a Mid and East Antrim Disability Lived Experience Group by 31 December 2026.
- Install 3 new Changing Places facilities across the borough by 31 March 2027.

Who is responsible:

- Director of People
- Director of Growth and Major Projects
- Director of Corporate and Support Services

Links to other strategies and plans:

- **Programme for Government:** Better support for children and young people with special educational needs
- **Community Plan:** Good Health and Wellbeing; Community Safety and Cohesion
- **Corporate Plan:** People
- **Aspect of Improvement:** Strategic Effectiveness: Service Availability; Fairness

Improvement Objective 2

Place: Create safe, accessible and attractive places that enhance wellbeing and support town centres, local businesses and employment.

What we know – Outdoor Spaces, Town Centres and Employment:

- Parks and open spaces are highly valued, particularly for children and young people, however, concerns remain around maintenance, accessibility and anti-social behaviour.
- Town centres are widely perceived to be in decline, with issues including vacant and derelict buildings, accessibility challenges, cleanliness and reduced vibrancy. Key priorities include improving shopfronts, reusing vacant properties, and enhancing facilities and access.
- There is strong support for local businesses and job creation, including measures such as reduced business rates, start-up support and improved access to funding.
- Skills development and apprenticeships are viewed as important for creating local employment opportunities.
- While employment and economic activity levels remain strong compared to the Northern Ireland average, disposable income across Northern Ireland is the lowest in the UK, and average earnings in Mid and East Antrim are below the Northern Ireland average.

To address these needs, we will:

- Enhance and expand accessible, inclusive and high-quality play parks and outdoor recreational spaces.
- Help revitalise town centres by improving the built environment and increasing vibrancy.
- Support local business start-ups through targeted assistance.
- Strengthen skills development and employment opportunities.
- Promote sustainable growth through an effective and efficient Planning department.

How we will measure success:

- Refurbish one play park within the borough by 30 June 2027.
- Open a new play park and bike park at Carnfunnock Country Park by 30 June 2027.
- Deliver a pop-up park in Larne town centre by 31 July 2026.
- Progress the design development for 2 civic spaces within Ballymena town centre by 31 March 2027.
- Deliver the Shopfront Improvement Scheme by 31 March 2027.
- Achieve the statutory target for jobs promoted through business start-up interventions by 31 March 2027 (target to be confirmed by the Department for Economy).
- Deliver skills and employment programmes, with 200 participants, 100 participants into employment, and 150 qualifications gained by 31 March 2027 (subject to funding).
- Achieve an average (median) processing time of 30 weeks for major planning applications by 31 March 2027.
- Achieve an average (median) processing time of 15 weeks for local planning applications by 31 March 2027.
- Conclude at least 70% of planning enforcement cases within 39 weeks by 31 March 2027.

Who is responsible:

- Director of Place
- Director of Growth and Major Projects

Links to other strategies and plans:

- Programme for Government: Growing a globally competitive and sustainable economy
- Community Plan: Good Health and Wellbeing; Progress in Education and Employment; Tourism and the Economy
- Corporate Plan: People; Place
- Aspect of Improvement: Strategic Effectiveness; Service Quality; Service Availability; Efficiency

Improvement Objective 3

Planet: Create a cleaner, greener borough by improving recycling services and enhancing public spaces.

What we know - Environment, Cleanliness and Sustainability:

- Creating a clean and safe borough is a shared responsibility between Council, citizens, businesses and visitors.
- There is strong support for protecting and enhancing green spaces, including increased planting, restoration and the use of native species, all with long-term maintenance.
- Street cleanliness is 66% (in line with the Northern Ireland average), with dog-fouling, litter and fly-tipping identified as key concerns.
- Citizens want stronger enforcement, more bins, increased cleaning, improved education and greater focus on rural areas.
- Legislative changes under the EU Circular Economy Package amended the Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 and introduced, amongst a range of measures, a municipal recycling rate target of 65% and less than 10% landfill by 2035.
- Recycling systems vary across the borough and overall performance has declined with household recycling rates at 50.8% (2024/25).
- Cost, convenience and time are key barriers to environmental action (Citizens Survey 2022).
- Citizens have called for simpler recycling systems, including single-bin collections.

To address these needs, we will:

- Enhance and protect green spaces through planting, biodiversity initiatives and sustainable land management.
- Promote responsible environmental behaviour through targeted awareness and participation opportunities.
- Simplify recycling for citizens.
- Achieve statutory recycling and environmental targets.

How we will measure success:

- Launch the MEA Tree and Woodland Strategy by 31 March 2027.
- Deliver a civic pride campaign by 31 March 2027.
- Roll out a new dry recycling collection service by 31 July 2027.
- At least 50% of household waste collected is sent for recycling by 31 March 2027.
- Limit biodegradable collected municipal waste to landfill to no more than 16,387 tonnes by 31 March 2027.
- Less than 79,500 tonnes collected municipal waste arisings by 31 March 2027.

Who is responsible:

- Director of Place
- Director of Corporate and Support Services

Links to other strategies and plans:

- Programme for Government: Protecting Lough Neagh and the environment
- Community Plan: Good Health and Wellbeing; Community Safety and Cohesion
- Corporate Plan: Place; Planet
- Aspect of Improvement: Strategic Effectiveness; Service Quality; Service Availability; Efficiency; Sustainability; Innovation

Monitoring Progress

Monitoring arrangements are in place to ensure clear oversight, accountability and transparency in the delivery of plans and performance across the Council. These arrangements are summarised below.

- **Community Plan** progress is reported to:
 - Strategic Alliance (every six months)
 - Community Panel (quarterly)
 - Neighbourhoods and Communities Committee (as appropriate)

- **Corporate Plan** progress is reported to:
 - Senior Management Team (every six months)
 - Full Council (every six months)

- **Performance Improvement Plan** progress is reported to:
 - Senior Management Team (quarterly)
 - Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee (quarterly)

- **Business Plan** progress is reported to:
 - Assigned Director (quarterly)

- **Performance Self-Assessment Report** is reported to:
 - Full Council (annually)

Progress updates on our Corporate Plan and Performance Improvement Plan are also published on our website.

Get Involved

We all have a part to play in making Mid and East Antrim a great place to live, work and visit.

Here are some of the ways you can help:

- Shop locally.
- Be a responsible pet owner.
- Bin your waste.
- Reduce, reuse and recycle.
- Donate unwanted items to charity.
- Report problems, such as, fly-tipping, dog foul and anti-social behaviour.
- Get involved in community and voluntary work.
- Support our older people.
- Support people who are vulnerable.
- As business owners, offer apprenticeships or work placement opportunities.
- Be safe on our roads.
- Use public transport when you can.

You can also tell us about something that you think needs to be improved at any time throughout the year through any of the following methods:

- Email: performance@midandeastantrim.gov.uk
- Telephone: 0300 1245 000
- Post: Policy and Performance Team, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, 1-29 Bridge Street, Ballymena, BT43 5EJ

If you live, work or study in Mid and East Antrim you can submit questions directly to our Elected Members and Officers by completing a short form. To find out more, visit: www.midandeastantrim.gov.uk/publicquestions

Section 75 Equality Screening

Part 1	Policy Scoping
Part 2	Screening Questions
Part 3	Screening Decision
Part 4	Monitoring
Part 5	Approval and Authorisation

Part 1. Policy scoping

The first stage of the screening process involves scoping the policy under consideration. The purpose of policy scoping is to help prepare the background and context and set out the aims and objectives for the policy, being screened. At this stage, scoping the policy will help identify potential constraints as well as opportunities and will help the policy maker work through the screening process on a step by step basis.

Public authorities should remember that the Section 75 statutory duties apply to internal policies (relating to people who work for the authority), as well as external policies (relating to those who are, or could be, served by the authority).

Part 1: Information about the policy

Information about the policy	
Name of policy	Performance Improvement Plan 2026/27
Is this an existing, revised or new policy?	Revised
What is it trying to achieve? (<i>intended aims/outcomes</i>)	This screening relates to the Performance Improvement Plan 2026/27. The draft Plan, which was issued for public consultation between January and April 2026, was previously screened. This current screening applies to the final Plan, which has been developed taking into account the finalised Council rate, the agreed Capital Plan, and feedback received during the consultation process. Accordingly, as the earlier screening related to a

draft proposal, this screening reflects the updated and finalised Plan.

Our objectives for 2026/27 are as follows:

Objective 1 - People: Increase access to activities that support health, wellbeing and inclusion.

Actions:

- Enhance health and wellbeing outcomes, particularly for children and young people, through targeted programmes and support for sports organisations.
- Reduce barriers to participation and improve accessibility across Council services and facilities.

Measures:

- Progress the Amateur & Grassroots Sporting Organisations Improvement Fund by 31 March 2027.
- Deliver the Inclusive Summer Opportunities Grants Scheme by 30 September 2026.
- Establish a Mid and East Antrim Disability Lived Experience Group by 31 December 2026.
- Install 3 new Changing Places facilities across the borough by 31 March 2027.

Objective 2 - Place: Create safe, accessible and attractive places that enhance wellbeing and support town centres, local businesses and employment.

Actions:

- Enhance and expand accessible, inclusive and high-quality play parks and outdoor recreational spaces.
- Help revitalise town centres by improving the built environment and increasing vibrancy.
- Support local business start-ups through targeted assistance.
- Strengthen skills development and employment opportunities.
- Promote sustainable growth through an effective and efficient Planning department.

Measures:

- Refurbish one play park within the borough by 30 June 2027.
- Open a new play park and bike park at Carnfunnock Country Park by 30 June 2027.
- Deliver a pop-up park in Larne town centre by 31 July 2026.
- Progress the design development for 2 civic spaces within Ballymena town centre by 31 March 2027.
- Deliver the Shopfront Improvement Scheme by 31 March 2027.
- Achieve the statutory target for jobs promoted through business start-up interventions (target to be confirmed) by 31 March 2027.
- Deliver skills and employment programmes, with 200 participants, 100 into employment, and 150 qualifications gained by 31 March 2027 (subject to funding).
- Achieve an average (median) processing time of 30 weeks for major planning applications by 31 March 2027.
- Achieve an average (median) processing time of 15 weeks for local planning applications by 31 March 2027.
- Conclude at least 70% of planning enforcement cases within 39 weeks by 31 March 2027.

Objective 3 - Planet: Create a cleaner, greener borough by improving recycling services and enhancing public spaces.

Actions:

- Enhance and protect green spaces through planting, biodiversity initiatives and sustainable land management.
- Promote responsible environmental behaviour through targeted awareness and participation opportunities.
- Simplify recycling for citizens.
- Achieve statutory recycling and environmental targets.

Measures:

- Launch the MEA Tree and Woodland Strategy by 31 March 2027.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a civic pride campaign by 31 March 2027. • Roll out a new dry recycling collection service by 31 July 2027. • At least 50% of household waste collected is sent for recycling by 31 March 2027. • Limit biodegradable collected municipal waste to landfill to no more than 16,387 tonnes by 31 March 2027. • Less than 79,500 tonnes collected municipal waste arisings by 31 March 2027.
<p>Are there any section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit for the intended policy? If so, explain how.</p>	<p><u>2022 MEABC Citizen Survey</u> A Citizen Survey was carried out in 2022 which identified the following top five priorities for making the borough a better place to live in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supporting and developing activities for children and young people. 2. Support to reduce poverty. 3. Developing skills and job prospects. 4. Delivering clean and attractive streets and towns. 5. Supporting our parks, green spaces, and the natural and built environment. <p><u>2026 Public Consultation Draft Performance Improvement Plan</u> A 12-week public consultation took place from January to April 2026. Participants were invited to indicate their support for three draft objectives, consider examples of how these could be delivered, and share their own ideas for improvement.</p> <p>Surveys were conducted online and face-to-face across the borough’s town centres and leisure centres. There were 160 respondents.</p> <p>The following priorities were identified:</p> <p>People:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting children and young people • Improving health and wellbeing • Promoting accessibility and inclusion <p>Place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining and enhancing parks and open spaces

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting vibrant town centres • Encouraging local businesses and employment <p>Planet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving recycling • Keeping the borough clean • Protecting and enhancing green spaces <p>Performance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering value-for-money services • Ensuring meaningful engagement with citizens and stakeholders <p>The objectives and resultant actions have potential to benefit all section 75 categories, in particular, Age, Disability and Dependants. This is a strategic plan therefore, each project emanating from the plan will be subject to individual screening, which will determine if any additional opportunities to advance equality can be incorporated.</p>
<p>Policy Lead Officer <i>(who initiated or wrote the policy)</i></p>	<p>The Interim Chief Executive holds overall responsibility; however, ownership is Council-wide, with objectives and actions implemented across all directorates. The Policy and Performance team monitor and report on the plan.</p>
<p>Who owns/implements the policy?</p>	<p>Policy, Performance & Partnership Manager</p>
<p>Implementation factors</p>	
<p>Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the policy/decision?</p> <p>If yes, are they <i>(please tick as appropriate)</i></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> financial</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> legislative</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> other, please specify _____</p>	

Main stakeholders affected

Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the policy will impact upon? *(please tick as appropriate)*

- Staff
- Service users
- Other public sector organisations
- Voluntary/community/trade unions
- Other, please specify: businesses

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

- what are they?
- who owns them?
- Mid and East Antrim Community Plan (2017-2032) “Putting People First”:
www.midandeastantrim.gov.uk/resident/community-planning
- Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Corporate Plan (2024-2028):
www.midandeastantrim.gov.uk/corporateplan
- Mid and East Antrim Borough Council annual Business Plans.
- The Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.
- Programme for Government Northern Ireland “Doing What Matters Most” (2024-2027).
- Department for Communities policies, legislation and guidance.
- Department for the Economy policies and legislation.
- Northern Ireland Audit Office policies, legislation and guidance.
- Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Equality Scheme.

Available evidence

Evidence to help inform the screening process may take many forms. Public authorities should ensure that their screening decision is informed by relevant data. The Commission has produced this guide to signpost to S75 data.

What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy? Specify details for each of the Section 75 categories.

Section 75 category	Details of evidence/information																		
Religious belief	<p><u>2021 Census</u></p> <p>Protestant and other Christian religions comprise the majority of citizens within MEA Borough at 58% compared to 17% Catholic respectively.</p> <p>Citizens with a non-Christian belief comprise 1% and citizens without a religion comprise 24%.</p>																		
Political opinion	<p><u>Local Government Elections - May 2023</u></p> <p>The political opinion within MEA Borough is broken down as follows:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="440 1055 1027 1503"> <thead> <tr> <th>Party</th> <th>MEA Borough (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>DUP</td> <td>30.9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>UUP</td> <td>17.3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Alliance</td> <td>18.9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TUV</td> <td>15.9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sinn Fein</td> <td>9.3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SDLP</td> <td>2.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Green</td> <td>0.9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Others</td> <td>4.7</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Party	MEA Borough (%)	DUP	30.9	UUP	17.3	Alliance	18.9	TUV	15.9	Sinn Fein	9.3	SDLP	2.0	Green	0.9	Others	4.7
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Racial group	<p><u>2021 Census</u></p> <p>The racial breakdown within MEA Borough is as follows:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="440 1653 1027 1821"> <thead> <tr> <th>NI Census 2021</th> <th>MEA Borough (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>White</td> <td>97.78</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other/None recorded</td> <td>2.22</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	NI Census 2021	MEA Borough (%)	White	97.78	Other/None recorded	2.22												
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Age	<p><u>2021 Census</u></p> <p>The largest age range in MEA Borough is 40-64 (34%) followed by 15-39 (29%), 65+ (20%) and 0-14 (17%).</p>																		

	<p>2026 Public Consultation Draft Performance Improvement Plan The age profile of respondents was 15-39 (26%), 40-64 (49%), and 65+ (25%).</p>														
Marital status	<p>2021 Census</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>NI Census 2021</th> <th>MEA Borough (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Single</td> <td>33.43</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Married</td> <td>49.15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Civil Partnership</td> <td>0.16</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Separated</td> <td>3.53</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Divorced</td> <td>6.83</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Widowed</td> <td>6.91</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The number of residents who are single, in a civil partnership or divorced has risen since the 2011 Census.</p>	NI Census 2021	MEA Borough (%)	Single	33.43	Married	49.15	Civil Partnership	0.16	Separated	3.53	Divorced	6.83	Widowed	6.91
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Men and women generally	<p>2021 Census</p> <p>The population of the Borough is 49% male and 51% female.</p>														
Disability	<p>2021 Census</p> <p>There are 138,994 residents within Mid and East Antrim and 25% live with a limiting long term health problem or disability. However, the number of households affected by a resident or residents with a limiting long term health problem or disability totals 45% of the 58,283 households within the Borough.</p> <p>Therefore, nearly half the number of households in Mid and East Antrim are affected by one of the 50,121 limiting long term health problems or disability recorded for the area.</p>														

Dependants	<u>2021 Census</u>							
	27.07% of MEABC households have 1 or more dependant children. This has fallen from 32.14% recorded in the 2011 census.							
	The age breakdown of the dependant children is as follows:							
	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr style="background-color: #e0e0e0;"> <th style="text-align: left; padding: 2px;">Age</th> <th style="text-align: left; padding: 2px;">MEA Borough (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">0-4</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">9.65</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">5-11</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">9.39</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">12-18</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">8.03</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Age	MEA Borough (%)	0-4	9.65	5-11	9.39	12-18
Age	MEA Borough (%)							
0-4	9.65							
5-11	9.39							
12-18	8.03							
The majority of children within households with dependant children are aged between 0 and 4.								

If you do not have enough data to tell you about potential or actual impacts you may need to conduct a pre-consultation to generate more data and to distinguish what groups are potentially affected by your policy.

Needs, experiences and priorities

Taking into account the information referred to above, what are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the following categories, in relation to the particular policy/decision?

Specify details of the needs, experiences and priorities for each of the Section 75 categories below:

Section 75 category	Details needs, experiences and priorities
Religious belief	The qualitative data does not currently indicate specific needs for people from different religious backgrounds.
Political opinion	The qualitative data does not currently indicate specific needs for people with different political opinions.
Racial group	According to the 2021 Census, 2.2% of the Borough’s population belong to an ethnic minority. To ensure equality of access, the plan will be available in different languages and formats on request.
Age	<p>According to the 2021 Census:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The largest age group in the borough is 40-64 (34%), who may prioritise improvements to local facilities, parks, and services that support active lifestyles and opportunities for social engagement. • 15-39 year olds (29%) are more likely to have an interest in health and wellbeing, economic development, employment opportunities, and sustainability initiatives. • Those aged 65+ (20%) are likely to place greater value on accessible environments, age-friendly services, and information that is available in a range of formats. • Children aged 0-14 (17%) represent a significant proportion of the population, reinforcing the need for accessible recreational provision, including high-quality play parks and youth facilities. <p>Feedback from the public consultation placed a strong emphasis on the need to increase the provision of affordable, safe, and inclusive activities, particularly for children and young people. Respondents highlighted the important role these opportunities play in improving wellbeing and helping to reduce anti-social behaviour. Sports clubs, in particular, were widely recognised for their positive contribution to both physical and mental health.</p> <p>Parks and open spaces are highly valued assets, especially for younger age groups. However, concerns were raised regarding their maintenance, accessibility, and the presence of anti-social</p>

Section 75 category	Details needs, experiences and priorities
	<p>behaviour, which can limit their use and undermine perceptions of safety.</p> <p>Overall, the findings point to the need for sustained investment and coordinated action to ensure that children and young people have access to high-quality, inclusive, and safe opportunities for recreation and wellbeing.</p>
Marital status	The qualitative data does not currently indicate specific needs for people of different marital status.
Sexual orientation	The qualitative data does not currently indicate specific needs for people of different sexual orientations.
Men and women generally	The qualitative data does not currently indicate specific needs for people of different genders.
Disability	<p>Demographic data from the 2021 Census shows one quarter (25%) of the borough’s population lives with a long-term health condition or disability; affecting almost half of all households (45%). This highlights the significant scale at which accessibility and inclusion must be considered in service planning and delivery.</p> <p>Consultation feedback identified accessibility and inclusion as a key priority across the borough. There was strong consensus that people of all ages and abilities should have equal opportunities to participate fully in community life. However, current provision was widely viewed as inadequate in meeting the needs of autistic people and disabled people, often resulting in exclusion, highlighting the need for more inclusive design and delivery of services and activities.</p> <p>A range of barriers were identified. These include limited access to health and wellbeing activities, and significant physical accessibility challenges within town centres. Issues raised included a lack of ramps and drop kerbs, manual (non-automatic) doors, poorly located disabled parking, and insufficient seating and accessible toilet facilities. While parks and open spaces are highly valued, particularly by children and young people, concerns remain regarding their accessibility and inclusiveness.</p> <p>Participants expressed strong expectations for coordinated action to address these challenges. There were calls to improve accessibility across town centres, public amenities, clubs and sports organisations (including football and GAA), as well as Council-managed facilities. Suggested improvements included</p>

Section 75 category	Details needs, experiences and priorities
	<p>the introduction of initiatives such as quiet gym sessions and inclusive programming.</p> <p>Further priorities identified through public consultation include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved training and awareness of accessibility and inclusion needs. • Development and promotion of a borough-wide toilet directory, including facilities available in the evening. • More inclusive communication methods, beyond online-only channels, to ensure accessibility for all. • Suitable accessible transport provision, which is essential in enabling rural communities, older people, and disabled people to access services, facilities and social opportunities. <p>Overall, the findings underline the need for a coordinated, inclusive approach that removes barriers and supports equal access to services, spaces and opportunities across the borough.</p>
Dependants	<p>27.07% of households in the borough have one or more dependant children. This highlights the importance of ensuring adequate provision for children and families across services and community infrastructure, recognising the pressures of caring responsibilities, addressing potential isolation, and supporting employment and economic stability.</p>

Part 2. Screening questions

Taking into account the evidence presented above, consider and comment on the likely impact on equality of opportunity and good relations for those affected by this policy, in any way, for each of the equality and good relations categories, and indicate the level of impact on the group i.e. minor, major or none.

1 What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories? minor/major/none		
Section 75 category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact? Positive major Positive minor None Negative major Negative minor
Religious belief	Shared spaces and civic pride campaign can foster good relations across faiths.	Positive minor
Political opinion	Adopting a neutral, inclusive approach to improving shared spaces encourages participation across communities.	Positive minor
Racial group	Adopting a neutral, inclusive approach to improving shared spaces encourages participation across communities. Where English is not the first language of the individual, the plan can be provided in alternative formats on request. To do so proactively would not be feasible due to costs.	Positive minor
Age	The Performance Improvement Plan is envisaged to have a positive impact on all ages through the following actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Progression of the Amateur & Grassroots Sporting Organisations Improvement Fund - Refurbishment of a borough playpark - A new park and bike park at Carnfunnock Country Park - Skills and employment programmes - Introduction of a new dry recycling collection service which will reduce manual handling 	Positive major
Marital status	No specific impact identified, however the inclusive nature of the Performance Improvement Plan is envisaged to have a positive impact on all marital status'.	Positive minor
Sexual orientation	No specific impact identified, however the inclusive nature of the Performance	Positive minor

	Improvement Plan is envisaged to have a positive impact on all sexual orientations.	
Men and women generally	No specific impact identified, however the inclusive nature of the Performance Improvement Plan is envisaged to have a positive impact on gender.	Positive minor
Disability	<p>The Performance Improvement Plan is envisaged to have a positive impact on disabled people, through the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inclusive Summer Opportunities Grant Scheme - Mid and East Antrim Disability Lived Experience Group - Installation of 3 changing places facilities across the borough <p>An Easy Read version of the plan will also be available, and alternative formats will be available on request.</p>	Positive major
Dependants	Enhanced community and sporting facilities will benefit families and carers by providing accessible spaces for recreation and support.	Positive major

2 Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equalities categories?

Section 75 category	If Yes, provide details	If No, provide reasons
Religious Belief		At this stage, there are no opportunities to further promote equality of opportunity across the section 75 categories. However, each project emanating from the plan will be subject to individual screening, which will determine if any additional opportunities to advance equality can be incorporated.
Political opinion		
Racial group		
Age		
Marital Status		
Sexual Orientation		
Men and women generally		
Disability		
Dependants		

3 To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? minor/major/none		
Good relations category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact? Positive major Positive minor None Negative major Negative minor
Religious belief	Adopting a neutral, inclusive approach to improving shared spaces is expected to benefit all citizens including those of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.	Positive minor
Political opinion		
Racial group		
4 Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?		
Good relations category	If Yes, provide details	If No, provide reasons
Religious belief		At this stage, there are no opportunities to further promote good relations. However, each project emanating from the plan will be subject to individual screening, which will determine if any additional opportunities to promote good relations can be incorporated.
Political Opinion		
Racial Group		

Additional considerations - Multiple identity

<p>Generally speaking, people can fall into more than one Section 75 category. Taking this into consideration, are there any potential impacts of the policy/decision on people with multiple identities?</p> <p><i>(For example; disabled minority ethnic people; disabled women; young Protestant men; and young lesbians, gay and bisexual people).</i></p>
<p>This is a strategic document. Any policies developed from it will be equality screened, using relevant evidence for each policy to assess how they may impact people with different and multiple identities.</p>
<p>Provide details of data on the impact of the policy on people with multiple identities. Specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.</p>
<p>Not applicable.</p>

Part 3. Screening decision

If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment, please provide details of the reasons.
At a strategic level, the screening process has not identified any adverse impact that would require an equality impact assessment.
If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment the public authority should consider if the policy should be mitigated or an alternative policy be introduced - please provide details.
At a strategic level, the screening process has not identified any adverse impact that would require mitigation or the introduction of an alternative policy. However, mitigations have been put in place to promote equality of opportunity in accessing the plan, including the offer of alternative formats on request.
If the decision is to subject the policy to an equality impact assessment, please provide details of the reasons.
Not applicable.

Mitigation

When the public authority concludes that the likely impact is ‘minor’ and an equality impact assessment is not to be conducted, the public authority may consider mitigation to lessen the severity of any equality impact, or the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity or good relations.

Can the policy/decision be amended or changed or an alternative policy introduced to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If so, give the reasons to support your decision, together with the proposed changes/amendments or alternative policy.
Not applicable.

Timetabling and prioritising

Factors to be considered in timetabling and prioritising policies for equality impact assessment.

If the policy has been 'screened in' for equality impact assessment, then please answer the following questions to determine its priority for timetabling the equality impact assessment.

On a scale of 1-3, with 1 being the lowest priority and 3 being the highest, assess the policy in terms of its priority for equality impact assessment.

Priority criterion	Rating (1-3)
Effect on equality of opportunity and good relations	
Social need	
Effect on people's daily lives	
Relevance to a public authority's functions	

Note: The Total Rating Score should be used to prioritise the policy in rank order with other policies screened in for equality impact assessment. This list of priorities will assist the public authority in timetabling. Details of the Public Authority's Equality Impact Assessment Timetable should be included in the quarterly Screening Report.

<p>Is the policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities?</p> <p>If yes, please provide details.</p>
<p>Not applicable.</p>

Part 4. Monitoring

Public authorities should consider the guidance contained in the Commission's Monitoring Guidance for Use by Public Authorities (July 2007).

The Commission recommends that where the policy has been amended or an alternative policy introduced, the public authority should monitor more broadly than for adverse impact (See Benefits, P.9-10, paras 2.13 - 2.20 of the Monitoring Guidance).

Effective monitoring will help the public authority identify any future adverse impact arising from the policy which may lead the public authority to conduct an equality impact assessment, as well as help with future planning and policy development.

Part 5 - Approval and authorisation

Equality Screening undertaken by:	
Position/Job Title:	Corporate and Support Services Officer (Level 7)
Department:	Citizen Focus - Policy & Performance
Date Completed:	14/5/2026

Equality Screening approved by:	
Position/Job Title:	Policy, Performance & Partnership Manager
Department:	Citizen Focus - Policy Performance & Partnership
Date Completed:	20/05/26

Note: A copy of the Screening Template, for each policy screened should be 'signed off' and approved by a senior manager responsible for the policy, made easily accessible on the public authority's website as soon as possible following completion and made available on request.



Appendix 1 - Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) Template

Section 1: Defining the activity subject to Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016

1A. Please provide a short title which describes the activity being undertaken by MEABC that is subject to Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.

Implementing a Plan Performance Improvement Plan 2026/27

1B. Please indicate which category the activity specified in Section 1A above relates to.

Developing a	Policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adopting a	Policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Implementing a	Policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Revising a	Policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Devising a Public Service	Policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Delivering a Public Service	Policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>

1C. Please provide the official title (if any) of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service document or initiative relating to the category indicated in Section 1B above.

Performance Improvement Plan 2026/27

1D. Please provide details of the aims and/or objectives of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service.

This screening relates to the Performance Improvement Plan 2026/27. The draft Plan, which was issued for public consultation between January and April 2026, was previously screened. This current screening applies to the final Plan, which has been developed taking into account the finalised Council rate, the agreed Capital Plan, and feedback received during the consultation process. Accordingly, as the earlier screening related to a draft proposal, this screening reflects the updated and finalised Plan.

Our objectives for 2026/27 are as follows:

Objective 1 - People: Increase access to activities that support health, wellbeing and inclusion.

Actions:

- Enhance health and wellbeing outcomes, particularly for children and young people, through targeted programmes and support for sports organisations.
- Reduce barriers to participation and improve accessibility across Council services and facilities.

Measures:

- Progress the Amateur & Grassroots Sporting Organisations Improvement Fund by 31 March 2027.
- Deliver the Inclusive Summer Opportunities Grants Scheme by 30 September 2026.
- Establish a Mid and East Antrim Disability Lived Experience Group by 31 December 2026.
- Install 3 new Changing Places facilities across the borough by 31 March 2027.

Objective 2 - Place: Create safe, accessible and attractive places that enhance wellbeing and support town centres, local businesses and employment.

Actions:

- Enhance and expand accessible, inclusive and high-quality play parks and outdoor recreational spaces.
- Help revitalise town centres by improving the built environment and increasing vibrancy.
- Support local business start-ups through targeted assistance.
- Strengthen skills development and employment opportunities.
- Promote sustainable growth through an effective and efficient Planning department.

Measures:

- Refurbish one play park within the borough by 30 June 2027.
- Open a new play park and bike park at Carnfunnock Country Park by 30 June 2027.
- Deliver a pop-up park in Larne town centre by 31 July 2026.
- Progress the design development for 2 civic spaces within Ballymena town centre by 31 March 2027.
- Deliver the Shopfront Improvement Scheme by 31 March 2027.
- Achieve the statutory target for jobs promoted through business start-up interventions (target to be confirmed) by 31 March 2027.



- Deliver skills and employment programmes, with 200 participants, 100 into employment, and 150 qualifications gained by 31 March 2027 (subject to funding).
- Achieve an average (median) processing time of 30 weeks for major planning applications by 31 March 2027.
- Achieve an average (median) processing time of 15 weeks for local planning applications by 31 March 2027.
- Conclude at least 70% of planning enforcement cases within 39 weeks by 31 March 2027.

Objective 3 - Planet: Create a cleaner, greener borough by improving recycling services and enhancing public spaces.

Actions:

- Enhance and protect green spaces through planting, biodiversity initiatives and sustainable land management.
- Promote responsible environmental behaviour through targeted awareness and participation opportunities.
- Simplify recycling for citizens.
- Achieve statutory recycling and environmental targets.

Measures:

- Launch the MEA Tree and Woodland Strategy by 31 March 2027.
- Deliver a civic pride campaign by 31 March 2027.
- Roll out a new dry recycling collection service by 31 July 2027.
- At least 50% of household waste collected is sent for recycling by 31 March 2027.
- Limit biodegradable collected municipal waste to landfill to no more than 16,387 tonnes by 31 March 2027.
- Less than 79,500 tonnes collected municipal waste arisings by 31 March 2027.

1E.	What definition of ‘rural’ applies in respect of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Population Settlements of less than 5,000 (Default definition).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other Definition (Provide details and the rationale below).
<input type="checkbox"/>	A definition of ‘rural’ is not applicable.
<i>Details of alternative definition of ‘rural’ used.</i>	
Not applicable.	
<i>Rationale for using alternative definition of ‘rural’.</i>	
Not applicable.	
<i>Reasons why a definition of ‘rural’ is not applicable.</i>	



Not applicable.

Section 2: Understanding the impact of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service

2A. Is the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service likely to impact on people in rural areas?

Yes No If the response is **NO** GO TO Section **2E**

2B. Please explain how the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas.

Considering the extensive research and consultation undertaken during the development of the Performance Improvement Plan 2026/27, the overall outcomes are anticipated to have a broadly positive or neutral impact on people living or working in rural areas.

This Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) relates to the Performance Improvement Plan 2026/27 as a whole and considers its three Improvement Objectives at a high strategic level. Given the broad nature of the Plan, which encompasses a wide range of projects and actions, it is not possible at this stage to assess in isolation the specific impact of each individual initiative on rural communities, however, all projects delivered under the three Improvement Objectives will be subject to individual screening and assessment processes. These assessments will identify and consider any potential impacts on rural communities in greater detail, ensuring that rural needs and impacts are recognised.

Responsibility for completing these assessments will rest with the relevant Senior Responsible Officers (SROs), namely the Directors of the departments responsible for delivering each Improvement Objective.



2C. If the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact people in rural areas more or less than people in urban areas, please explain how it is likely to impact on people in rural areas differently.

At this high-level, there is no evidence to suggest that the Plan will impact people in rural areas either more or less favourably than those in urban areas. However, it is recognised that rural communities can experience different challenges, such as reduced access to services, infrastructure, and transport, which may influence how certain initiatives are experienced.

All projects delivered under the three improvement objectives will be subject to individual screening and assessment, where any potential rural impacts will be identified and considered in greater detail. This approach ensures that rural considerations are built into delivery and that no community is disadvantaged.

Responsibility for completing these assessments will rest with the relevant Senior Responsible Officer (SRO). The SROs will be the Directors of the respective departments responsible for delivering each Improvement Objective.

2D. Please indicate which of the following rural policy areas the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Services is likely to primarily impact on.

Rural Business	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rural Tourism	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rural Jobs or Employment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rural Education or Training	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rural Broadband or Mobile Comms	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Transport Services or Infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rural Health or Social Care Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Poverty in Rural areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Deprivation in rural areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agri-Environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please state)	<input type="checkbox"/>

If the response to Section 2A was YES GO TO Section 3A

2E	Please explain why the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is NOT likely to impact on people in rural areas.
Not applicable.	



Section 3: Identifying the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas.

3A. Has MEABC taken steps to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas that are relevant to the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service.

Yes No If the response is **NO** GO TO Section **3E**

3B Please indicate which of the following methods or information sources were used by MEABC to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.

Consultation with Rural Stakeholders	<input type="checkbox"/>	Published Statistics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Consultation with Other Organisations	<input type="checkbox"/>	Research Papers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Surveys or Questionnaires	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other Publications	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Methods of Information Sources (include details in Question 3C below).			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

3C. Please provide details of the methods and information sources MEABC used to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas including relevant dates, names or organisations, titles of publications, website references, details of surveys or consultations undertaken etc.

Council launched a public consultation on three proposed Improvement Objectives from 13 January to 8 April 2026. The survey was conducted in the Council’s leisure centres, and within Ballymena, Carrickfergus, and Larne town centres, published online, and displayed at main reception areas.

Additionally, we reviewed and considered the following information:

- The Mid and East Antrim Borough Council’s Citizen Survey (2022) which consisted of a representative sample of 810 people across the borough; 42% of responses were received from people living in rural areas.
- Regional statistics, for example, data from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, the Northern Ireland Executive, and the Department of Agriculture, Environment, and Rural Affairs.
- The Programme for Government Northern Ireland - “Doing What Matters Most” (2024-2027).
- The Mid and East Antrim Community Plan - “Putting People First” (2017-2032, and 2022 review).

- The Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Corporate Plan (2024-2028).
- Findings from previous public consultations on the Council's prior Performance Improvement Plans and Corporate Plan.
- A review of legislation and statutory guidance.
- Self-analysis from our annual Performance Self-Assessment Reports, audit results (Northern Ireland Audit Office), and business plan performance.
- Benchmarking with other councils.
- Engagement and feedback from the Council's management and officers.

3D. Please provide details of the social and economic needs of people in rural areas which have been identified by MEABC?

- Citizens in rural settlements were more likely to be 'satisfied' than those in urban areas for the following:
 - Their local area as a place to live: 80% versus 66%.
 - The Council's cleansing service: 73% versus 62%.
 - Council events: 81% versus 72%.
 - The Council's parks and green spaces: 77% versus 71%.
 - The Council's leisure centres: 70% versus 68%.
 - The Council's recycling services: 89% versus 85%.
- Citizens in rural settlements were more likely to be 'dissatisfied' than those in urban areas for the following:
 - Bin collections: 91% versus 84%.
 - Planning: 45% versus 32%.
- Citizens from rural areas were more likely to 'agree' that the Council treats residents of the Borough fairly than those in urban areas: 50% versus 37%, and that the Council consults with and listens to the views of local people: 41% versus 24%.
- Citizens in rural areas were more likely to prefer not to use the Council's website than their urban counterparts: 36% versus 23%, and were less likely to want to use the Council's website to book activities, classes, tickets, pay for services, apply for funding, pay a bill, or report a problem.
- The most popular ways that citizens in rural settlements would like the Council to let them know what is going on across the borough is via Facebook (27%), by leaflet (25%), and by letter (20%), compared to those living in urban



settlements, whereby Facebook (31%), leaflets (23%), and email (10%) were the preferred options.

- Citizens from rural areas indicated that they see less dog mess and fouling, and less rubbish or litter lying around than their urban counterparts.
- Citizens from rural areas were more likely to ‘agree’ the borough is good for starting and growing a business than their urban counterparts: 60% versus 34%, for job opportunities: 31% versus 26%, and for attractions and tourism: 64% versus 44%.
- Citizens from rural areas were more likely to ‘agree’ that Mid and East Antrim is a borough that supports healthy living than their urban counterparts: 49% versus 38%, that supports the needs of all people: 46% versus 28%, and is a borough with a skilled and adaptable workforce: 58% versus 42%.
- More people in rural areas felt ‘very safe’ when outside in their local area during the day as opposed to those living in urban areas: 68% versus 49%, and after dark: 53% versus 27%.
- People in rural areas were more likely to ‘agree’ that Mid and East Antrim is a borough where most people value and behave responsibly towards our natural environment and built assets than people from urban areas: 60% versus 42%.

If the response to Section 3A was YES GO TO Section 4A

3E.	Please explain why no steps were taken by MEABC to identify the social and economic needs of people
Not applicable.	

Section 4: Considering the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas

4A. Please provide details of the issues considered in relation to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.

This Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) relates to the Performance Improvement Plan 2026/27 as a whole and considers its three Improvement Objectives at a strategic level.

All projects delivered under the three Improvement Objectives will be subject to individual screening and assessment processes where considerations given to the social and economic needs of rural communities will be addressed.

Responsibility for undertaking these assessments will rest with the relevant Senior Responsible Officers (SROs), namely the Directors of the departments responsible for delivering each Improvement Objectives.



Section 5: Influencing the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service

5A.	Has the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or delivery of the Public Service, been influenced by the rural needs identified?
Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If the response is NO GO TO Section 5C

5B.	Please explain how the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or design or delivery of the Public Service, has been influenced by the rural needs identified.
<p>This Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) relates to the overall Performance Improvement Plan and considers its three Improvement Objectives at a high strategic level.</p> <p>All projects delivered under the three improvement objectives will be subject to individual screening and assessment, where details of how the individual project has been influenced by identified rural needs.</p> <p>Responsibility for completing these assessments will rest with the relevant Senior Responsible Officer (SRO). The SROs will be the Directors of the respective departments responsible for delivering each Improvement Objective.</p>	

If the response to Section **5A** was **YES** GO TO Section **6A**

C.	Please explain why the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or the delivery of the Public Service, has NOT been influenced by the rural needs identified.
<p>Not applicable.</p>	



Section 6: Documenting and Recording

6A.	Please tick below to confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained by MEABC and relevant information on the Section 1 activity compiled in accordance with paragraph 6.7 of the guidance.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	I can confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained, and relevant information compiled

Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by:	
Position/Grade:	Corporate and Support Services Officer (Level 7)
Department	Citizen Focus - Policy and Performance
Date:	15/05/2026
Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:	
Position/Grade:	Policy, Performance & Partnership Manager
Department:	Citizen Focus - Policy, Performance & Partnership
Date:	20/05/26

Date created
15/05/2026

Lead author

Organisation
Mid & East Antrim Borough Council

Your report

Performance Improvement Plan 2026/27

Our Climate, Environment and Social Assessment has been designed to help make sustainable development more readily understood by examining the everyday work taking place within an organisation.

Performance Improvement Plan 26/27 (Strategic-level screening)

Completed by: [Name] Completion time: 3 minutes General result: Short term or limited positive impact

- Key
- Long term negative impact
 - Short term or limited negative impact
 - No known impact
 - Short term or limited positive impact
 - Long lasting positive impact



Tips & Advice

We've identified several factors in your assessment that could have an impact. Here are some advice and tips.

Will this work implement measures to manage associated climate risks?

- It is vital that all new plans and policies strategically consider and outline the climate-related risks associated with their project at the business-case stage.
- Identifying and planning for climate-related risks is a necessity for any project and failing to do so can have severe negative implications for the local environment and community.
- There are numerous climate-related risks that new policies and plans must manage and monitor.
- More information on managing climate risks can be found here: [Managing Climate Risk, Facing up to Losses and Damages | OECD](#)

How will this work impact children and young people and address the UN Convention on Rights of the Child (UNCRC)?



IDENTIFYING THE NEED FOR A DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT (DPIA) - SCREENING QUESTIONS

A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) is a process to help you systematically and comprehensively analyse your personal data processing and help you identify and minimise any data protection risks of a project.

You must do a DPIA before you begin any type of personal data processing that is “likely to result in a high risk.”

This set of screening questions will help you decide whether a DPIA is necessary. Please note, if there is a change to the nature, scope, context or purposes of your processing you will be required to complete this screening template again.

You will be accountable for the screening decisions you make. Therefore, it is critical that you document via “Explanatory Notes” the screening decisions you have made, providing logical reasons regarding whether to do a DPIA or not.

Section A - Project Details	
Title of Project/Plan/Policy	Performance Improvement Plan 2026/27
Is this an existing, revised or new project?	Revised
What is the purpose of the project, plan or policy? <i>e.g. intended aims/outcomes</i> Include any relevant background information here	Councils are required under the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 to secure continuous improvement. To meet this duty, councils must set annual Improvement Objectives and ensure appropriate arrangements are in place to achieve them. The Performance Improvement Plan outlines the Council’s objectives, actions and performance measures for 2026/27.
Which MEABC Department owns or holds responsibility for this project, plan or policy?	The Interim Chief Executive holds overall responsibility; however, ownership is Council-wide, with objectives and actions implemented across all directorates. The Policy and Performance team monitor and report on the plan.

Section B - Personal Data

Does this project, plan or policy involve the processing of personal data?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
--	------------------------------	--

If the answer to this question is 'No', you do not need to conduct a DPIA. Please proceed straight to Section E.

If the answer to this question is 'Yes', please proceed to Section C.

Section C: Questions 1 - 13

Examples are for guidance only and should not be considered exhaustive or definitive.

For questions 1 to 13, a DPIA **MUST** be carried out if the answer is **YES**. Your documentation should explain very clearly whether there are any indicators that a type of processing will likely result in 'high risk'.

High risk means a risk that could result in a significant impact on individuals' rights and freedoms.

For some of these questions, the answer will only be "yes" if the processing occurs in combination with criteria (see questions 14 to 22) in the Article 29 Data Protection Working Party's European Guidelines.

Screening Questions - <u>Will the project:</u>		Yes/No	Explanatory Notes
1	Use systematic and extensive profiling or automated decision-making to make significant decisions about people? <i>e.g. using technology to analyse personal data or make decisions without human involvement.</i>	N/A	
2	Process special category data or criminal offence data on a large scale? <i>e.g. health, medical, racial/ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, trade union or political views.</i>	N/A	
3	Systematically monitor a publicly accessible place on a large scale? <i>e.g. CCTV.</i>	N/A	
4	Use innovative technologies or the novel application of existing technologies? <i>e.g. AI-driven systems, or repurposing data for new functions.</i> <i>(Note: A DPIA is required where this processing is combined with any of the criteria from the European guidelines.)</i>	N/A	
5	Use profiling, automated decision-making or special category data to help make	N/A	

	<p>decisions on someone's access to a product, service, opportunity or benefit?</p> <p><i>e.g. use of computer systems to automatically decide, or by using sensitive data to decide whether someone can get access to a service provided by Council.</i></p>		
6	<p>Carry out profiling on a large scale?</p> <p><i>Profiling is using personal data to assess or predict things about a person, e.g. job performance, financial situation, interests, reliability, behaviour, location, or movements.</i></p> <p><i>To decide what constitutes 'large scale' you should consider and include information on factors such as:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - number of individuals concerned - volume of data - variety of data - duration of processing - geographical extent of processing. <p><i>Also see examples in ICO's guidance of processing/ projects they consider to be large scale.</i></p>	N/A	
7	<p>Process biometric data?</p> <p><i>e.g. Fingerprints, facial/voice recognition.</i></p> <p><i>(Note: A DPIA is required where this processing is combined with any of the criteria from the European guidelines.)</i></p>	N/A	
8	<p>Process genetic data?</p> <p><i>e.g. DNA or data from ancestry/genetic testing</i></p> <p><i>(Note: A DPIA is required where this processing is combined with any of the criteria from the European guidelines.)</i></p>	N/A	
9	<p>Combine, compare or match personal data from multiple sources?</p> <p><i>e.g. proof of life enquiries, receiving information from external organisations.</i></p>	N/A	
10	<p>Process personal data without providing a privacy notice directly to the individual?</p> <p><i>Signposting to a privacy notice on the website is sufficient to satisfy this requirement.</i></p> <p><i>(Note: A DPIA is required where this processing is combined with any of the criteria from the European guidelines.)</i></p>	N/A	
11	<p>Process personal data in a way which involves tracking individuals' online or offline location or behaviour?</p> <p><i>e.g. are you collecting information about where people go or what they do? [online activity or GPS].</i></p> <p><i>(Note: A DPIA is required where this processing is combined with any of the criteria from the European guidelines.)</i></p>	N/A	

12	Process children’s personal data for profiling or automated decision-making or for marketing purposes, or offer online services directly to them? e.g. <i>running an online library service for children and using their reading history to suggest new books.</i>	N/A	
13	Process personal data which could result in a risk of physical harm in the event of a security breach? <i>e.g. revealing home addresses of people in a protected role.</i>	N/A	

**Section D:
Article 29 Data Protection Working Party’s European Guidelines**

When considering if your processing is “likely to result in high risk,” you should consider the [European guidelines](#). These define **nine** criteria of processing operations likely to result in high risk. In most cases, a combination of two factors indicates the “need” for a DPIA. Although this is not a strict rule.

Therefore, if the answer to any of questions 14 to 23 is “yes” a DPIA should be “considered.”

Your documentation should explain very clearly whether there any indicators that a type of processing will likely result in high risk.

Will the project:		Yes/No	Explanatory Notes
14	Involve evaluation or scoring? <i>e.g. a recruitment panel scoring candidates against set criteria.</i>	N/A	
15	Involve automated decision-making with legal or similar significant effect? <i>e.g. an automated system decides to assign a fixed penalty notice without human review.</i>	N/A	
16	Involve systematic monitoring? <i>e.g. CCTV, use of software to monitor staff emails</i>	N/A	
17	Involve sensitive data or data of a highly personal nature? <i>e.g. processing health information or information about neighbour disputes</i>	N/A	
18	Involve data processing on a large scale? <i>e.g. electoral roll data for all residents</i>	N/A	

19	<p>Involve matching or combining datasets? <i>e.g. matching HR records with payroll data or combining customer data from different platforms, e.g. combining someone's Te Dogs record with their planning portal application.</i></p>	N/A	
20	<p>Involve processing of data concerning vulnerable data subjects? <i>Note: this does not always mean a traditionally considered vulnerability, e.g. staff may be considered to be vulnerable data subjects due to the imbalance of power between employer and employee.</i></p>	N/A	
21	<p>Use innovative technological or organisational solutions? <i>e.g. AI.</i></p>	N/A	
22	<p>Prevent data subjects from exercising a right or using a service or contract? <i>e.g. restricting access to an online application unless identity verification is completed, restricting someone's right of access, etc.</i></p>	N/A	
23	<p>Process personal data which could result in a risk of other forms of harm (e.g. emotional, psychological, financial) in the event of a security breach? <i>e.g. details of a disciplinary investigation or complaint, bank details, etc.</i></p>	N/A	

Section E: Findings		
Does this screening indicate that a DPIA is required?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<p><i>Note: Data Protection legislation and ICO guidance state that you should seek your DPO's advice when you need to do a DPIA. If this box is ticked 'yes', please complete the full Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) template on the P-drive.</i></p>		
Has a DPIA been recommended?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<p><i>You may wish to conduct a DPIA even if the screening indicates that one is not required. A DPIA is a useful tool to consider any impacts and/or risks involved in processing personal data.</i></p>		

Final Comments

Please outline anything you feel relevant to the decision whether to conduct a DPIA or not.

On some occasions your project may require the processing of a minimal amount of personal data, e.g. for administrative purposes only. Use this space to outline any such circumstances.

As an overarching plan, the Performance Improvement Plan 2026/27 has been screened at a high-level.

Each project emanating from the Improvement Objectives will be subject to individual screening. It will be the responsibility of the relevant Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) to ensure this is undertaken. In this case, the SRO will be the relevant Director. - *Corporate & Support Services Officer (Level 7)*

DPIA Screening completed by:

Please detail level of Council Officer completing this screening and forward for further sign off

Position:	Corporate & Support Services Officer (Level 7)		
Department:	Policy & Performance	Date:	14/05/2026

Information Governance review:

This screening can be reviewed by any member of the Information Governance team

Position:	Information Governance Officer	Date:	14/05/2026
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DPIA Screening Approval:

This should be the Information Asset Owner, which is usually the HoS/AD

Position:	Assistant Director Citizen Focus		
Department:	Citizen Focus, Corporate & Support Services	Date:	15/05/2026

Council/Committee:	Full Council
Date:	8 June 2026
Report Title:	Corporate Plan Update 2025/26
Publication Status:	Open
Author:	Laura-Jane McCloy – Policy, Performance & Partnership Manager
Approver:	Siobhan Fisher - Assistant Director of Citizen Focus

1. Purpose

- 1.1. To provide Council with the Corporate Plan Update 2025/26 for review and approval.

2. Background

- 2.1. The Corporate Plan, which was formally adopted on 13 May 2024, sets out Council's vision for the borough for the period of 2024-2028.
- 2.2. The Plan is being delivered under the four pillars of *People, Place, Planet and Performance*.

3. Key Issues for Consideration

- 3.1. The report, included at Appendix 1, sets out the progress made under each of the four pillars and their underlying objectives, for the period April 2025-March 2026.
- 3.2. Additionally, the report highlights some of Council's key achievements over this period.
- 3.3. To support the delivery of our Strategic Objectives, we established a set of 87 measures to track our success. These measures are contained within departmental business plans.
- 3.4. The following table summarises our performance against achieving these measures, full details can be found within the body of the report.

	Number of Indicators	Percentage
Achieved or on track	72	83%
Delayed but progressing	11	13%
Not achieved	4	4%
	87	100%

4. General Considerations / Implications

- 4.1. The Corporate Plan sets out our objectives, ambitions and vision for the borough. Failure to progress against Council's strategic priorities has the potential to lead to poor service delivery, poor audit results and reputational damage.

5. Proposed Way Forward

- 5.1. On notice of approval from SMT, the report will be presented to Full Council for final approval.
- 5.2. The update will then be published on the Council's website.

6. Recommendation or Decision

- 6.1. Council are asked to review and approve the Corporate Plan Update 2025/26.

7. Appendices / Links

Appendix 1 - Corporate Plan Update 2025/26

Corporate Plan 2024-2028

Update Report

April 2025 to March 2026

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Welcome

As we reach the halfway point of our Corporate Plan 2024–2028, I am pleased to share an update on the progress we have made so far. Over the past year we have delivered meaningful change, and I am proud of what we have achieved together, both as an organisation and alongside our communities.

Throughout the year, we have worked with purpose and commitment to turn our shared vision into action. While there is still more to do, we are already seeing the positive impact of our efforts through new initiatives, strengthened partnerships and the continued delivery of high-quality services that enhance daily life across the borough.

This update highlights key milestones from the past year, showcases the progress taking place within our communities, and reaffirms our ongoing commitment to improving the quality of life for everyone who lives, works in, and visits Mid and East Antrim.

I hope you find this update both informative and encouraging. Thank you for your continued support, it remains central to our success. I look forward to building on this momentum and to what we can achieve together in the year ahead.

Valerie Watts
Interim Chief Executive

Our Vision is:

"Mid and East Antrim will be a strong, vibrant, safe and inclusive community, where people work together to improve the quality of life for all."

Key Achievements

The upcoming points provide a snapshot of just a few of our activities throughout 2025-2026. These have helped to enhance community bonds, drive economic growth, and enrich the overall quality of life for everyone living, working, visiting and doing business in our borough.

- Gracehill recognised as Northern Ireland's first UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Attracted 1,600+ visitors to the 'Around the Town Music Festival', with 22 sold-out events.
- Brought Pride and Prejudice to life for audiences of 800 people through 'Theatre in the Park' in Carrickfergus and Ballymena.
- Welcomed 600+ visitors to the 'Friends Goodwill Music Festival'.
- Secured the prestigious 'Five Gold Anchor Award' for Carrickfergus Marina.
- Launched the '2026 Accessible & Inclusive Tourism Programme' across Mid & East Antrim.
- Strengthened the tourism offering with 19 newly qualified tour guides.
- Enhanced visitor experience with 3 new visitor information boards in Ballymena and Carrickfergus.
- Inspired enterprise skills through a Dragons' Den-style Challenge, engaging 250 pupils with Young Enterprise NI.
- Engaged 400+ young people in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) via the flagship Activate Your Curiosity event.
- Delivered the 'Snack Attack' competition, inspiring 200+ primary school pupils during Global Entrepreneurship Week.
- Celebrated heritage with the launch of 'The Tale of the Castle Cat and the Golden Dragon' children's storybook for the 400th anniversary of Ballymena.
- Opened the 'Vital Signs: Exploring the Life of Dr Eleanor Sproull' exhibition at Carrickfergus Museum.
- Promoted inclusion by signing the 'Age-Friendly Employer Pledge'.
- Supported positive ageing through the VOLT (Link, Lunch & Learn) community event.
- Tackled social isolation by expanding the Loneliness Network with 8 new 'Chatty Benches' across the borough.
- Invested in sport with refurbished 3G pitches at Greenisland and Sunnylands.

Our Plan

In striving to achieve our vision, we are delivering our Corporate Plan under the 4 key pillars of People, Place, Planet and Performance.

In the following sections, we explore each pillar in detail, outlining our ambitions, the strategies we are using to achieve them, the tangible outcomes our citizens, communities and businesses can expect to see, and our progress on delivering those outcomes.

Performance Summary

To track our success in delivering our strategic objectives, we use a series of key performance indicators, referred to as measures.

For this reporting year, we identified 87 measures. Our performance against achieving these is summarised below:

- 83% have been achieved or are on track (72 of 87 measures)
- 13% are delayed but progressing (11 of 87 measures)
- 4% have not been achieved (4 of 87 measures)

Detailed performance updates, by pillar, are provided throughout the remainder of this report.

People

Our ambition:

By 2028, Mid and East Antrim will be a safe, inclusive, and welcoming borough, where diversity and cultural differences are celebrated, and communities live in peace. Our people will have equity of opportunity and support to achieve their full potential, in both a professional and personal capacity. Individuals and communities will be empowered to be independent and self-sustaining, enabling us to concentrate our efforts on those who need it most.

To achieve this, we will:

- Work in partnership with employers and stakeholders to support those seeking employment, provide upskilling support, improve access to the labour market for those with disabilities, and promote skills pathways.
- Promote the benefits of offering apprenticeships and work experience opportunities to enhance skills development and bridge the gap between education and employment.
- Support and deliver opportunities for our citizens to improve their physical, mental, and emotional health.
- Explore ways to help vulnerable and marginalised individuals feel welcomed and supported in their local communities, removing feelings of isolation or exclusion.
- Lead by example to improve equality, accessibility, and inclusion across the borough by embedding it into everything we do.
- Work alongside partners to encourage good relations, enhance community pride, and reinforce a strong sense of belonging in our communities.
- Strengthen community safety, and boost public confidence, by forging collaborative partnerships that focus on proactive and comprehensive crime prevention.

Under this theme, we have 27 measures. Of these:

- 96% have been achieved or are on track (26 of 27 measures)
- 4% have not been achieved (1 of 27 measures)

What you'll see

Outcome 1	Support those seeking employment and those looking to upskill via a range of employment and skills academies.
Measure 1	200 participants taking part in academies and skills programmes by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	509 participants engaged.
Measure 2	100 participants gaining employment by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	137 participants gained employment.
Measure 3	150 qualifications gained by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	449 qualifications achieved.

Outcome 2	Promote skills and career pathways with employers and academia.
Measure 1	750 participants engaged in skills, employability, and careers outreach by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	2,306 participants engaged.
Measure 2	600 youths engaged in MEA Science School by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	1,349 youths engaged.
Measure 3	20 companies/stakeholders engaged in MEA Science School by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	21 companies/stakeholders engaged.
Measure 4	500 youths engaged in Hospitality & Tourism careers by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	856 youths engaged.
Measure 5	10 companies/stakeholders partnering in Hospitality & Tourism careers activity by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	11 companies/stakeholders partnered.

Outcome 3	Promote apprenticeships and work experience opportunities with schools and employers.
Measure 1	150 participants engaged in NI Apprenticeship Week by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	372 participants engaged in NI Apprenticeships Week delivered in February 2026.
Measure 2	20 work placements provided by schools and employers by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	66 placements provided.

Outcome 4	Offer internal work placements across the Council.
Measure 1	15 work experience or placements by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	18 placements provided.

Outcome 5	Deliver the MEActive programme.
Measure 1	10,400 participants in the MEActive programme by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	10,965 participants.
Measure 2	1,430 sessions delivered by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	1,541 sessions delivered.

Outcome 6	Encourage our citizens to spend more time outdoors and exploring nature.
Measure 1	20 outdoor recreation events delivered by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	68 events delivered, engaging approximately 1,600 participants.

Outcome 7	Deliver a series of events through the Community Arts and Heritage Programme.
Measure 1	50,000 engagements with the Community Arts and Heritage Programme by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	54,372 engagements delivered during the reporting period.

Outcome 8	Progress initiatives that support the most vulnerable people across the borough.
Measure 1	Deliver 85% of the PHA target for over-65 home safety checks by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	365 checks completed, which equates to 155% of the PHA target.
Measure 2	Deliver 85% of the PHA target for energy efficiency support by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	241 completed, which equates to 121% of the PHA target.
Measure 3	Support the Age Friendly Alliance to deliver Year 2 action plan by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	<p>During Year 2 of the Age Friendly Action Plan, several planned actions were delivered through strong partnership working. Age Friendly walking audits were completed, during which partners were supported to use the 'See Things from My Age' self-assessment tool. Engagement continued through the regional Age Friendly Network NI task groups.</p> <p>A range of awareness activities were delivered, including home safety events, succession-planning workshops and Positive Ageing Month, supported by a dedicated publication and 50 local, regional and online events.</p> <p>Communications and information-sharing were strengthened through partner publicity, promotion of 'Connect North', volunteering opportunities, and installation of Age Friendly information boards across the borough.</p>
Measure 4	Deliver Positive Ageing Month by 31 October 2025.
Status: Achieved	Positive Ageing Month was successfully delivered during October. Events included guided walks, exhibitions, late-life hobby workshops, and pop-up play sessions.
Measure 5	Re-establish Poverty Action Group meetings and support initiatives by 31 March 2026.
Status: Not Achieved	Due to recent staffing transitions, the Poverty Action Group has been temporarily paused. It is expected to resume operations in the 2026-2027 reporting year.

Outcome 9	Improve accessibility and inclusion at Council's museums and theatres.
Measure 1	Complete technology upgrades to audiovisual and interactive storytelling equipment in Mid-Antrim Museum and Carrickfergus Museum by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	Technology upgrades to audio-visual and interactive storytelling equipment have been successfully completed at both Mid-Antrim Museum and Carrickfergus Museum.
Measure 2	Conduct accessibility audits and implement improvements at 3 locations by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	<p>Audits have been completed at Arthur Cottage, The Gobbins, Andrew Jackson Cottage, and the President Arthur Homestead, with improvement works currently underway at each location.</p> <p>In addition to the audit findings, enhanced accessibility measures have been introduced at The Gobbins, including the purchase of additional translation devices. A QR-code poster has also been installed in the briefing room, enabling visitors to access the online safety briefing and select their preferred language.</p>

Outcome 10	Advance equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives across the Borough.
Measure 1	Monitor and report on Year 3 progress of the 2023–2027 Equality Action Plan.
Status: Achieved	<p>The Council continues to make strong progress in delivering the Equality Action Plan. Progress was reviewed at the EDI Network meeting on 1 April 2026, with an update subsequently provided to the Inclusion & Equality Sub-Committee.</p> <p>Key actions are fully embedded or progressing well, including the development of the Age Friendly Working Group, enhanced promotion of accessible services such as assisted lifts and waste collections, and continued engagement with schools and employers to support inclusive opportunities.</p> <p>Ongoing commitments include delivery of the Mental Health Charter, equality-focused staff induction, and skills development programmes to support inclusive tourism. Visibility of Section 75 groups has also been strengthened across Council communications, alongside the expansion of MEAqua Little Stars to include additional pan-disability provision.</p>

Measure 2	Monitor and report on Year 3 progress of the 2023–2027 Disability Action Plan.
Status: Achieved	<p>We continue to make strong progress in delivering the Disability Action Plan. Progress was reviewed at the EDI Network meeting on 1 April 2026, with an update subsequently provided to the Inclusion & Equality Sub-Committee.</p> <p>Key actions are either fully embedded or progressing well, including improvements to accessible services (e.g. bin collection notifications and accessible events), delivery of inclusive leisure programmes such as MEAqua Little Stars, SEN and pan-disability clubs, and the expansion of inclusive sports and activities across all three leisure centres.</p> <p>Engagement with businesses, schools and partner organisations has supported increased awareness, employability opportunities and accessibility improvements, alongside initiatives such as JAM Card promotion, inclusive tourism development, and enhanced communications and representation of people with disabilities.</p>

Outcome 11	
Measure 1	Deliver the 2025/26 MEABC Good Relations Action Plan.
Status: Achieved	<p>During the 2025/26 financial year, we successfully delivered a range of actions under our Good Relations Action Plan, supporting positive relationships, inclusion and shared community benefit across the borough. The Common Good Programme was fully delivered, enabling locally led activity that promoted community resilience, wellbeing and inclusion, with a focus on projects that brought people together and delivered shared outcomes. This collaborative programme worked with young people who are disengaged and at risk of becoming involved in criminal activity.</p> <p>The Integrate Programme was also fully delivered, with targeted, commissioned activity supporting efforts to reduce exclusion and improve access to support services. This included embedding integration and inclusion objectives within wider community safety and cohesion work.</p> <p>We continued to support regional good relations initiatives through the delivery of Good Relations Week and Holocaust Memorial Day. Good Relations Week 2025 took place from 13–19 October under the theme Connect, with a varied programme of community-led</p>

	<p>events delivered across the borough and supported through civic leadership and public engagement.</p> <p>A commemorative Tree of Hope was planted in People's Park, Ballymena in February 2026 to mark Holocaust Memorial Day. The event was led by the mayor and involved pupils from Cambridge House Grammar School. The tree and accompanying plaque provide a permanent symbol of remembrance in the borough, reflecting the 2026 theme Bridging Generations and supporting ongoing education and awareness.</p> <p>Activity under Celebrating Culture Safely also progressed during the year, with ten beacons installed across the borough in July. The Cultural Celebrations Working Group continued to meet regularly, providing a multi-agency forum to discuss issues relating to bonfires and cultural celebrations and to work collaboratively on safe and preventative approaches.</p>
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Outcome 12	
Measure 1	Deliver the 2025/26 MEABC PCSP Action Plan.
Status: Achieved	<p>PCSP continues to operate three interagency sub-groups, Drugs and Alcohol, Antisocial Behaviour, and Domestic and Sexual Violence, which support delivery of the Action Plan and collaboration with PSNI to address community safety issues.</p> <p>Key outcomes include targeted support for vulnerable groups through BAME advocacy programmes and work with older people, funded through the Agewell Partnership, delivering crime prevention advice alongside the PSNI. The Youth at Risk initiative has also engaged young people across the borough through detached youth work and signposting to support services.</p> <p>Community safety initiatives such as Farm Watch and Neighbourhood Watch continue to support crime prevention, particularly in rural areas. The Text Alert Service provides real-time updates and advice, encouraging vigilance and reporting of suspicious activity.</p> <p>The Four Tier Security System has supported victims of crime through enhanced home security measures following PSNI referral, helping reduce repeat victimisation and support wellbeing.</p> <p>High-impact initiatives, including the Community Safety Fun Day funded through the Agile Local Response Initiative, have</p>

	<p>strengthened community engagement. Ongoing work through the Multi-Agency Support Hub and Community Safety Wardens Scheme has further enhanced local prevention and response.</p> <p>Partnership working with PSNI and stakeholders has continued to strengthen, alongside member development, including training on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG).</p> <p>Road safety has remained a key priority, with driver awareness initiatives, school-based education programmes, National Road Safety Week campaigns, and a multi-agency collision demonstration delivered in Ballymena and East Antrim.</p>
Measure 2	Deliver the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls programme of initiatives by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	<p>The Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Programme has been successfully delivered through coordinated progress across funding, awareness training, and workplace culture.</p> <p>The EVAWG Change Fund was implemented and managed effectively, with £100,000 awarded to four organisations delivering preventative, educational and support-based projects across schools and community settings.</p> <p>A comprehensive awareness and training programme was delivered in partnership with trusted organisations, targeting Council staff, community groups and health professionals. 'Power to Change' and 'Be the Change' training was rolled out across all leisure centres, strengthening staff confidence and capability to challenge harassment and respond appropriately to disclosures. Additional programmes addressed the root causes of violence against women and girls, coercive control, and recognising high risk domestic abuse within mental health settings.</p> <p>The Northern Domestic and Sexual Violence Partnership website was fully upgraded and launched, providing a single access point for information, resources and signposting. All funded activity achieved both spend and delivery targets, with strong collaborative working with The Executive Office to maximise impact.</p> <p>Internally, we successfully retained Platinum-level accreditation under the Workplace Charter on Domestic Violence in November 2025. Over 100 staff have completed Charter training across three tiers, embedding a safe, informed and consistent response for</p>

employees affected by domestic abuse and strengthening the Council's role as a 'Safe Place' within the community. Future roll out to Elected Members is planned for delivery later in the year.

Place

Our ambition:

By 2028, Mid and East Antrim will be widely recognised as an ideal place to live, visit, work and do business. We will have vibrant, clean, and harmonious shared spaces, designed to showcase our natural, and built, heritage and assets. Our tourism offering will be filled with diversity and richness of culture, history, and heritage, attracting visitors on a global scale. Businesses, new and existing, will have the required support to grow and prosper, leading to an economically innovative and sustainable borough, offering stable employment, inclusive growth and an ideal place to invest.

To achieve this, we will:

- Support the development of a sustainable, dynamic, and prosperous local economy that helps businesses to grow, and promote the borough as an ideal place to do business for both new and existing companies.
- Help drive sustainable economic growth by promoting the borough as a leading visitor and cultural destination, utilising our natural, and built, heritage and assets.
- Support our towns and villages to help regenerate and stimulate economic activity, while protecting and conserving our natural and historic landscape.
- Enhance and expand our amenities, parks, open spaces, and built heritage, making sure they meet the needs of all, while encouraging their respectful and mindful use.
- Conduct Council business in a way that encourages economic prosperity within the borough.

Under this theme, we have 30 measures. Of these:

- 77% have been achieved or are on track (23 of 30 measures)
- 20% are delayed but progressing (6 of 30 measures)
- 3% have not been achieved (1 of 30 measures)

What you'll see

Outcome 1	Deliver the Go Succeed service.
Measure 1	240 participants supported via Engage and Foundation by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	384 participants supported.
Measure 2	97 businesses supported to Grow and Scale by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	115 businesses supported.
Measure 3	165 jobs promoted/created by 31 March 2026. (Engage, Foundation & Enterprise Pathways and Growth/Scale)
Status: Achieved	192.5 jobs promoted. This figure is subject to external verification.

Outcome 2	Develop and deliver new business growth programmes.
Measure 1	3 new tailored programmes delivered by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	6 programmes of support developed, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Co-ordinated programme with Invest NI partners supply chain events, AICC partner events, Growth Mindset and Innovation workshops 2. NIHE Opportunities Programme 3. Digital Edge Programme 4. Green to Grow Programme 5. DTFF MEA bespoke workshops 6. Amplify Business Support Programme
Measure 2	150 businesses supported by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	158 businesses supported during the reporting period.

Outcome 3	Promote entrepreneurship, creative thinking and innovation to encourage more residents of all ages to consider enterprise as a future career pathway.
Measure 1	825 participants engaging in enterprise outreach activities by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	2,471 participants engaged.
Measure 2	25 economically inactive participants engaged in pre-enterprise activity by 31 March 2026.

Status: Achieved	44 participants engaged.
Measure 3	5 economically inactive participants starting a business by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	24 participants received mentoring support as part of 'Get Started in Business' and 'New Opportunities' programmes. 5 participants of the 'Get Started in Business' programme have started their own business.

Outcome 4	Deliver a year-round programme of vibrant public events.
Measure 1	Attract 33,000 attendees to events by 31 March 2026.
Status: Not achieved	28,750 attendees recorded during the reporting period. Unfortunately, due to severe weather our Hallowena event was cancelled which significantly impacted our ability to achieve our target.

Outcome 5	Sustain a high level of attendance in the Council's commercial Arts and Culture programme.
Measure 1	Attract 15,000 attendees to the Braid Theatre Programme by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	17,046 attendees.

Outcome 6	Drive footfall to Strategic Visitor Attractions.
Measure 1	60,000 visitors to be welcomed annually (56,000 to Carrickfergus Castle and 4,000 to Ancestral Cottages/US Rangers Museum) by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	75,406 visitors recorded during the reporting period. (70,374 at Carrickfergus Castle and 5,032 at Ancestral Cottages/US Rangers Museum).

Outcome 7	Progress the Revitalise Town Centre Programme.
Measure 1	Deliver the Shopfront Improvement Scheme by 31 March 2027.
Status: On track	Phase 3 funding has been secured, and claims are currently being processed for payment. To date, approx. £346k has been allocated to 78 local businesses and payment of grant funding has already begun.

Measure 2	Festive lighting upgrades installed in Ballymena, Carrickfergus and Larne by 31 November 2025.
Status: Achieved	Festive lighting upgrades were successfully delivered across Ballymena, Carrickfergus and Larne by 31 November 2025.
Measure 3	Deliver the Christmas lighting trail in Shaftsbury Park, Carrickfergus, in December 2025.
Status: Achieved	The first ever Carrickfergus Christmas Twinkle Trail was successfully held at Shaftsbury Park in December 2025.
Measure 4	Deliver 3 street art projects (Ballymena - landmark features, Carrickfergus - Youth Engagement Programme, and Larne - Street Art Jam) by 31 March 2026.
Status: Delayed but progressing	The Larne Street Art Jam was successfully delivered in August 2025. Delivery of the Carrickfergus (Youth Engagement Programme) and Ballymena (landmark features) projects has been delayed due to adverse weather conditions and is now scheduled for completion in summer 2026.
Measure 5	Install a Pop-up Park in Larne by 31 March 2026.
Status: Delayed but progressing	The contractor procurement exercise has been completed and a contract awarded. Works on the park are anticipated to start mid-May 2026.
Measure 6	Complete Dunluce Street clean-up (renew hoardings, paint facades etc.) by 31 March 2026.
Status: Delayed but progressing	Significant progress has been made, with hoardings renewed and façade painting completed. The remaining elements, including the installation of graphic design panels and artwork on the hoardings, are scheduled for completion by June 2026.

Outcome 8	Develop a strategy to address Town Centre dereliction and vacancy to enable programme start in 2026/27.
Measure 1	Programme designed and application for funding submitted to DfC by 31 March 2026.
Status: On track	The business survey has been completed, with results analysed and findings report drafted. The project is currently awaiting the release of guiding principles from DfC, which will inform programme design and enable progression to the funding application stage.

Outcome 9	Deliver Public Realm Improvements
Measure 1	Progress actions to complete public realm works at Ballymena Civic Spaces by 31 March 2026.
Status: Delayed but progressing	Initial concept designs for Fairhill and Springwell Street have been developed and are currently under review. The proposed works include new footpaths and enhanced green spaces. The project will continue into the 2026/27 financial year.
Measure 2	Progress actions to complete public realm works at Braid River Walkway by 31 March 2026.
Status: On track	The draft RIBA Stage One Design Report has been completed and submitted for review by lead officers. The next phase of work will focus on agreeing delivery phasing and lease arrangements with DfI Active Travel and DfC, alongside confirming potential funding opportunities to support implementation.
Measure 3	Complete design for Phase 2 of Point Street Public Realm Scheme Larne by 31 March 2026.
Status: Delayed but progressing	While the project has experienced some delays, ongoing engagement with DfC and DfI has helped clarify key elements of the scheme and materials have now been confirmed. The next step is to finalise and issue the design brief to appoint an Integrated Consultancy Team (ICT), which will lead on the detailed design and prepare the necessary procurement documentation for the appointment of a contractor. This project will extend into the 2026/27 reporting year.

Outcome 10	Deliver Town Centre events to increase footfall and attract visitors to the borough.
Measure 1	15 events or activities held within Ballymena, Carrickfergus, and Larne town centres by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	<p>The target of 15 events has been surpassed, with a wide-ranging and successful programme delivered across the Borough.</p> <p>Events included the Carrickfergus Artisan Markets held monthly, both outdoors and in the Town Hall during winter months, alongside Cirque de Carrickfergus, which provided street performers, workshops and family-friendly entertainment.</p> <p>In Larne, the Broadway Summer Carnival and a six-week programme of Feel Good Friday music sessions created a lively</p>

	<p>atmosphere, while additional activity such as a silent disco further enhanced engagement.</p> <p>Ballymena hosted a number of high-profile events including the Summer Carnival (delivered in partnership with Ballymena BID) and the Fall Fashion Show at The Braid, which sold out.</p> <p>Seasonal programming also played a key role, with Halloween events in Carrickfergus and Larne, and extensive Christmas programming including markets, a craft village, live music and street entertainment across all three towns.</p>
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Outcome 11	Progress the Cullybackey to Galgorm Greenway project.
Measure 1	Contractors appointed and on-site by 31 March 2026.
Status: Delayed but progressing	Due to a delay in securing planning approval the contractor is not yet on site. This will progress into the 2026/27 planning year.

Outcome 12	Progress Carnfunnock Country Park project.
Measure 1	Contractors appointed and on-site by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	Contractors have been appointed and were on site by 31 March 2026. Site clearance has now been completed, with construction activity underway and progress continuing in line with the agreed programme for completion in Spring 2027.

Outcome 13	Deliver the Play Park Investment Framework.
Measure 1	3 play park refurbishments delivered by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	3 playparks have been refurbished. These include Fisherwick in Ballymena, Oakfield in Carrickfergus, and Bardic Drive in Larne.

Outcome 14	Efficient payment processes and reduce bad debt.
Measure 1	A minimum of 60% of payments made within 10 working days.
Status: Achieved	81% of payments were made within 10 working days.
Measure 2	A minimum of 80% of payments made within 30 calendar days.
Status: Achieved	88% of payments were made within 30 calendar days.

Outcome 15	Achieve statutory Planning Service targets.
Measure 1	Major planning applications processed within an average of 30 weeks by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	This indicator is based on the median time taken to process a major planning application to a 'decision' or 'withdrawal'. The latest verified data is for the period April to December 2025, when an average processing time of 26.6 weeks was recorded.
Measure 2	Local planning applications processed within an average of 15 weeks by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	The latest available data is for the period April to December 2025, when a median processing time of 7.4 weeks was recorded.
Measure 3	At least 70% of enforcement cases concluded within 39 weeks by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	The latest available data is for the period April to December 2025, when 74.8% of cases were concluded within 39 weeks.

Planet

Our ambition:

By 2028, Mid and East Antrim will be at the forefront of balancing progression with sustainability. We will be an emerging NI hub for innovation, environmental and cleantech skills training, and green economic growth. Our commitment to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 will have set a standard for excellence across the region. Our dedication to safeguarding our natural and built heritage and preserving the environment through climate change mitigation and adaptation, will ensure a thriving and resilient future for generations to come.

To achieve this, we will:

- Empower, educate, and work in partnership with our citizens, communities, and businesses, to progress the borough towards net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.
- Support local communities to create an environmentally resilient and sustainable borough that is equipped to deal with emergency situations, including climate adaptation.
- Protect our natural environment, enhance biodiversity, and retain or increase Council's current levels of carbon capture.
- Lead by example and reduce the impact of our own operations to progress our organisation towards net-zero emissions by 2040, by embedding sustainability and climate adaptation into all decision-making.
- Deliver an effective and efficient waste service that supports citizens, communities, and businesses to reduce waste and promote a more circular economy.

Under this theme, we have 16 measures. Of these:

- 88% have been achieved or are on track (14 of 16 measures)
- 12% are delayed but progressing (2 of 16 measures)

What you'll see

Outcome 1	Support local businesses to be more sustainable through MEANZ and other Cleantech projects and initiatives.
Measure 1	10 businesses engaged in net zero activities by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	13 businesses engaged.

Outcome 2	Deliver programmes to support local communities and reduce the amount of materials going to landfill.
Measure 1	Deliver 5 circular economy initiatives by 31 March 2026 (MEA School Uniform Scheme, MEA Christmas Toy Container, Community Fridges, Community RePaint Scheme, and the Spectacle Reuse Scheme).
Status: Achieved	<p>All five initiatives have been successfully delivered, supporting cost-of-living pressures, promoting reuse, and reducing waste across the borough:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MEA School Uniform Scheme: Successfully delivered during Summer 2025, helping families reduce clothing costs by redistributing good-quality school uniforms. • MEA Christmas Toy Scheme: Successfully delivered, with 4.1 tonnes of toys donated and redistributed, supporting families and reducing waste during the festive period. • Community Fridges: An ongoing, volunteer-led initiative delivered jointly by the Climate and Parks teams, providing access to surplus food while reducing food waste. • Community RePaint Scheme: Operating through the three main Household Recycling Centres, enabling residents and community groups to reuse surplus paint and divert it from disposal. Since March 2026, over 1800 litres of paint have been given out. • Spectacle Reuse Scheme: Collected 12, 240-litre bins (approx. 720kg) of donated reading glasses, promoting reuse and supporting those who may struggle to access eye care.

Outcome 3	Ensure continuous improvement in emergency preparedness and community resilience.
Measure 1	Review and test the Council's Emergency Plan, incorporating recent severe weather learnings by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	Following detailed debriefs from recent severe weather, the Emergency Plan was fully updated to reflect learnings, and initial testing has been undertaken. Further exercises are planned to ensure continued refinement as new structures and arrangements are embedded.
Measure 2	Deliver 4 local workshops to build community resilience by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	<p>Following consultation with community groups and the Community Development team, it was identified that a more efficient way to deliver the training was via integration into existing Community Cluster meetings and partner engagements, rather than delivering standalone workshops.</p> <p>Additionally, a Community Resilience Network online platform was secured to support engagement, coordination, and information sharing with community groups. Planning is underway to use this platform as a key mechanism for securing community involvement and supporting the delivery of resilience-building activity going forward.</p>

Outcome 4	Increased protection and expansion of the borough's tree population through the delivery of strategic greening initiatives.
Measure 1	Develop 3 tree nurseries and/or community gardens by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	3 nurseries developed. These include Ecos in Ballymena (in collaboration with Friends of Ecos), Jubilee Farm in Larne and Groundbreakers Doury Road in Ballymena.
Measure 2	Implement a comprehensive Tree Strategy by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	The Tree Strategy is in place and is currently being delivered through a range of partnership arrangements. A formal launch of the strategy is planned for later in the year.

Outcome 5	We will reduce our environmental impact and improve sustainability by achieving environmental targets and accreditations.
Measure 1	Secure continued accreditation to ISO14001 by 30 September 2025.
Status: Achieved	Accreditation secured and audit passed with no non-conformances or observations.
Measure 2	At least Gold Level in the Business in the Community NI (BITCNI) Environmental Benchmarking Survey.
Status: Achieved	We successfully achieved Gold Level in the Business in the Community NI (BITCNI) Environmental Benchmarking Survey.

Outcome 6	Operate more sustainably through reduced carbon emissions, lower energy consumption, and increased use of renewable energy.
Measure 1	3 LED lighting upgrade projects implemented in Council buildings by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	4 LED lighting upgrades completed. These include Ballymena Showgrounds, Carrickfergus Civic Centre, Larne Leisure Centre and Carrickfergus Leisure Centre pool area.
Measure 2	3 Solar PV arrays installed at suitable Council facilities by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	Solar PV arrays have been installed at the People's Park, Tully Household Recycling Centre and Nursery, and Waveney Road, Ballymena.
Measure 3	3 battery energy storage systems installed to complement new PV installations by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	Upgrades to battery energy storage systems have been successfully completed at Springwell Street Car Park (Ballymena), Tully Household Recycling Centre, Waveney Road Household Recycling Centre, and the People's Park. Extended battery storage capacity has also been installed at Portglenone Marina, Sullatober Waste Transfer Station, and Sullatober Depot.

Measure 4	12 EV charging stations installed by 31 March 2026, providing a total of 24 EV charge points across the borough.
Status: Delayed but progressing	Following a delay, this project is now back on track and scheduled for delivery by October 2026.

Outcome 7	Implementation of the fully co-mingled dry recycling collection service to support improved recycling rates and operational efficiency.
Measure 1	New dry recycling collection service launched by 1 November 2026.
Status: delayed but progressing	Following the completion of a judicial review, this project is now in the mobilisation phase, focusing on preparing services and operations as agreed by the Council.

Outcome 8	Compliance with all statutory recycling and landfill targets.
Measure 1	Ensure at least 50% of household waste collected is sent for recycling by 31 March 2026.
Status: On track	Latest available data is for the period April to December 2025, when 55.6% was recorded. Data up March 2026 will be published in our next update.
Measure 2	Ensure no more than 16,387 tonnes of biodegradable municipal waste is sent to landfill by 31 March 2026.
Status: On track	Latest available data is for the period April to December 2025, when 839 tonnes were recorded. Data up to March 2026 will be published in our next update.
Measure 3	Ensure collected municipal waste arisings does not exceed 79,500 tonnes by 31 March 2026.
Status: On track	Latest available data is for the period April to December 2026, when 58,446 tonnes were recorded. Data up to March 2026 will be published in our next update.

Performance

Our ambition:

By 2028, we will operate as a single entity, fully embracing the vision of the Reorganisation of Public Administration (RPA 2015). We will be a sustainable, customer focused organisation and employer of choice, attracting and retaining the right people, with the right skills, to deliver our vision for the borough. We will provide value for money services by building solid foundations, learning from our mistakes, and instilling sound governance arrangements.

To achieve this, we will:

- Redesign the organisation to work more effectively and efficiently, ensuring financial competence and resilience, delivering social value, and offering good value for money services in a sustainable manner.
- Develop our key support services to help us achieve our goals, underpinning and enabling us to operate effectively and meet our core, statutory and regulatory obligations.
- Continue to work alongside our partners to progress the delivery of the Community Plan and other Council strategies, sharing knowledge, skills, and best practice, to create synergy and influence decision-making to achieve the best outcomes for the borough at an affordable cost.
- Empower and equip our staff, through comprehensive skill development initiatives, fostering a culture of continuous learning, innovation, and growth, ultimately enhancing individual and organisational capabilities.
- Prioritise employee health and wellbeing, encompassing physical, mental, and emotional health, creating an environment where everyone feels valued, motivated and confident, enabling them to thrive personally and professionally.
- Invest in our Elected Members, providing them with the required skills and knowledge to effectively govern.
- Include stakeholders in our decision-making processes through consultation, communication, and engagement, in order to increase satisfaction levels.

Under this theme, we have 14 measures. Of these:

- 64% have been achieved or are on track (9 of 14 measures)
- 22% are delayed but progressing (3 of 14 measures)
- 14% have not been achieved (2 of 14 measures)

What you'll see

<p>Outcome 1</p>	<p>Ensure high-quality, efficient, and sustainable service delivery through smart use of technology and strong financial stewardship.</p>
<p>Measure 1</p>	<p>Utilise Council technologies to improve service delivery.</p>
<p>Status: Achieved</p>	<p>During the year, we continued to make strong progress in improving the use of TechOne within the Finance Pillar, with activity focused on strengthening digital processes, improving data management, and delivering critical system upgrades.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document Management (Ezescan) – The digital document management environment has been set up and integrated. Testing has been completed and the module is ready to progress to wider user acceptance testing, subject to business capacity. • Inventory Management – System configuration, testing, and staff training were completed, supporting improved stock control, purchasing, and reporting. Further rollout was paused later in the year to prioritise delivery of the HR and payroll system. • Procurement (Sourcing) – Core procurement functionality has been configured and tested, providing a foundation for more efficient, transparent procurement processes and improved supplier engagement. • Accounts Payable – Opportunities have been explored to enhance digital interaction with suppliers, with potential solutions identified to streamline processes and reduce manual administration. • HR & Payroll – A major focus during the year was the successful implementation of the new TechOne HR and Payroll system. Configuration, testing, data migration, and parallel payroll runs were completed, and the system is now live, modernising payroll delivery and workforce management. • Access Management – New access profiles have been developed and tested, strengthening data security and ensuring appropriate system access aligned to staff roles. <p>With the HR and Payroll system now operational, work is planned to resume on the remaining TechOne modules and to continue identifying opportunities to maximise the benefits of TechOne across the Finance Pillar.</p>

Measure 2	Ensure robust budget arrangements and sound financial management.
Status: Achieved	<p>We have maintained a strong approach to financial governance, with effective budgetary control measures in place throughout the year. Financial performance continues to be monitored through the production of regular management accounts, enabling ongoing oversight of expenditure against approved budgets and supporting informed financial decision-making.</p> <p>Engagement with senior managers through routine financial review meetings remains an important control mechanism, ensuring budget variances are reviewed in a timely manner and that any required actions are identified and addressed.</p> <p>Targeted training has enhanced financial awareness and capability across the organisation, with further learning planned to strengthen accountability and ensure alignment with the Council's financial priorities.</p>

Outcome 2	Ensure statutory compliance and transparency of the Council.
Measure 1	100% of information requests under Freedom of Information (FOI) and/or Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) to be processed within the statutory timeframe of 20 working days.
Status: Not achieved	During the reporting period 96% of requests were processed within the statutory timeframe. Delays in responding to information requests were primarily due to the complexity of certain cases and the significant resources they require. Work is ongoing to improve response times and ensure that requests are prioritised appropriately.
Measure 2	100% of subject access requests processed within the statutory timeframe of one calendar month.
Status: Not achieved	During the reporting period 75% of requests were processed within the statutory timeframe. Delays in responding to information requests were primarily due to the complexity of certain cases and the significant resources they require. Work is ongoing to improve response times and ensure that requests are prioritised appropriately.

Measure 3	0% of Information Commissioner’s Officer (ICO) Decision Notices overturning Council’s FOI/EIR decisions.
Status: Achieved	None of Council’s decisions were overturned by the ICO during the reporting period.

Outcome 3	Work in partnership with various community, business and tourism stakeholders to progress various initiatives and support programmes.
Measure 1	Embed the Council’s new Strategic Partnership function, with work plans developed, by 31 March 2026.
Status: Delayed but progressing	Initial research and mapping exercises have taken place. These have included meetings with other councils, NILGA and internal departmental meetings. A report has been compiled and will be discussed with the newly formed Senior Management Team in order to determine how to embed this work.

Outcome 4	Build organisational capability through targeted learning and development.
Measure 1	1.5 days to be spent on employee learning and development by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	1.85 days were provided.
Measure 2	100 training courses to be delivered to staff by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	Over 100 training courses provided.

Outcome 5	Support the health, wellbeing, and resilience of the staff.
Measure 1	2 health and wellbeing initiatives delivered for staff by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	<p>Throughout the year, health and wellbeing information has been actively promoted to staff via regular email communications, helping to raise awareness of available supports.</p> <p>Initiatives highlighted included Men’s Health Week, Northern Ireland Alcohol Awareness Week, World Suicide Prevention Day, Mental Health Awareness topics, support for employees and families during exam results, and the promotion of the Employee Assistance Programme (LENA) alongside multiple editions of the LENA e-zine.</p>

	<p>The Council has signed up to the Age Friendly Employer Pledge and continues to actively participate in the Business in the Community (BITC) Age Positive Workplace initiative.</p> <p>Procurement for period products was completed and the initiative was successfully rolled out across all Council facilities in January 2026. This launch was supported by a webinar on Menstrual Health in the Workplace. In addition, a Menopause Workshop was delivered in March 2026.</p> <p>Further wellbeing activities included staff walks organised across Carrickfergus, Larne and Ballymena to mark National Heart Month, with 33 staff participating and raising £280 for the Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke charity. This was complemented by a Healthy Hearts webinar. A Will-Making webinar was also open to all staff, raising awareness of this employee benefit.</p>
Measure 2	Absence levels do not exceed 15 days per annum per FTE.
Status: Achieved	A figure of 13.89 days per FTE was recorded.

Outcome 6	Learning and Development for Elected Members
Measure 1	15 hours of training per annum to be offered to Elected Members by 31 March 2026.
Status: Achieved	75.15 hours of training were delivered.
Measure 2	Work towards the NILGA Councillor Development Charter with the aim of securing it by 31 March 2027.
Status: On track	<p>The Councillor Development Sub-Committee has overseen a programme of review and forward planning, including the completion of a comprehensive Training Needs Analysis. This work is now informing the development of a structured Councillor training programme to support effective delivery.</p> <p>The Sub-Committee has met monthly since October 2025, with Terms of Reference formally agreed and work underway to compile the required evidence in support of the Councillor Development Charter. In parallel, an Elected Members Learning and Development Strategy and Action Plan has been approved.</p>

Outcome 7	Strengthen the Council's Customer Service function.
Measure 1	Finalise and seek approval of the Customer & Digital Strategy by 31 March 2026.
Status: Delayed but progressing	Despite a brief delay, good progress is being made towards finalising the Customer & Digital Strategy, with approval anticipated in the coming months.

Outcome 8	Strengthen Council-wide Consultation and Engagement.
Measure 1	Finalise and seek approval of the new Consultation & Engagement Strategy by 31 March 2026.
Status: Delayed but progressing	Following the successful appointment of an Inclusion & Equality Manager and a Consultation & Engagement Officer, good progress is being made on the development of the Consultation & Engagement Strategy. Work is now advancing well towards finalisation, with approval anticipated in the coming months.

Get Involved

It is really important that Mid and East Antrim citizens' voices are heard, and that they have the opportunity to play their part in shaping local democracy.

We want your input, views and feedback as we continue our transformation and work to deliver the very best public services.

We are committed to championing openness and transparency, and invite members of the public who live, work or study in the borough to put their questions directly to Elected Members and officers.

To submit a question to the Council, please complete the short form at:

www.midandeastantrim.gov.uk/publicquestions

Suggestions and comments on areas where we can enhance our services can also be submitted directly to the Policy & Performance Team at any time throughout the year, via any of the following methods:

By email: performance@midandeastantrim.gov.uk
By telephone: 0300 1245 000
By post: Policy & Performance Team
Mid and East Antrim Borough Council
1-29 Bridge Street
Ballymena
BT43 5EJ

Closing Remarks

As we reflect on the past 12 months, I am incredibly proud of the collective achievements of everyone involved in delivering our Corporate Plan.

Each milestone brings us closer to realising our vision of improving the quality of life for all who live, work, and visit Mid and East Antrim. The dedication and commitment shown by our teams have been exemplary, and the positive impact on our borough is clear to see.

Looking ahead, we remain focused on furthering this journey. We hope you will continue to work with us as we pursue the ambitious objectives set out in our Corporate Plan.

Together, we can ensure that Mid and East Antrim remains a vibrant and thriving place for everyone.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Valerie Watts
Interim Chief Executive

For further information contact us at:

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council
1-29 Bridge Street
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Telephone number: 0300 1245 000

Email us at: enquiries@midandeastantrim.gov.uk

Visit our website: www.midandeastantrim.gov.uk

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This is the end of the document.

Council/Committee:	Council
Date:	8 June 2026
Report Title:	Srebrenica 31st Anniversary Commemoration request
Publication Status:	Open
Author:	David Hume, Civic Events Co-ordinator
Approver:	Sarah Williams, Assistant Director – Business Support

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to present a draft response to correspondence from the Chair of Remembering Srebrenica.

2. Background

- 2.1. The Council has received email communication from the Chair of Remembering Srebrenica (set out at **Appendix 1**).
- 2.2. Srebrenica was the scene of a massacre of at least 8,372 male Muslim Bosniaks in 1995 during the Balkans conflict. Many of the boys and men were separated from their loved ones and taken away, with a small Dutch UN peacekeeping unit unable to intervene. The massacre which followed was the worst in Europe since the Second World War.

3. Key Issues for Consideration

- 3.1. It is proposed that the Council responds (a draft response is set out at **Appendix 2**) with the following suggestions:
 - Organising to plant a tree in memory of Srebrenica and erecting a plaque if the charity wishes to fund the same, and hosting a public event to which Borough opinion formers would be invited.
 - Engagement with the Remembering Srebrenica charity.
- 3.2. This would be coordinated under the civic events work in Democratic Services.



4. General Considerations / Implications

- 4.1. Financial implications: This would be new spend, but could be accommodated within the existing Civic Events budget. A reception as suggested would be likely to cost in the region of £300.
- 4.2. Human Resources (are there sufficient staffing resources or will additional resources be required – financial impact will need to be provided): This work would be co-ordinated by Democratic Services.
- 4.3. Equality Screening: any equality implications would be identified using the Council's usual screening process.
- 4.4. Assets: N/A
- 4.5. Alignment with Corporate Priorities and Link to Corporate Plan: aligned to corporate objectives to ensure the Borough is seen as a welcoming and safe place for all to live and work.
- 4.6. Rural Proofing and Environmental Impact: N/A

5. Proposed Way Forward

- 5.1. It is recommended that Council approve the draft response and the actions contained therein.

6. Recommendation or Decision

- 6.1. It is recommended that Council approve the draft response and the actions contained therein.

7. Appendices / Links

- Appendix 1 – Correspondence received
- Appendix 2 – Draft response

Appendix 1

**Commemorate Srebrenica Memorial Week 2026**

Dear Mrs Watts,

I am writing from Remembering Srebrenica, a charitable organisation funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and supported by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. Our work raises awareness of the Bosnian genocide and brings people together to tackle hatred and build safer, stronger communities across the UK. Since 2013, we have educated over 280,000 young people on the lessons from Srebrenica, supported hundreds of memorial events each year, and developed a network of over 1,500 Community Champions committed to standing up to hatred and intolerance.

Each year, we raise awareness during Srebrenica Memorial Week by working with councils, schools, faith groups and community organisations. This year's Memorial Week will take place from 5th to 12th July, marking the 31st anniversary of the genocide, in which nearly 100,000 people were killed, two million displaced, and up to 50,000 women subjected to sexual violence. It remains, as recognised by the UN, the worst atrocity on European soil since



the Second World War. I am writing to invite you to join communities across the UK in marking Srebrenica Memorial Week this year.

There are a number of simple ways your council can take part:

- Hosting a memorial event
- Marking the week through a moment of reflection or internal communications
- Sharing messages with your local community

At a time when hate crime and division remain significant challenges, commemorating Srebrenica provides an opportunity to promote understanding, strengthen cohesion, and demonstrate civic leadership.

If you are planning to take part, please let us know.

We would be delighted to support your participation and to include your council as part of national commemorations this year.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dr Waqar Azmi", with a date "2024" written below it.

Dr Waqar Azmi OBE
Chair, Remembering Srebrenica



Appendix 2 – draft response

Dear **Dr Waqar Azmi OBE**

Thank you for your letter in relation to Remembering Srebrenica UK, which I read with interest.

It is very important that public awareness is not allowed to fade from such terrible events, and that they are a continual reminder to us that blind prejudice leads humanity to a very bleak place indeed.

Due to limited resources, the Council is unable to fund this request. However, if the charity wished to cover the cost of a tree and plaque, Council would arrange for it to be planted and would host a commemorative event to which opinion formers within the Borough would be invited, thus helping to highlight the anniversary.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Yours sincerely,