



**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE HELD
AT ANTRIM CIVIC CENTRE ON MONDAY 5 FEBRUARY 2024 AT 6.30 PM**

In the Chair	:	Councillor J Burbank
Committee Members (In person)	:	Alderman – J Smyth Councillors – R Foster, J Gilmour, H Magill, E McLaughlin, M Ní Chonghaile, V McWilliam, and M Stewart
Committee Members (Remote)	:	Alderman – P Bradley Councillors - AM Logue, A McAuley, L O'Hagan and L Smyth
Non Committee Members (In person)	:	Councillor – B Webb
Officers Present	:	Chief Executive – R Baker Director of Sustainability – M Lavery Director of Parks and Leisure - M McDowell Head of Waste Strategy and Sustainability – L Daly ICT Change Officer – A Cole Member Services Officer – C McGrandle

CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the February Operations Committee meeting and reminded all present of the audio recording procedures.

1 APOLOGIES

Alderman Clarke

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

3 INTRODUCTION OF NEW STAFF

None

4 ITEMS FOR DECISION

4.1 L/LEI/002/VOL4 LEISURE GRANT AID PROGRAMME

The purpose of this report was to seek approval for the funding recommendations relating to Council's Leisure Grant Aid Programme, covering the period from November to December 2023.

In total, 18 applications were submitted and evaluated during this period. A table presenting the application details and associated recommendations were circulated for Members' reference. Upon approval of the listed grants, the remaining balances in each funding category were outlined below:

Category	No. of apps	Budget	Approved spend to date 23/24	No. of apps.	Grants proposed (£)	Funding Balance remaining (subject to approval of application)
Capital Grants	1	£20,000	£20,000	0	£0	£0
Grants to Clubs	15	£31,198	£29,698	1	£1,500	£0
Grants to Athletes	35	£47,511	£43,736	6	£3,775	£0
Grants to Coaches and Officials	14	£7,126	£5,939	6	£1,187	£0
Sports Event Grant	12	£47,277	£35,570	4	£12,129	-£422
Defibrillator Grant	8	£16,888	£16,888	0	£0	£0
Allocation total	85	£31,198	£151,831	17	£18,591	£18,169
Fitness suite Gold Card	4	20 Applications	4	1	0 eligible	15 applications
Total spend to date including this call, if approved £170,422						

Proposed by Alderman Smyth

Seconded by Councillor McWilliam and agreed that

approval be granted for the Leisure Grant Aid Programme, covering the period from November to December 2023.

*ACTION BY: Anna Boyle, Sport and Physical Activity Programmes Manager and
Conor McCallion, Leisure Development Manager*

4.2 WM/WM/037/VOL2 REVIEW OF WASTE COLLECTION POLICY

The purpose of this report was to seek approval for the Waste Collection Policy 2024.

The Waste Collection Policy (circulated) had been in place since February 2015 and is reviewed on a regular basis and updated as agreed. The Policy provided a framework for the collection of waste in the Borough and was required to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of the service.

Following review, the changes to the policy were highlighted. The EQIA screening document had been reviewed and did not require amendment.

The Director of Sustainability answered a query in relation to any damage caused to bins as well as the warranty period of five years within which the bins will be replaced free of charge and agreed to include this in an amended Waste Collection Policy

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Alderman Smyth and agreed that

the Waste Collection Policy 2024 be approved with the agreed amendment.

ACTION BY: Lynsey Daly, Head of Waste Strategy and Sustainability

4.3 WM/S/003 SUSTAINABILITY WORKING GROUP MINUTES

The purpose of this report was to seek approval for the minutes of the Sustainability Working Group.

The meeting of the Sustainability Working Group was held on 9 January 2024 and a copy of the minutes (circulated) were attached for Members approval.

At the meeting, Members were updated on the following:

- 1) Appointment of the Chair and Vice-Chair;
- 2) New Structure of the Sustainability Directorate;
- 3) Possible Sustainability Strategies, Action Plan and Policies going forward;
- 4) Council projects currently operating that meet the UN Sustainable Development Goals;
- 5) Carbon Literacy Training and internal training update;
- 6) SOLACE Position Paper on Sustainability/Climate Change.

In response to a Member's query regarding the potential to allow more

members to join the Sustainability Working Group, the Director of Sustainability stated that this would be discussed at the next meeting.

Proposed by Councillor Foster

Seconded by Councillor McLaughlin and agreed that

the minutes of the Sustainability Working Group held on 9 January 2024 be approved.

ACTION BY: Gillian McGrath, PA to the Director of Sustainability

4.4 PK/BIO/011 ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION – SUSTAINABLE NORTHERN IRELAND

The purpose of this report was to seek approval to retain the current level of funding to Sustainable Northern Ireland (SNI) for the coming financial year.

SNI works with a range of stakeholders, including local councils, with the aim of a sustainable low carbon future. Correspondence had been received from SNI (circulated) and it was proposed to contribute financial support of £6,000 for the incoming financial year as we did last year.

Members were reminded that Council had provided support to SNI for a number of years and the membership had given access to quarterly networking forums, best practices case studies/decision making tools, and consultation responses. SNI provided valuable access to information which was useful to the Sustainability Working Group.

Proposed by Councillor Logue

Seconded by Councillor McWilliam and agreed that

Council approves the continuation of the current level of funding, £6,000, Sustainable Northern Ireland for 2024/2025.

ACTION BY: Gillian McGrath, PA to the Director of Sustainability

4.5 PK/BIO/044 REVIEW OF BATHING WATERS – CONFIRMATION OF BATHING WATER OPERATOR AT REA'S WOOD

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' direction regarding Council undertaking the statutory responsibilities of Bathing Water Operator for Rea's Wood, Lough Neagh.

Members were reminded that, during the January Operations Committee meeting, it was recommended that the Council confirm to the Department of Agriculture, Environment, and Rural Affairs (DAERA) its intention to undertake the statutory responsibilities of Bathing Water Operator at Rea's Wood, Lough Neagh. However, Members requested that the item be deferred for further consideration due to prevalent issues related to Blue Green Algae during the summer months of the past year. Additionally, Members raised concerns within the Department's data that the site's water quality was determined to be poor outside of the issues related to the algae.

DAERA recently delivered a presentation to senior Officers of those Council

areas that border the Lough, addressing the issues of Blue Green Algae and outlining ongoing actions to prevent its recurrence. The presentation was circulated for Members' reference. Furthermore, NILGA had also established a Lough Neagh Interagency Partnership, which recently held its first meeting. NILGA have been invited to present its progress to the March Operations Committee.

Regarding the general water quality, notwithstanding the algae, it was noted, with the circulated correspondence, that the "poor" rating had been distorted due to one particularly high reading, and that the statistical assessment was based on a four-year dataset. However, as a candidate water, only one year's data is available for Rea's Wood.

The specific responsibilities of a Bathing Water Operator were outlined in Annex 3 of the enclosure for Members' reference.

The Director of Parks and Leisure responded to a Member's queries around the responsibilities of being a Bathing Water Operator including that for removal of waste and associated costs.

The Director of Parks and Leisure clarified the separate procedure for reporting Blue Green Algae sightings and testing around this issue.

The Director of Parks and Leisure confirmed that DAERA would not continue to test for faecal matter and E Coli, should the Council decline to take on the responsibilities of Bathing Water Operator at Rea's Wood, Lough Neagh but that testing for Blue Green Algae would continue if the Department was alerted to its presence.

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor Logue and agreed that

approval be granted for Council to undertake the statutory responsibilities of Bathing Water Operator for Rea's Wood, Lough Neagh.

On the proposal being put to the meeting, a recorded vote was requested by Alderman Smyth and Members voted as follows:

In favour of the Proposal Members viz 10	Against the Proposal Members viz 4	Abstentions Members viz 0
Councillors – Burbank, Foster, Gilmour, Logue, McLaughlin, McWilliam, Ní Chonghaile, O'Hagan, Smyth and Stewart	Aldermen – Bradley and Smyth Councillors – Magill and McAuley	

On the substantive proposal being put to the Committee, 10 Members voted in favour, 4 against and 0 abstentions and it was agreed that

the substantive proposal be declared carried.

ACTION BY: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

5 ITEMS FOR NOTING

5.1 WM/WM/037/VOL2 HABITAT FOR HUMANITY CHRISTMAS TOY COLLECTIONS

The purpose of this report was to update Members on the Habitat for Humanity Christmas Toy Collections.

Members were reminded that in 2023 collection points for the donation of good quality pre-loved toys were located at each of the five Household Recycling Centres in a continuation of the partnership with Habitat for Humanity to provide gifts to families in the Borough at Christmas.

Following from the success of a pilot in 2020, and further collections in 2021 and 2022, it was recognised that there was a significant demand and need for the scheme. As in previous years, the collected toys were repaired, cleaned and sold on at reduced prices in Habitat for Humanity's ReStore shops and two pop-up shops at Mayfield Village Hall and Muckamore Community Centre, in conjunction with the Community Planning team.

Habitat for Humanity stated that the quality, range and types of toys that were donated were excellent and in total 5,106 toys were donated, providing toys for children in many families across the Borough and diverting over 5.6 tonnes of waste from landfill. The total was slightly down on last year, however it was felt that this was due to the current cost of living crisis and an increase in people selling good-quality toys on online marketplace sites.

Any toys remaining after the Christmas period had been donated by Habitat for Humanity to local groups identified by the Community Planning team, including play-groups, nurseries and Women's Aid, to ensure that all toys donated reached children in the Borough.

Once again the initiative had demonstrated a need in the Borough and it was proposed to run the collections in 2024 in partnership with Habitat for Humanity and the Community Planning team.

Proposed by Councillor Smyth

Seconded by Councillor Ní Chonghaile and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

7. ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

7.1 L/LEI/002/VOL4 - SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT - MARY PETERS TRUST - REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE 2024/25

The purpose of this report was to seek approval to the Mary Peter's Trust request for funding to support young athletes within the Borough.

The circulated correspondence had been received from the Mary Peter's Trust, requesting financial support for its funding to local athletes.

Members were reminded that the Trust provides encouragement and financial support to young athletes from across Northern Ireland. Within the Borough the range of sporting disciplines supported in 2023/24 includes athletics, football, golf, gymnastics, netball, swimming, archery, canoeing, and para triathlon.

Council support for the last seven financial years had been £2,000 per annum. Due to the increase in costs during that time, Members may consider increasing Council's contribution to £2500.

A list of those athletes from the Borough who have received support were set out in the letter.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour
Seconded by Councillor Magill and agreed that

a contribution of £2,500 be made to support the work of the Mary Peters Trust within the Borough for 2024/2025.

ACTION BY: Vicki Kyles, Personal Assistant to Director of Parks and Leisure Operations

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED 'IN CONFIDENCE'

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Councillor McAuley and agreed that

the following Committee business be taken In Confidence and the livestream and audio recording would cease.

6 ITEMS IN CONFIDENCE

6.1 IN CONFIDENCE WM/arc21/4/VOL11 ARC21 JOINT COMMITTEE PAPERS

The purpose of this report was to update members on the most recent arc21 Joint Committee meeting.

The papers for the arc21 Joint Committee Meeting were circulated for:

- 25 January 2024

Members were reminded that these documents are confidential and may be legally privileged or otherwise protected from disclosure so therefore Members should not disclose this information to any third party and the information must be kept secure.

[REDACTED]

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Alderman Smyth and agreed that

the papers be noted.

ACTION: Michael Lavery, Director of Sustainability

6.2 IN CONFIDENCE WM/WM/37/VOL2 REVIEW OF CLEANSING CHARGES 2024-2025

The purpose of this report was to seek approval for the Cleansing Charges 2024-2025, relevant to

1. Trade Waste Collection Service for Recyclable Waste (glass & food waste);
2. Sale of Domestic Recycling Waste Collection Containers.

Background

In December 2023 Members agreed to the increase in fees and charges for trade waste collections of residual waste and sale of black bins.

This report identified two further areas which to date had not had a fee applied, which was no longer sustainable due to increasing cost pressures.

Trade Waste Collection Service for Recyclable Waste (glass & food waste)

Council does not charge for the collection for food or glass waste from local businesses. This has meant that inflationary costs and any treatment charges had been absorbed while businesses receive free recycling waste collections.

As a result, it was proposed to introduce collection charges for food and glass waste containers. In order to encourage the continued recycling of these waste streams, it was proposed to set the collection rates at 50% of the residual waste collection charges in 2024-25, which equated to £[REDACTED] per uplift of a 240L bin (residual waste 240L costs £[REDACTED]).

It was envisaged that the introduction of this collection charge would generate approximately £75,000 of additional income through the trade waste collection service, whilst maintaining competitive rates with the private sector who already charge for the collection of recyclable waste.

Recycling Waste Collection Containers

Members would be aware, Council had provided recycling containers (blue, brown and wheelie box) free of charge to residents to encourage the use of recycling services. Council has achieved the highest recycling rates in Northern Ireland for the last few years and with all other councils charging for their recycling bins, it was proposed to place a monetary charge on the purchase or replacement of recycling containers.

The recommended charge, £[REDACTED] for 240L bin (blue & brown) or wheelie box, was still subsidised compared to the container purchase price and was 50% of the charge for a 240L black residual bin.

Council currently distributes approximately 6,600 containers per annum and it

was envisaged the proposed rates could reduce expenditure by approximately £85,000. Discounted rates would still apply for stolen bins, aging residents or re-conditioned containers.

A schedule of Proposed Charges was included (circulated) for Members' consideration.

It was not envisaged that recycling rates would be adversely effected by the proposed changes but Officers would monitor the situation and report back at the annual review of waste charges in November 2024.

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Alderman Smyth and agreed that

Council approves the introduction of the following charges from 1 April 2024:

- 1. The collection of recyclable waste (glass & food waste) from trade waste customers at 50% of the residual waste rates;**
- 2. New or replacement recycling containers (blue, brown and wheelie box) at a cost of £[REDACTED] per unit.**

ACTION BY: Lynsey Daly, Head of Waste Strategy and Sustainability

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED OUT OF 'IN CONFIDENCE'

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor McLaughlin and agreed

that the remainder of Committee business be taken in Open Session.

The Chairperson advised that audio-recording would recommence at this point.

There being no further Committee business, the Chairperson thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting concluded at 7.05 pm.

MAYOR