Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council

**LEISURE & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING**
**TUESDAY 19 MAY 2026**

| No | Item | Summary of key Recommendations | Estimated Timescale for completion |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1.** | Apologies | ***Councillor Holmes, Wisener*** | ***N/A*** |
| | | | |
| **2.** | Declarations of Interest | ***Alderman Brown Stewart*** | ***N/A*** |
| | | | |
| **3.** | Minutes of Leisure and Development Committee meeting held Tuesday 21st April 2026 | ***Confirmed as a correct record*** | ***N/A*** |
| | | | |
| **4.** | Causeway Coastal Route Draft Infrastructure Strategy | ***To recommend to Council to:*** ***1. Endorse the Causeway Coastal Route Draft Infrastructure Strategy.*** ***2. Approve commencement of Phase 1 project planning and delivery.*** | |
| | | | |
| **5.** | Sperrins Partnership | ***To recommend that Council note the robust, transparent and extensive consultation on development of the first ever Sperrin AONB 10-year Management and 5-year Action Plan and endorse the contents of the final plan*** | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | ***presented as part of this paper. To further recommend that Council notes the following: • That Sperrin AONB 10-year Management Plan and 5-year Action Plan will be professionally designed following endorsement by all partner councils. •The date of the upcoming formal launch of the new Sperrin AONB 10-year Management and 5-year Action Plan and invitation to follow in due course. • Council's contribution for period 2026-2027.*** | |
| | | | |
| **6.** | Leisure & Development 26/27 Business Plans | ***To recommend that Council consider and approve the proposed business plans for the 2026/27 period (Annex A-E), providing a focus for officers responsible for delivering Leisure and Development services.*** | ***March 2027*** |
| | | | |
| **7.** | Social Supermarket Support Programme 2026-27 | ***To recommend that Council continue contracts with Ballycastle Community Group CIC and The Glens Social Supermarket Ltd to deliver social supermarkets, to the value of £11,615.27 each.*** | ***31st March 2027*** |
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|---|---|---|---|
| **8.** | DfC Integrated Advice Partnership Fund (Debt Advice) | ***To recommend that Council considers continuing the contract for the Integrated Advice Partnership Fund (Debt Advice) Project, to Community Advice Causeway to the value of £67,091.86, exclusive of VAT for delivery up to 31st March 2027.*** | |
| | | | |
| **9.** | Culture, Arts & Heritage Fund 2026-27 | ***Noted*** | |
| | | | |
| **10.** | Coleraine Future Town Fund Board Minutes March 26 | ***Noted*** | ***N/A*** |
| | | | |
| **11.** | Local Economic Partnership Minutes April 26 | ***Noted*** | ***N/A*** |
| | | | |
| **12.** | Correspondence | ***Nil*** | ***N/A*** |
| | | | |
| | **In Committee (Items 13 – 16 inclusive)** | | |
| | | | |
| **13.** | Armed Forces Day Update | ***Noted*** | ***June 2026*** |
| | | | |
| **14.** | SWB Essential Maintenance – Upgrade Projects | ***To recommend that Council approves the progression of these projects to tender stage.*** | ***December 2026*** |
| | | | |
| **15.** | Request for Funding COAST | ***To recommend to Council:***<br>***a. Approval to enter into discussion with Community Planning partners, to consider an approach from our strategic partner Causeway Older Active Strategic Team (COAST), to financially support the*** | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | ***provision of core services for the remainder of the 2026-2027 period.*** ***And to further recommend that:*** ***b. The outcome of Community Planning partner discussions to be brought back to Council for further consideration.*** | |
| | | | |
| **16.** | Stendhal Festival | ***Deferred to full Council meeting*** | |
| | | | |
| **17.** | Any other relevant business notified in accordance with Standing Order 12. (o) | | |
| **17.1** | Dark Hedges Management Forum (Alderman Hunter) | ***Information*** | |

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE LEISURE AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER AND VIA MS TEAMS ON TUESDAY 19 MAY 2026 AT 7.05PM**



**In the Chair:** Councillor Anderson (C)

**Members Present:** Alderman Brown Stewart (C), Fielding (C), Hunter (R), Knight-McQuillan (C)
Councillors N Archibald (C), Bateson (R), Elder (C), Kyle (C), McCully (C), McGurk (R), McShane (C), Schenning (C), Watson (R), Wilson (C)

**Substitutions:** Councillor Wilson substituted for Alderman Callan
Alderman Hunter substituted for Councillor Holmes
Alderman Knight-McQuillan substituted for Councillor Kennedy
Alderman Fielding substituted for Alderman McAuley

**Officers Present:** P Mulvenna, Director of Leisure and Development (C)
N McGurk, Head of Prosperity and Place (R)
P Thompson, Head of Tourism and Recreation (C)
J Welsh, Head of Community and Culture (C)
W McCullough, Head of Sport and Wellbeing (C)
P O'Brien, Head of Funding Unit (R)
R Gillen, Coast and Countryside Manager (C)
G Fall, Events Manager (R)
U Harper, Senior Democratic Services Officer (C)

**In Attendance:** C Toner, Sperrins Partnership Lead Project Officer (C)
J Hennessey, The Paul Hogarth Company (C)

C McTaggart, ICT Operations Officer (C)
L Boyd, ICT Operations Officer (C)

Press 3 no. (R), Public 1 no. (R)

**Key:** **(R)** Attended Remotely
**(C)** Attended in the Chamber

The Director of Leisure and Development undertook a roll call.

The Chair advised Committee of its obligations and protocol whilst the meeting was being audio recorded.

## 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were recorded for Councillor Holmes and Councillor Wisener.

## 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Alderman Brown Stewart declared an interest in the Addendum report – Mark Ashton Memorial, and in Item 18 – AORB Alderman Hunter (Abbrev Dark Hedges). Having declared an Interest, Alderman Brown Stewart left the meeting during discussion of the Item.

## 3. MINUTES OF LEISURE AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD TUESDAY 21 APRIL 2026

Summary, previously circulated.

Proposed by Councillor Schenning
Seconded by Alderman Brown Stewart and

**AGREED -** That the Minutes of the Leisure and Development Committee meeting held on Tuesday 21 April 2026 were confirmed as a correct record.



**CHANGE TO ORDER OF BUSINESS**
The Director of Leisure and Development advised that Item 6 – Stendhal Festival would be heard 'In Committee'.

The Director of Leisure and Development advised that the Addendum report – Mark Ashton Memorial will be withdrawn and brought forward another time, hopefully at the June meeting.

Councillor McShane queried on what basis the report was withdrawn and queried why Members were not advised by email. She stated that the motion was passed in 2021, with almost 30,000 signatures in support of the plaque, and the decision by Council pre-dates the memorial policy. She stated that she is aware from social media that the minutes from the Memorial Advisory Group meeting were shared before going through due process by Council.

The Director of Leisure and Development advised that the normal protocol is that Members are advised at the start of the meeting if a report is to be withdrawn, but a communication was put out to Members of the Memorial Advisory Group. She stated that the reason for the Item being withdrawn is that the Chief Executive had advised that a considerable amount of additional information has been received, so the Memorial Advisory Group would need additional time to consider it to ensure that due process is followed.

Councillor McCully stated that he was disappointed that the item has been withdrawn and he will be interested to see the additional information received. He expressed his thanks to the Council officers working behind the scenes to fulfil the will of the Council.

Councillor Schenning stated that she and Councillor MA McKillop had brought the original motion in 2021 and expressed her disappointment that it had been withdrawn. She stated that she would like to see what process had been followed.

Councillor Wilson stated that he would have liked some indication that the Item was to be withdrawn. He queried whether it would be possible for the meeting to go 'In Committee' to hear further detail on the nature of the additional information. The Chair advised that there is no further information available than what has already been provided.

Councillor N Archibald stated that it was sad for this to happen on what would have been Mark Ashton's birthday.

## 4. CAUSEWAY COASTAL ROUTE DRAFT INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

Report, previously circulated, was presented by the Head of Tourism and Recreation.

**Purpose of Report**
The purpose of this report is to provide Elected Members with an update following the report presented to Committee on 21 May 2024, which outlined development opportunities between the Causeway Coastal Route (CCR) and the Wild Atlantic Way (WAW).

A Causeway Coastal Route Draft Infrastructure Strategy (Annex A, previously circulated) has since been developed, aiming to redefine the CCR as a region rather than a linear driving route, with a focus on sustainable tourism development, enhanced visitor experiences, and the protection of the natural landscape. The report seeks Elected Members' endorsement to progress with planning, consultation, and implementation of the Strategy, including the delivery of Phase 1 priority projects.

Further information is provided in the report under the following headings:

- Background
- Key objectives

- Strategic components
- Consultation Findings
- Strategic Alignment with Council Objectives
- Recommendations of the Strategy
- Priority Locations – Phase 1 Development
- Financial and Resource Implications

**Recommendation**
It is recommended that the Leisure and Development Committee recommends to Council to:
1. Endorse the Causeway Coastal Route Draft Infrastructure Strategy.
2. Approve commencement of Phase 1 project planning and delivery. This will be subject to a further shortlisting of projects and availability of resources.

Representatives from The Paul Hogarth Company presented to Elected Members at the workshop prior to the Committee meeting, and James Hennessey from The Paul Hogarth Company was in attendance at the Committee meeting to answer any further questions.

Councillor McShane thanked the representative from The Paul Hogarth Company for his presentation and stated that she hopes that there will be an opportunity to apply for more funding in future to fully realise the aspirations in the strategy.

Councillor McCully welcomed various aspect of the strategy, including the geographical spread of phase 1 development sites across the Borough.

Proposed by Councillor McShane
Seconded by Councillor McCully and

**AGREED** – To recommend to Council to:
1. Endorse the Causeway Coastal Route Draft Infrastructure Strategy.
2. Approve commencement of Phase 1 project planning and delivery.

* **The representative from The Paul Hogarth Company left the Chamber at 7.27pm.**

## 5. SPERRINS PARTNERSHIP

Report, previously circulated was presented by the Head of Tourism and Recreation.

**Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the Sperrins Partnership project activity that has taken place since the last update in November 2025 and to seek Council endorsement of the Sperrin Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) 10-year Management and 5- year Action Plan.

Further information is provided in the report under the following headings:

- Background
- Update on Activities
- Sperrin Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty 10-year Management and 5-year Action Plan
- Other activities
- Council contributions for 2026-2027

The Sperrins Partnership Lead Project Officer delivered a presentation to Members on the Sperrin AONB 10-year Management and 5-year Action Plan.

**Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Leisure & Development Committee recommends that Council note the robust, transparent and extensive consultation on development of the first ever Sperrin AONB 10-year Management and 5-year Action Plan and endorse the contents of the final plan presented as part of this paper.

It is further recommended that Leisure & Development Committee recommends that Council notes the following:

- That Sperrin AONB 10-year Management Plan and 5-year Action Plan will be professionally designed following endorsement by all partner councils.
- The date of the upcoming formal launch of the new Sperrin AONB 10-year Management and 5-year Action Plan and invitation to follow in due course.
- Council's contribution for period 2026-2027.

Councillor McGurk welcomed the presentation and noted the amount of work that has been undertaken to make the plan robust and to reflect community needs.

Proposed by Councillor McGurk
Seconded by Councillor N Archibald and

**AGREED** – To recommend that Council note the robust, transparent and extensive consultation on development of the first ever Sperrin AONB 10-year Management and 5-year Action Plan and endorse the contents of the final plan presented as part of this paper.
To further recommend that Council notes the following:

- That Sperrin AONB 10-year Management Plan and 5-year Action Plan will be professionally designed following endorsement by all partner councils.
- The date of the upcoming formal launch of the new Sperrin AONB 10-year Management and 5-year Action Plan and invitation to follow in due course.
- Council's contribution for period 2026-2027.

**6. LEISURE & DEVELOPMENT 26/27 BUSINESS PLANS**

Report, previously circulated was presented by the Director of Leisure and Development.

**Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to present to Members the 2026/2027 Leisure and Development Business Plans for members' consideration.

Further information is provided in the report under the following headings:

- Introduction
- The Purpose of the Plans
- Key Objectives & Priorities 2026/27
- Financial Position

**Recommendation**

The Committee is asked to consider and approve the proposed business plans for the 2026/27 period (Annex A-E, previously circulated), providing a focus for officers responsible for delivering Leisure and Development services.

Alderman Brown-Stewart noted that the Metropole Urban Sports Plaza was not listed. The Head of Sport & Wellbeing advised that officers are working on the project and it is hoped to bring a progress report to the Committee before the summer recess.

Proposed by Councillor McCully
Seconded by Councillor N Archibald and

**AGREED** – To recommend that Council consider and approve the proposed business plans for the 2026/27 period (Annex A-E), providing a focus for officers responsible for delivering Leisure and Development services.

**7. SOCIAL SUPERMARKET SUPPORT PROGRAMME 2026-27**

Report, previously circulated was presented by the Head of Community and Culture.

**Purpose of Report**

The purpose of the report is to seek approval for the continuation of contracts for Social Supermarket provision in The Glens DEA.

Further background information is provided in the report.

**Proposals**

It is proposed that the contracts with Ballycastle Community Group CIC and Glens Social Supermarket Ltd be continued into 2026-27 with the same targets as 2025-26 and the same funding allocation as outlined in the table below:

| **Organisation** | **Contract allocation** | **Target number of households** | **DEAs covered** |
|---|---|---|---|
| The Glens SSM | £11,615.27 | 30 | The Glens (50%) |
| Ballycastle Community Group | £11,615.27 | 20 | The Glens (50%) |

**Recommendation**

It is recommended that Council continue contracts with Ballycastle Community Group CIC and The Glens Social Supermarket Ltd to deliver social supermarkets, to the value of £11,615.27 each.

Proposed by Councillor Schenning
Seconded by Councillor McShane and

**AGREED** – To recommend that Council continue contracts with Ballycastle Community Group CIC and The Glens Social Supermarket Ltd to deliver social supermarkets, to the value of £11,615.27 each.

**8. DFC INTEGRATED ADVICE PARTNERSHIP FUND (DEBT ADVICE)**

Report, previously circulated was presented by the Head of Community and Culture.

**Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval to extend the contract for the Integrated Advice Partnership Fund (Debt Advice) project, funded by the Department for Communities (DfC), for a period of one year up to 31st March 2027.

Further information is provided in the report under the following headings:

- Background
- Project details
- Key Outcomes

**Recommendation**
It is recommended that Council considers continuing the contract for the Integrated Advice Partnership Fund (Debt Advice) Project, to Community Advice Causeway to the value of £67,091.86, exclusive of VAT for delivery up to 31st March 2027.

In response to a query from the Chair, the Head of Community and Culture advised that the additional money will allow the group to provide additional services.

Proposed by Councillor Schenning
Seconded by Alderman Brown Stewart and

**AGREED** – To recommend that Council considers continuing the contract for the Integrated Advice Partnership Fund (Debt Advice) Project, to Community Advice Causeway to the value of £67,091.86, exclusive of VAT for delivery up to 31st March 2027.

**9. CULTURE, ARTS & HERITAGE FUND 2026-27**

Report, previously circulated, presented as read.

**Purpose of Report**
The purpose of this report is to inform members of the outcome of the Culture, Arts and Heritage Programme 2026/27.

Further information is provided in the report.

Committee NOTED the report.

**10. COLERAINE FUTURE TOWN FUND BOARD MINUTES MARCH 26**

Minutes, previously circulated, presented as read.

Committee NOTED the Minutes.

**11. LOCAL ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP MINUTES APRIL 26**

Report, previously circulated, was presented as read.

Committee NOTED the Minutes.

**12. CORRESPONDENCE**

There were no items of correspondence.

**MOTION TO PROCEED '*IN COMMITTEE*'**

Proposed by Councillor Kyle
Seconded by Alderman Knight-McQuillan and

**AGREED** – to recommend that Council move '*In Committee'.*

* **Press and Public left the meeting at 7.45pm**

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

**13. ARMED FORCES DAY UPDATE**

Confidential report by virtue of paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, previously circulated was presented as read.

**Purpose of Report**
The purpose of this report is to provide Elected Members with an information update on the preparations for Armed Forces Day 2026.

Further information was provided in the report.

Committee NOTED the report.

**14. SWB ESSENTIAL MAINTENANCE – UPGRADE PROJECTS**

Confidential report by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, previously circulated was presented by the Head of Sport & Wellbeing.

**Purpose of Report**
The purpose of this report is to seek Member approval to progress to Tender Stage on a number of priority works / maintenance / upgrade projects required at Sport & Wellbeing Facilities.

Further information was provided in the report.

**Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Leisure & Development Committee approves the progression of these projects to tender stage.

As appropriate for each project, further reports will be brought back to Council for approval of contract award.

Proposed by Alderman Fielding
Seconded by Councillor McCully and

**AGREED** – To recommend that Council approves the progression of these projects to tender stage.

**15. REQUEST FOR FUNDING COAST**

Confidential report, by virtue of paragraph 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, previously circulated, was presented by the Head of Sport & Wellbeing.

**Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval to enter into discussion with Community Planning partners, to consider an approach from our strategic partner Causeway Older Active Strategic Team (COAST), to financially support the provision of core services for the remainder of the 2026-2027 period.

This will ensure continued delivery of support programmes for the older residents across the Borough, as the designated Age Sector Network provider and as detailed within Council's Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan (Age Friendly Causeway).

Further information was provided in the report.

Members are asked to consider the content of this report and recommend to Council:

a. Approval to enter into discussion with Community Planning partners, to consider an approach from our strategic partner Causeway Older Active Strategic Team (COAST), to financially support the provision of core services for the remainder of the 2026-2027 period.

   This will ensure continued delivery of support programmes for the older residents across the Borough, as the designated Age Sector Network provider and as detailed within Council's Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan (Age Friendly Causeway);

   And

b. The outcome of Community Planning partner discussions to be brought back to Council for further consideration.

Councillor Kyle noted that the service represents great value for money and asked what more could be done to promote it to elderly residents of the Borough. The Head of Sport & Wellbeing advised that the services are promoted through the Age Friendly Network and agreed to provide Members with details of how these services are promoted.

The Chair expressed concern regarding groups relying solely on Lottery funding. The Head of Community and Culture advised that her team works with the Funding Unit to look at sustainability planning.

Proposed by Councillor Kyle
Seconded by Councillor Elder and

**AGREED** – To recommend to Council:

a. Approval to enter into discussion with Community Planning partners, to consider an approach from our strategic partner Causeway Older Active Strategic Team (COAST), to financially support the provision of core services for the remainder of the 2026-2027 period.

And to further recommend that:

b. The outcome of Community Planning partner discussions to be brought back to Council for further consideration.

## 16. STENDHAL FESTIVAL

Confidential report by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, previously circulated was presented by the Director of Leisure and Development.

**Purpose of Report**
The purpose of this report is to present a request from Stendhal Festival, who in addition to receiving funding from Council through the Tourism Event Funding Programme (TEFP), is also seeking extra infrastructure provision.

**Recommendation**
Council is requested to consider the infrastructure support request from Stendhal Festival in which Council agrees to supply event hardware, the provision of cleansing support and waste management services for the 2026 Stendhal Festival, for a one-year period at an estimated cost of [redacted].

If approved, this request may be completed entirely by internal Council resources or may require external providers, with Council covering the estimated associated costs.

Members discussed the request and various issues around it, noting that it had come late for consideration.

Councillor Wilson stated that the Stendhal Festival is a wonderful event but expressed concern about setting a precedent. He requested additional information from the Stendhal organisers and stated that it would be helpful to meet with them to discuss the request.

The Director of Leisure and Development advised that this request is being considered in the context of Stendhal Festival being one of only three events in the Borough with Tourism NI International Event Status, noting that Council provides significant additional support to the other two events. The Chair noted that the NW200 and the SuperCupNI are both free events.

Councillor McGurk stated that the proposal seemed to be an equalisation of support to regional events. She proposed the recommendation as detailed in the report.

Councillor Schenning agreed with the points made by Councillor McGurk and seconded the recommendation.

Councillor McCully proposed an amendment, that the decision be deferred to full Council, to allow Members to obtain additional information from the Stendhal organisers. He stated that there should be engagement between the Stendhal organisers and Elected Members.

The Head of Tourism and Recreation provided detail on the support provided to the NW200 and the proposed support to be provided by Council to Stendhal Festival, including which elements could be provided gratis from Council's own facilities.

Councillor Wilson seconded Councillor McCully's amendment. He emphasised the need to consider the economic benefit to the Borough. He requested that Members be provided with the latest available figures for the economic impact of events funding by Council.

<u>Proposal</u>
Proposed by Councillor McGurk
Seconded by Councillor Schenning
- To recommend that Council agrees to supply event hardware, the provision of cleansing support and waste management services for the 2026 Stendhal Festival, for a one-year period at an estimated cost of [redacted].

<u>Amendment</u>
Proposed by Councillor McCully
Seconded by Councillor Wilson
- To defer a decision until the full Council meeting.

The Chair put the amendment to the Committee to vote
9 Members voted For; 6 Members voted Against; 0 Members Abstained.
The Mayor declared the amendment passed.

**AGREED** – to defer a decision until the full Council meeting.

**MOTION TO PROCEED '*IN PUBLIC'***

Proposed by Alderman Knight-McQuillan
Seconded by Councillor Kyle and

**AGREED –** to recommend that Council move '*In Public'.*

* **Alderman Stewart Brown left the Chamber at 8.26pm.**

**17. ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS NOTIFIED IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER 12. (O)**

**17.1 Dark Hedges Management Forum (Alderman Hunter)**

*A Dark Hedges Management Forum was set up through the CCGHT in 2025. Could you outline the Council's current role within the management plan of the Dark Hedges?*
*Given the ongoing imbalance of one of the mature beech trees, what actions are being taken to manage risk, while preserving this significant heritage asset?*
*What measures are in place, or planned to ensure the safety of pedestrians and visitors, especially considering falling limbs and the increasing footfall along the Bregagh Road?*
*How is Council supporting the care, maintenance, and long-term establishment of the newly planted saplings to ensure continuity of the avenue of trees for future generations?*
*With the busy tourist season ahead, what provisions are being introduced to manage numbers, traffic, and overall site protection?*
*What joint actions are being taken with DFI to improve the effectiveness of road closure, traffic enforcements and access control?*

*How is Council working with landowners and relevant agencies to secure a balanced approach between conservation, tourism and public access going forward?*

The Director of Leisure and Development advised that she is not currently in a position to respond to many of the queries. She suggested that she engage with the Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust to seek information and report back to the Committee.

Alderman Hunter stated that it is disappointing that the forum was set up just over a year ago and has disappeared. She noted that the dark hedges is one of the most recognised global attractions in the Borough and that it is at an ongoing risk of ecological stress. She asked whether the trees are being checked regularly, what measures are in place for visitors, and what further actions have been taken by the Department for Infrastructure now that it is a no-through road. She asked that a paper be brought to the June Leisure and Development Committee meeting.

There being no further business, the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance. The Director of Leisure and Development thanked the outgoing Chair for his support. The Chair thanked Committee Members and the Director of Leisure and Development. The meeting concluded at 8.31pm.



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Chair