Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council

Title of Report:	**Offensive Weapon Surrender Scheme – Community Surrender Bin**
Committee Report Submitted To:	**Environmental Services Committee**
Date of Meeting:	**10th November 2026**
For Decision or For Information	**For Decision**
To be discussed In Committee	**No**

Linkage to Council Plan (2026-31)	
Strategic Theme	Engaging and Communicating with our Customers
Outcome	Surrender of offensive weapons
Lead Officer	Head of Operations

Estimated Timescale for Completion	
Date to be Completed	March 2027

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	N/A
Included in Current Year Estimates	
Capital/Revenue	
Code	
Staffing Costs	

Legal Considerations	
Input of Legal Services Required	**NO**
Legal Opinion Obtained	**NO**

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Members approval to participate in the Department of Justice's Offensive Weapon Surrender Scheme with a specialised secure collection bin at a select Household Recycling Centre.

2.0 Background

2.1 Council has received correspondence, dated 30th June 2026, from the Department of Justice (DoJ) requesting its participation in an Offensive Weapon Surrender Scheme. A copy of the correspondence is enclosed (see appendix A) for Members information.

2.2 As part of the Offensive Weapons Act 2019, the Department of Justice (NI) plans to make the private possession of a range of offensive weapons illegal. The possession of these items in a public place is already an offence. Examples and images of offensive weapons are shown in the DoJ correspondence.

2.3 If the law changes to ban items that were previously legal to own, owners should be provided with a safe and legal way of disposing of said items before they become illegal.

2.4 The DoJ intends to operate a "Surrender & Compensation Scheme" in 17 designated police stations and has requested that councils provide location(s) for "Community Surrender Bins" at select Household Recycling Centre(s).

3.0 Location of Community Surrender Bin

3.1 It is proposed that a specially designed wheelie bin is located at Coleraine Household Recycling Centre.

3.2 Recycling Centre staff would have a very limited role except for signposting the location of the bin to the public. There will be no additional cost to council.

3.3 If approved, it is envisaged that the Community Surrender Bin would be in situ for three months.

3.4 While there have been no similar schemes in the life of this council, legacy councils did previously participate in initiatives to remove dangerous objects.

4.0 Recommendation

4.1 It is recommended that Committee recommends that Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council participate in the Offensive Weapon Surrender Scheme by installing a Community Surrender Bin at Coleraine Household Recycling Centre for a period of three months.

To Council Chief Executives

Department of Justice
www.justice-ni.gov.uk

30 June 2026

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: OFFENSIVE WEAPONS ACT 2019 & ASSOCIATED SURRENDER SCHEME

Background

Knife crime has a serious and wide-ranging impact, causing death and injury while also creating long-lasting psychological harm for victims, families, and communities. Offensive weapons and knives are involved in a large proportion of homicides, showing how lethal the problem can be. Beyond physical harm, it increases fear of crime, especially among young people who are disproportionately affected, with many witnessing or experiencing violence, which damages wellbeing and community cohesion.

The Offensive Weapons Act 2019 is UK Government legislation designed to reduce violent crime by tightening controls on the sale and ownership of corrosive substances, knives, offensive weapons and certain firearms.

Later this year, the Department of Justice (NI) plans to commence the parts of the Act that relate to private possession of a range of offensive weapons. Possession of these items in a public place is already an offence.

Essentially this means that if police currently find an offensive weapon such as a zombie knife, a zombie style knife, machete, flick knife, cyclone knife or a ninja sword in a private place, for example in someone's home, they can only take action and seize the knife in question if it is considered to be evidence in a criminal investigation. However, upon the commencement of relevant provisions of the Offensive Weapons Act 2019 it will render possession alone an offence, thereby empowering police to seize such items and consider referral to the prosecution authorities.

Surrender Schemes

If the law changes to ban items that were previously legal to own, owners should be provided with a safe and legal way of disposing of said items before they become illegal.

The Department of Justice hopes to provide two ways to allow for the disposal of items made illegal to own under the 2019 Act

A **Surrender & Compensation Scheme** will allow people to bring weapons to one of 17 designated police stations around the country. They will receive a receipt for the items from police which they will submit to DOJ to claim compensation for surrendered items.

We also hope to arrange a second way to allow people to dispose of weapons and it is this strand that requires assistance from local councils.

Community Surrender Bins

For those individuals who do not want to be compensated but need somewhere safe to dispose of the weapons, we propose providing Community Surrender Bins to be located at council recycling centres throughout Northern Ireland.

We have already had positive engagement with the Council Waste Forum, providing a presentation of our proposals and we now seek the support of our local councils in relation to the Community Bin Scheme.

I have attached an overview of the proposed scheme which includes answers to some anticipated questions. The attachment also provides a list and pictures a of the items to be banned under the Offensive Weapons Act.

However, some key points that council officials may wish to know are:

- The Department of Justice will cover the cost of the community bins and will be responsible for ensuring they are emptied with the knives disposed of in a safe and ethical manner. There will be no additional cost to any council.

- Recycling centre staff will have a very limited role. They will be required to point people who wish to use the scheme to the bins. They will not be required to engage with those surrendering items or to touch or have any contact with the items being handed over. Council staff will not be expected to inspect any of the items being placed in the bins.

- We hope to introduce the legislative provisions in September 2026, with the surrender scheme to launch later in the autumn. The Department will publicise the scheme in advance of the launch with plans for posters, social media content and stories carried by local press and television media.

- The scheme will run for 3 months, after which the bins will be removed and possession of any of the items named in the legislation will be a criminal offence.

The legislation and surrender schemes will deliver a range of benefits intended to enhance community safety, including:

- removing dangerous knives and offensive weapons from the community, therefore lowering the risk that they could be used in violent crime;
- strengthening police powers in relation to knife crime by making it illegal to possess certain offensive weapons in private; and,
- ensuring that individuals who acquired items legally are treated fairly when those items become prohibited.

I am more than happy to answer any queries that council members may have and would be very grateful if you would support the scheme and allow us to engage further with your colleagues to finalise details.

Yours sincerely,

Nigel Bloomer

Victims Support Division, DoJ

OFFENSIVE WEAPONS COMMUNITY SURRENDER BINS GUIDANCE & FAQS

WHAT IS THE SCHEME ABOUT?

The Offensive Weapons Act 2019 ('the Act') is UK Government legislation designed to reduce violent crime by tightening controls on the sale and ownership of corrosive substances, knives, offensive weapons and certain firearms.

In the absence of a functioning NI Assembly in 2018/19, the Head of the Civil Service and Northern Ireland Office gave agreement to the provisions in the Act extending to Northern Ireland; with a view to commencement taking place once the Assembly was restored.

The Department of Justice is now seeking to commence the provisions of the Act relating to private ownership or possession of certain knives and offensive weapons.

In practice, the introduction of this legislation will criminalise in Northern Ireland possession of a range offensive weapons that have already been outlawed in England and Wales, such as flick knives, zombie knives and ninja swords (possession in public is already an offence in Northern Ireland).

A list of the weapons included in the 2019 Act is provided at Annex A.

The Surrender & Compensation Scheme

Section 48 of the 2019 Act provides for a surrender scheme that will allow individuals who lawfully owned any of the weapons prior to the introduction of the new law, to be able to hand them in and in some cases, receive compensation reflecting the value of the surrendered item(s).

They will do this by completing a form and handing over the item(s) to one of 17 designated PSNI stations around the country,

The PSNI will process the form and send it to the Department of Justice who will arrange payment of the compensation. You will note from Annex A that none of the items carry a particularly high value. If the claimant believes their item is of greater value than that detailed at Annex A, they must provide proof such as a receipt of purchase or independent valuation.

The total value of the compensation claim must be over £30 in order to be eligible for compensation.

The purpose of the new laws and the surrender scheme is to:

- remove dangerous knives and offensive weapons from the community, lowering the risk that they could be used in violent crime;
- strengthen police powers in relation to knife crime by making it illegal to possess certain offensive weapons; and,
- ensure that individuals who acquired items legally are treated fairly when those items become prohibited.

THE OFFENSIVE WEAPONS COMMUNITY SURRENDER BINS

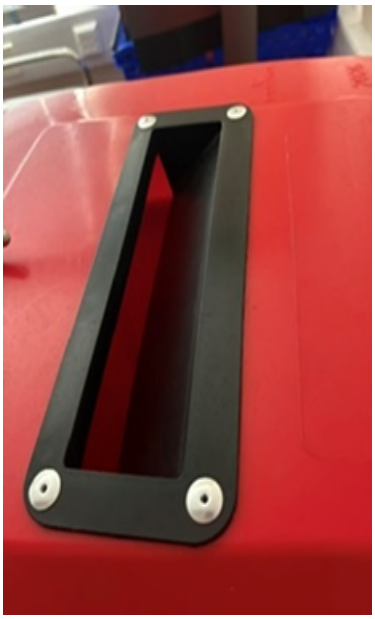
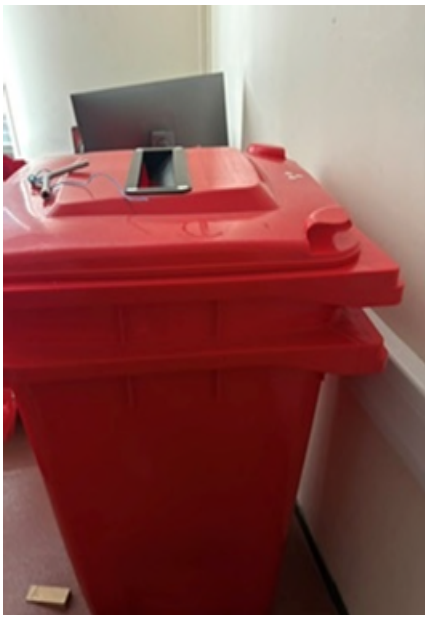
This scheme is to cater for those individuals who wish to surrender items but do not want to claim compensation.

Our suggestion is for collection bins to be left in council recycling centres to allow individuals to dispose of the items.

FAQS FOR COUNCIL OFFICIALS

1. What will the bins look like?

They will be modified, reinforced wheelie bins, as below.

2. How many bins will be provided?

We will be led by council officials put we plan to place one bin in each designated recycling centre.

3. Will the scheme be publicised?

Yes, publicity will be led by the Department with plans for posters, social media content and stories carried by local press and television media.

Obviously support in terms of publicity by councils will be welcomed.

We will also arrange for notices at council sites.

4. How many weapons do you think will be handed over?

It is difficult to say, we expect limited numbers of the items listed at Annex A. However, previous experience would show people tend to dispose of all kinds of knives in the bins, not just those set out in the legislation e.g. kitchen knives etc. We have no issue with that and do not require council staff to inspect any of the items.

5. How will weapons be brought to council sites?

It will be up to individuals to transport items to the council sites. They will receive clear instructions about packaging and safe transportation.

Council staff will not be expected to collect or transport any items as part of the scheme.

- ✓ Make sure the weapon is securely packaged / wrapped and placed inside a sealed bag, box or case;
- ✓ Keep it concealed in transit - ensure the weapon remains safely stored in its sealed box or bag at all times while traveling. It must not be held in your hands, put in a waistband, or left visible inside any vehicle
- ✓ Once you arrive at the site and establish where the surrender bin you can dispose of it carefully by placing it in the bin
- ✓ If you are surrendering a large quantity of weapons (typically more than 10), you should contact the Department of Justice before you travel to any site to dispose of the weapons.

6. Are there any costs for the council?

No, the Department of Justice will provide the bins, publicise the scheme and arrange for collection at the end of the surrender period (3 months).

7. What role will council staff play?

Recycling centre staff will have a very limited role. They will be required to point people who wish to use the scheme to the bins. They will not be required to engage with those surrendering items or to touch or have any contact with the items being handed over. As noted above, Council staff will not be expected to inspect any of the items being placed in the bins.

8. Is there a total 'amnesty' with the scheme?

In the main, yes. Police will not ordinarily check or test any weapon handed in. However, if they do suspect a weapon has been used in a crime they have the power to recover it and test it.

9. Is there any compensation element to the community bin scheme?

No, that will be made clear in the promotional documentation.

10. How long will the scheme last?

3 months – dates TBC, but will likely commence in October 2026.

11. What happens at the end of the scheme?

The Department will arrange collection and emptying the bins by an approved contractor. The items collected will be destroyed in an ethical and safe manner.

We will arrange collection from all sites at the end of the 3 month scheme. If bins are full before that, we can arrange interim collections (we think that is unlikely, but it can be arranged).

12. What happens the bins at the end of the 3 month scheme?

That has yet to be confirmed, we may ask the supplier if they will take them back to re-purpose and would obviously negotiate the cost on that basis.

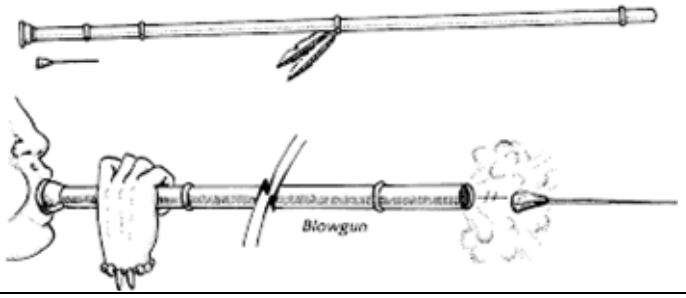
If that is not possible, we may ask councils if they wish to retain them (at no cost).

If councils do not want them, we will ensure they are removed from your sites.

ANNEX A - LIST OF WEAPONS COVERED UNDER THE OFFENSIVE WEAPONS ACT 2019

DESCRIPTION OF ITEM	PICTURE OF ITEM	VALUE OF EACH ITEM
Flick Knives: Knives with blades that spring open automatically by pressing a button, spring, or device on the handle.		**£20**
Gravity Knives: Knives where the blade is released from the handle by gravity or centrifugal force and locks into place.		**£40**
A knuckleduster, that is, a band of metal or other hard material worn on one or more fingers, and designed to cause injury, and any weapon incorporating a knuckleduster		**£2**
A swordstick, that is, a hollow walking stick or cane containing a blade which may be used as a sword.		**£12**

The weapon sometimes known as a "hand claw", being a band of metal or other hard material from which a number of sharp spikes protrude, and worn around the hand		**£9**
The weapon sometimes known as a "belt buckle knife", being a buckle which incorporates or conceals a knife		**£5**
The weapon sometimes known as a "push dagger", being a knife the handle of which fits within a clenched fist and the blade of which protrudes from between two fingers;		**£2**
The weapon sometimes known as a "hollow kubotan", being a cylindrical container containing a number of sharp spikes;		**£3**
The weapon sometimes known as a "footclaw", being a bar of metal or other hard material from which a number of sharp spikes protrude, and worn strapped to the foot;		**£7**

The weapon sometimes known as a "shuriken", "shaken" or "death star", being a hard non flexible plate having three or more sharp radiating points and designed to be thrown;		**£5**
The weapon sometimes known as a "balisong" or "butterfly knife", being a blade enclosed by its handle, which is designed to split down the middle, without the operation of a spring or other mechanical means, to reveal the blade		**£9**
The weapon sometimes known as a "telescopic truncheon", being a truncheon which extends automatically by hand pressure applied to a button, spring or other device in or attached to its handle;		**£20**
The weapon sometimes known as a "blowpipe" or "blow gun", being a hollow tube out of which hard pellets or darts are shot by the use of breath;		**£14**

The weapon sometimes known as a "kusari gama", being a length of rope, cord, wire or chain fastened at one end to a sickle;		**£35**
The weapon sometimes known as a "kyoketsu shoge", being a length of rope, cord, wire or chain fastened at one end to a hooked knife;		**£20**
The weapon sometimes known as a Manrikigusari "or "kusari", being a length of rope, cord, wire or chain fastened at each end to a hard weight or hand grip		**£10**
A disguised knife, that is any knife which has a concealed blade or concealed sharp point and is designed to appear to be an everyday object of a kind commonly carried on the person or in a handbag, briefcase, or other hand luggage (such as a comb, brush, writing instrument, cigarette lighter, key, lipstick or telephone);		**£5**

A stealth knife, that is a knife or spike, which has a blade, or sharp point, made from a material that is not readily detectable by apparatus used for detecting metal and which is not designed for domestic use or for use in the processing, preparation or consumption of food or as a toy;		**£3**
A straight, side handled or friction lock truncheon (sometimes known as a baton).		**£10**
Cyclone knives Section 47 of the 2019 Act amends includes cyclone/spiral knives and zombie knives, zombie killer knives, or zombie slayer knives.		**£10**
A "cyclone knife" or "spiral knife" - being a weapon with a handle, a blade with two or more cutting edges, each of which forms a helix, and a sharp point at the end of the blade.		**£30**

Zombie knives, Zombie-style' knives 'Zombie-style' machetes a blade with a cutting edge; a serrated edge; and images or words (whether on the blade or handle) that suggest that it is to be used for the purpose of violence.		**£10**
Ninja swords		**£5**