



**LEISURE & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY 20 MAY 2025**

No	Item	Summary of key Recommendations	Estimated Timescale for completion
1.	Apologies	Councillor Holmes	
2.	Declarations of Interest	None	
3.	Minutes of Leisure and Development Committee meeting held Tuesday 15th April 2025	Confirmed as a correct record	
4.	Addendum: Deputation – Coleraine Harbour Commissioners - Barmouth Moles - Mr. Robert Skelly Chairman, Board of Commissioners; Commissioner Mr. Richard Connor and Mr Bobby Farren, Farren Consulting, in attendance.	Received	
5.	Notice of Motion Proposed by Councillor MA McKillop, seconded by Councillor Schenning (Nip in The Bud Motion)	To recommend that Council Support the Notice of Motion	
6.	Leisure and Development 25/26 Business Plans	To recommend that Council consider and approve the proposed business plans for the	March 2026

		2025/26 period (Annex A-E), providing a focus for officers responsible for delivering Leisure and Development services	
7.	Sports Grants and Bursary Programme	to recommend that Council: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Increase the Sports Grant & Bursary Programme budget from £20,000 to £40,000. b. Sports Grant & Bursary Programme to now be open to 'local sporting events'. c. Amend the award for a successful Coach Education to be a maximum £300 for generic and sports specific courses. 	
8.	Social Supermarkets	To recommend that Council approve the following actions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Award contracts for the delivery of social supermarkets in The Glens DEA to the following organisations, each to receive up to £11,000, subject to confirmation of funding from the Department for Communities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ballycastle Community Group CIC • Glens Social Supermarket Ltd b) Collaborate with The Salvation Army Ballymoney and Causeway 	31st March 2026

		Coast Church and Community Centre to support the development and trial of a social supermarket in Ballymoney DEA.	
9.	Ballycarton to Binevenagh Trail Head Project	To recommend that Council enter into a licence agreement with Forest Service for the development of the trail head project at Ballycarton and Binevenagh Forest. As part of this licence agreement, Council will assume insurance liabilities for the trail head and trail corridor rails under the 25-year tenure of the licence agreement. Ongoing maintenance costs will be shared with Forest Service. The project will be subject to the condition that the Binevenagh & Coastal Lowlands Landscape Partnership Scheme (LPS) provide and secure capital funding for the works required	TBC
10.	Leisure and Development Financial Performance Review	Noted	-
11.	The 153 rd Open Planning Update	Noted	September 2025
12.	Guide to Digital Connectivity	Noted	March 2026

13.	New York Times Supplement	Noted	N/A
	'In Committee' (Items 14-18 inclusive)		
14.	Growth Deal Executive Programme Board Minutes	To recommend that the Minutes of the Growth Deal Executive Programme Board Minutes of the meetings held 5th December 2024 and 9th April 2025 are noted	-
15.	Station Square Skate Park	To recommend that Council note the above and approve the progression of this project to Tender stage (allocation from the Play Action Plan capital budget)	-
16.	Green Support Scheme	To recommend that Council notes the appointment of B9 Solutions Limited to provide the technical support to deliver Carbon Reduction Action Plans (CRPs) for SMEs & Social Enterprises	March 2026
17.	Coleraine Harbour Commissioners	To recommend that Council approve the recommendation of the Harbour Commissioners Board to appoint Mr Richard Connor as Vice Chairman of the Coleraine Harbour Commissioners.	-
			-
18.	Addendum Correspondence		

(i)	Correspondence from Ulster University regarding the future of the Riverside Theatre (dated 13 May 2025)	Noted	
	'In Public' (Item 19 (i))		
19.	Any Other Relevant Business notified in accordance with Standing Order 12. (o)		
(i)	Replanting Trees (Councillor Kane)	Information provided	

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE LEISURE AND DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER AND
VIA MS TEAMS ON
TUESDAY 20 MAY 2025 AT 7.00PM**

In the Chair: Councillor McGurk (C)

Members Present: Alderman Fielding (C), Stewart (C);
Councillors Anderson (C), N Archibald (C), Bateson (R),
Kennedy (C), Kyle (C), McCully (C), McShane (R),
Schenning (R), Stirling (C), Watson (R), Wisener (C)

Non-Committee Members Present: Alderman Boyle; Councillor Kane,
Councillor MA McKillop (Item 5)

Officers Present: P Mulvenna, Director of Leisure and Development (C)
J Welsh, Head of Community and Culture (C)
P Thompson, Head of Tourism and Recreation (C)
P O'Brien, Funding Unit Manager (C)
W McCullough, Head of Sport and Wellbeing (C)
N McGurk, Head of Prosperity and Place (C)
J McCarron, Project Manager - The Open Championship (C)
S Duggan, Civic Support & Committee & Member Services
Officer (C)

In Attendance: R Skelly Chairman, Board of Commissioners }
R Connor, Commissioner }Item 4
B Farren, Farren Consulting }

A Lennox, ICT Operations Officer (C)
M Kennedy, ICT Operations Officer (C)

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

Substitutions: Alderman Fielding substituted for Alderman Callan

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

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

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were recorded for Councillor Holmes.

Alderman Fielding advised he was substituting for Alderman Callan.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF LEISURE AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD TUESDAY 15TH APRIL 2025

Copy, previously circulated.

Proposed by Councillor N Archibald

Seconded by Councillor Anderson and

AGREED – That the Minutes of the Leisure and Development Committee meeting held Tuesday 15th April 2025 are confirmed as a correct record.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chair advised the Notice of Motion would be taken next on the item of business.

4. ADDENDUM: DEPUTATION – COLERAINE HARBOUR COMMISSIONERS - BARMOUTH MOLES - MR. ROBERT SKELLY CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS; COMMISSIONER MR. RICHARD CONNOR AND MR BOBBY FARREN, FARREN CONSULTING, IN ATTENDANCE

The Chair invited R Skelly Chairman, R Connor, Commissioner and B Farren, Farren Consulting to present.

The Chairman Board of Commissioners provided commentary on the following paragraphs referred to within a powerpoint presentation:

- Coleraine Harbour Commissioners
- Who We Are
- Introduction to Barmouth
- The Challenge of Aging Infrastructure
- Engineering and Environmental Protection
- Key Economic Risks
- Investing in the Future
- Project Costs

- Call to Action

The Chairman asked Council's support to contact their Party MLA's that sit on the Infrastructure Committee in order to raise awareness to urge Department for Infrastructure to provide funding. The Chairman outlined the current pre-tender position, and urged garnering support in advance of their meeting with Minister McKimmins in July. The Chairman also sought to engage with Council Officers to help with technical support on how to monitor and deliver the project and to look at a longer-term strategic partnership to work on the future of the Harbour as a key economic driver for Coleraine and the wider area.

The Commissioner added the matter was a National infrastructure issue, that if the Barmouth broke down to a stage to form a sand bar, there would be a flood in Coleraine.

Councillor McCully asked what work was taking place in March and what efforts were being put in place to limit disruption to Portstewart and Castlerock Beaches. Councillor McCully asked how much funding they had and he placed on record his support to do what they could.

The Commissioner outlined they were working with The National Trust and Council Officers, and that if funding was provided, they plan to start moving stone onto the beach in January. The Commissioner detailed the works within the window provided by The National Trust of March-end June when works would be completed, depending on the winning tenders' methodology.

Farren Consulting representative clarified the protected EU Habitat Directive, that if the Barmouth would fail, the people responsible - Council, Department for Infrastructure, Department for the Environment and The National Trust would be liable for EU fines, the most important thing is to protect the habitat.

The Chairman advised the Harbour Commission had their own funds to put in, he clarified last year Minister John O'Dowd brought slippage money through, however it was late in the year and not feasible to undertake the works within the window supplied. He was hopeful this year, having raised awareness and having undertaken a year of work, that once they meet the Minister in July, they would obtain the funding quickly.

Farren Consulting representative added there was a prerequisite to obtain further funding and that they were applying to the Shared Island Fund with Mayo County Council regarding Killala Bay. The process was through Department for Infrastructure who had been supplied with the SOC and was in progress. Farren Consulting representative advised they also wished to keep their own funds as there was a wider Strategy planned to open out the Harbour into the Coleraine economy in the next 4-5

years, funding was anticipated of 80% from Shared Island and Department for Infrastructure.

Councillor Stirling advised she would be happy to lobby and provided full support.

Councillor Anderson stated he wished to send best wishes to Mr Donaghy who was a key member of their team.

The Chair thanked the representatives for their attendance.

- * **R Skelly Chairman, R Connor, Commissioner and B Farren, Farren Consulting left the meeting at 7.27pm.**

5. NOTICE OF MOTION PROPOSED BY COUNCILLOR MA MCKILLOP, SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR SCHENNING

Nip in the bud motion

That this council notes the importance of farmers and rural dwellers in our society. Recognises that farmers, agricultural workers and people living in rural communities, can have lower access to cancer services due to the nature of their work and often living in isolated areas.

We also recognise the impact that a cancer diagnosis can have on family business such as a family farm, including housing the extended family and the welfare of livestock.

Endorses the Nip in the Bud campaign delivered by the farming community networking partnership with MacMillan cancer support and acknowledges the benefits of the rural community.

Pledges to do all we can to raise awareness and save lives, particularly using our social media platforms, to help rural dwellers in this council area be aware of symptoms of cancer and to seek immediate medical advice if necessary as evidence demonstrates that early diagnosis and treatment can save lives.

Councillor MA McKillop presented the Notice of Motion:

“Research indicates that people living in rural communities often present with more advanced cancer when they are diagnosed and are 5% less likely to survive than those living in an urban environment.

Approximately 36% of Northern Ireland’s population lives in a rural area, and this can create unique challenges for accessing services and support. Farmers and people living in rural communities are being urged to ‘Nip it in the Bud’ and be aware

of symptoms and if necessary get checked for early signs of cancer - as part of a new UK-wide campaign by The Farming Community Network (FCN).

Farmers, farm workers and people living in rural communities can have lower access to cancer services and support due to the nature of their work and rural life, often in isolated areas Farmers in particular when asked would highlight difficulties in accessing their GP services and other farming challenges as the main barriers.

The Minister of Health recognise inequalities in diagnosis and treatment and has included addressing the imbalance's as a priority. Research has been commissioned with the Northern Ireland Cancer Registry to identify the barriers and constraints.

Early diagnosis saves lives therefore it is essential that we encourage farmers who face many challenges and stressful situations to put their health first and your influence and support would serve to help us achieve this objective which will undoubtedly save lives. A prime example is that of bowel cancer which if diagnosed at stage 1 there is a 98% chance of survival in comparison to stage 4 which reduces to an 8% chance of survival.

In an effort to address this issue and save lives, The Farming Community Network (FCN) is working in partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support to raise awareness of cancer risks, signs and symptoms, and to encourage early detection in farming and rural communities through delivery of their 'Nip it in the Bud' campaign.

The 'Nip it in the Bud' campaign provides a range of useful resources for agri-businesses, colleges, community groups, businesses, employers and others to download or circulate – some focused on specific cancers that farmers in particular can be more at-risk of developing, such as skin cancer, prostate cancer or lung cancer. It is commonly known that farmers don't visit their GP promptly, often presenting at much later stages of disease. This paired with barriers unique to rural communities, such as service provision, transport, travel time and costs etc. can have a significant impact on farms, farming families and rural communities.

The proposal of the motion across each of the 10 rural local councils is intended to raise awareness of the campaign and encourage Councillors using their influence within the rural communities through whatever means possible including the use of local media outlets, social media and face to face engagement with rural constituents. Ask our staff in Council to engage with the Farming Community Network to promote this campaign at all our events especially ones coming up in the next few months. I have a list of people to contact that I will share to be sent out to all the Councillors”.

Councillor Schenning referred to the horrifying statistics and what can happen when there was early intervention. Councillor Schenning seconded the Motion.

AGREED – to recommend that Council support The Notice of Motion.

6. LEISURE AND DEVELOPMENT 25/26 BUSINESS PLANS

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

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to present to Members the 2025/2026 Leisure and Development Business Plans for member's consideration.

Introduction

These service area business plans are presented to Councillors in order to establish the working priorities for the period 1st Apr 2025 to the 31st March 2026.

The business plans are underpinned by the necessity to:

- Focus on delivering quality services to ratepayers; maximising every opportunity to generate gains for the borough economically, socially and environmentally.
- Provide services and develop projects safely.
- Deliver services and projects in an efficient and cost-effective manner.
- Identify opportunities to reduce expenditure and where possible generate income.

Within this context, the business plans represent a continuation of work for the following services areas:

- Sport and Wellbeing.
- Community and Culture.
- Tourism and Recreation.
- Prosperity and Place.
- The Funding Unit.

The plans for each of the aforementioned service areas are developed based upon:

- The emerging actions from the Community Planning Process.
- The Council's existing Corporate Plan and Improvement Plan.
- Endorsed service area strategies.
- Relevant Central government strategies, and funding policies programmes.
- Council decisions and direction from previous periods.

The Purpose of the Plans

The purpose of the annual business plans is to:

- Give a clear sense of what the service is for and the challenges it faces.
- Show how it is supporting Council's priorities.
- Show how it is contributing to the efficiency drive and transformation of service delivery.

- Show how it is aligning its resources to meet the challenges ahead.
- Help us to hold ourselves to account and ensure we deliver for Council and its residents.
- Bring key information together in one place about the service, which Members, staff and stakeholders can understand.

The following paragraphs were set out within the report:

- Key Objectives & Priorities 2025/26
- Financial Position

Recommendation

The committee is asked to consider and approve the proposed business plans for the 2025/26 period (Annex A-E), providing a focus for officers responsible for delivering Leisure and Development services.

The Chair thanked the staff, stating the statistics were impressive.

The Director of Leisure and Development stated she would present the updates on a more regular basis if Committee was in agreement.

Councillor Schenning thanked the team, their work in all areas was well connected with the community.

AGREED – to recommend that Council consider and approve the proposed business plans for the 2025/26 period (Annex A-E), providing a focus for officers responsible for delivering Leisure and Development services.

7. SPORTS GRANTS AND BURSARY PROGRAMME

Copy, previously circulated presented by the Head of Sport and Wellbeing.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval for additional budget and grant parameter amendments to the Sports Grant & Bursary Programme for the 2025-2026 period.

Background

Council's Sports Funding and Bursary Programme provides grant funding to support;

- International / representative costs (maximum grant £400)
- Coach education (maximum grant £200 generic / £300 sports specific)
- Safety equipment for sports clubs (maximum grant £300)
- 'Seeding grant' for new sports clubs to get started (maximum grant £150).

From the start of this grant, Council have received requests to provide financial support to local 'sporting events' The current grant guidelines don't allow for sporting events.

Council are now in a position to increase the current budget from £20,000 to £40,000. This is affordable within the 2025/26 SWB budget.

In the last financial year 2024/25, the grant monies available in the budget had all been allocated in the first six months from the grant opening.

Currently the Coach Education element has two levels of funding support – **generic courses** such as first aid and safeguarding awareness can be awarded a maximum of £200. **Sports specific coach education courses** can be awarded a maximum of £300.

Proposals

Amend the parameters of the grant programme to include funding for 'Sporting Events'.

Sporting Event:

- The application must be from a constituted Sports Club based in Causeway Coast and Glens or National Governing Body recognised by Sport NI.
- The Sporting Event must take place in Causeway Coast and Glens.
- The event must show that it increases sports participation at a local level; or
- The event can be hosting sporting individuals / teams / countries from outside the area but held in Causeway Coast and Glens to increase sports participation.
- Sporting events that Council already provide financial support are NOT eligible for this fund.

£4,000 to be allocated solely for applications for Sporting Events. Maximum award for a successful application £400.

Amend the award for a successful Coach Education to be a maximum £300 for generic and sports specific courses.

Recommendations

Members are asked to recommend to Council the following;

- a. Increase the Sports Grant & Bursary Programme budget from £20,000 to £40,000.
- b. Sports Grant & Bursary Programme to now be open to 'local sporting events'.
- c. Amend the award for a successful Coach Education to be a maximum £300 for generic and sports specific courses.

There were no questions put.

Proposed by Councillor N Archibald

Seconded by Councillor McCully and

AGREED – to recommend that Council:

- a. Increase the Sports Grant & Bursary Programme budget from £20,000 to £40,000.
- b. Sports Grant & Bursary Programme to now be open to 'local sporting events'.
- c. Amend the award for a successful Coach Education to be a maximum £300 for generic and sports specific courses.

8. SOCIAL SUPERMARKETS

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

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to present the outcomes of the recent Expression of Interest (EOI) process undertaken to support the establishment and trial of social supermarkets within selected District Electoral Areas (DEAs).

Background

The Council receives annual funding from the Department for Communities through the Social Supermarket Support Fund. The aim of this fund is to provide a sustainable and long-term response to food insecurity by addressing the underlying causes of poverty, rather than offering short-term crisis interventions.

Social supermarkets operate on a membership model, where eligible individuals—those facing financial hardship—pay a weekly subscription to access a reduced-cost food shop for a specified period (typically 3–6 months). In parallel, members are supported through wraparound services, including debt and budgeting advice, benefits guidance, healthy eating education, training, and employability support. Each member receives a tailored support plan developed following an initial needs assessment.

Expression of Interest Process

In November 2023, an initial EOI process was conducted to assess interest in delivering social supermarket services in areas of the Borough where provision was lacking—specifically, The Glens and Ballymoney DEAs.

Progress in The Glens DEA

Following a developmental support phase for organisations that expressed interest in The Glens DEA, the Council progressed to the delivery stage and reissued an invitation for EOIs to deliver the service in this area.

Renewed EOI in Ballymoney DEA

As the initial EOI process for Ballymoney DEA did not receive any submissions, the process was repeated to gauge current interest from organisations potentially prepared to trial a social supermarket.

Outcome of the Expression of Interest Process

EOI Process and Communication Channels

The renewed EOI process was conducted in April and promoted through various communication channels to ensure broad community engagement. These included publication on the Council's website, use of corporate communication platforms, and direct outreach via the Community & Voluntary Organisations Register.

Submissions Received – The Glens DEA

Two EOIs were received for delivering social supermarkets in The Glens DEA:

- The Glens Social Supermarket Ltd, based in Cushendall
- Ballycastle Community Group CIC, based in Ballycastle

Both proposals target distinct geographical areas within The Glens DEA, offering complementary coverage across the area. Each organisation satisfies governance requirements and has demonstrated experience in delivering community-based food services. Both have previously piloted social supermarket models, showing strong operational understanding and capacity, including logistical management and delivery of holistic member support. Each also identified potential delivery partners for wraparound services.

Based on the approved funding model and assuming a comparable allocation from the Department for Communities for 2025–26, the proposed funding allocation for The Glens DEA is £22,000. It is recommended that this funding be distributed equally between the two organisations, with each receiving £11,000, contingent upon final funding confirmation from the Department.

Submission Received – Ballymoney DEA

One EOI was received for trialling a social supermarket in the Ballymoney DEA:

- The Salvation Army Ballymoney and Causeway Coast Church and Community Centre

The organisation meets governance criteria and brings relevant experience in delivering community support services such as befriending, emergency fuel assistance, and holiday-based support programmes.

Council officers will provide developmental support using Department for Communities funding. This assistance will guide the organisation through all necessary stages of establishing a social supermarket, including policy development, logistics, governance structures, needs assessments, and the creation of individualised support plans. Support will also be drawn from experienced social supermarket providers.

Following the completion of this preparatory work, the Council will issue a further EOI call for the delivery phase in Ballymoney DEA.

Recommendations

Council approval is sought for the following actions:

- c) Award contracts for the delivery of social supermarkets in The Glens DEA to the following organisations, each to receive up to £11,000, subject to confirmation of funding from the Department for Communities:
 - Ballycastle Community Group CIC
 - Glens Social Supermarket Ltd
- d) Collaborate with The Salvation Army Ballymoney and Causeway Coast Church and Community Centre to support the development and trial of a social supermarket in Ballymoney DEA.

Councillor McShane referred for the capacity of both areas to deliver the programme and how they serve distinct areas of Ballycastle and Cushendall, she stated it was good to see the proactive approach taken for Ballymoney. Councillor McShane proposed the recommendation.

Councillor Kennedy stated it was a worthy cause and seconded the proposal.

Councillor Schenning stated she was delighted The Glens and Ballymoney were on track, that it had worked well over the last 5 years in Limavady and Coleraine. Councillor Schenning supported seconding the proposal.

Proposed by Councillor McShane
Seconded by Councillor Kennedy and

AGREED – to recommend that Council approve the following actions:

- a) Award contracts for the delivery of social supermarkets in The Glens DEA to the following organisations, each to receive up to £11,000, subject to confirmation of funding from the Department for Communities:
 - Ballycastle Community Group CIC
 - Glens Social Supermarket Ltd
- b) Collaborate with The Salvation Army Ballymoney and Causeway Coast Church and Community Centre to support the development and trial of a social supermarket in Ballymoney DEA.

9. BALLYCARTON TO BINEVENAGH TRAIL HEAD PROJECT

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

Purpose of Report

This report aims to obtain approval from Members for the Ballycarton to Binevenagh Trail Head Project. This partnership initiative, involving the Binevenagh Landscape Partnership, Forest Service, and NIEA, includes a Licence agreement with the Forest Service for a designated trail area. It encompasses a trail corridor for walking activities and a car park at Ballycarton. It features a trailhead, signage, and a Permissive Path Agreement for private lands connecting Ballycarton Wood to Binevenagh Mountain.

Background was circulated within the report.

Proposal

A review and consultation as part of the Binevenagh Landscape Partnership project highlighted that Binevenagh & Ballycarton Forests could greatly enhance outdoor recreation in the Binevenagh area, especially for local residents.

One major initiative is to create trailhead facilities at Ballycarton, which includes re-grading the car park, landscaping, and providing visitor information. A 5.5km linear walking trail is planned to connect Ballycarton Forest to Leighery Road, as depicted in Annex A. This trail will formalise access to Binevenagh Nature Reserve and the surrounding uplands, where there is a clear demand for improved access. Moreover, it promotes the use of Ballycarton Wood and its car park as an official starting point as an alternative access point at St Aidan's Church. Council officers and Forest Service staff have evaluated the projected costs for maintaining these facilities and a partnership approach to financing repairs and maintenance will be agreed between Council and Forest Service.

To progress this proposal will require Council to consider entering a licence agreement with the Forest Service for a designated trail corridor within the forest and the car park. NIEA will manage the trail's repair and maintenance within Binevenagh Nature Reserve. The Binevenagh Landscape Partnership will provide all project staff and oversee all project work with a budget of £234,000. Moreover, both the Forest Service and NIEA have agreed to discuss potential capital investment in the project.

The proposed route will have some surface dressing, stone pitching and appropriate trail furniture installed. These works are being funded through Binevenagh & Coastal Lowlands Landscape Partnership.

Issues and implications

The key implication for the Council involves entering into a licence agreement with the Forest Service. Previous terms placed responsibility for broader management

issues within the forest on the Council. However, the Forest Service has now agreed that under this license agreement, management and maintenance responsibilities will be shared and will focus solely on the car park area and the trail corridor, which is the Council's preference.

Should Council agree to progressing with a licence agreement with Forest Service then suitable budget will have to be identified for the joint maintenance and inspection to ensure that the quality of visitor experience is upheld.

There is no capital cost to Council with respect to the development of this proposal, only the required ongoing maintenance costs, which as noted, will be shared by Forest Service.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that the Leisure and Development Committee recommends to Council to enter into a licence agreement with Forest Service for the development of the trail head project at Ballycarton and Binevenagh Forest. As part of this licence agreement, Council will assume insurance liabilities for the trail head and trail corridor rails under the 25-year tenure of the licence agreement. Ongoing maintenance costs will be shared with Forest Service. The project will be subject to the condition that the Binevenagh & Coastal Lowlands Landscape Partnership Scheme (LPS) provide and secure capital funding for the works required.

The Coast and Countryside Manager contributed on the detail of the Binevenagh and Ballycarton project. Maps were presented illustrating the Trail Head.

The Head of Tourism and Recreation reiterated the estimated maintenance costs after a 5-year period when the project and capital works would be completed were to average no more than £5,000 per annum for the Trail and £1,000 per annum for the Car Park.

Councillor Anderson referred to the location and spectacular scenery in the area, he stated it was a very exciting project to encourage people to get out walking and into fresh air.

Proposed by Councillor Anderson
Seconded by Councillor Kyle and

AGREED – to recommend that Council enter into a licence agreement with Forest Service for the development of the trail head project at Ballycarton and Binevenagh Forest. As part of this licence agreement, Council will assume insurance liabilities for the trail head and trail corridor rails under the 25-year tenure of the licence agreement. Ongoing maintenance costs will be shared with Forest Service. The

project will be subject to the condition that the Binevenagh & Coastal Lowlands Landscape Partnership Scheme (LPS) provide and secure capital funding for the works required.

The Chair presented the *For Information* reports as read.

10. LEISURE AND DEVELOPMENT FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Copy, previously circulated.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to present to Members a financial performance update on the L&D Directorate as at Month 11 against the 2024/2025 agreed budget.

Background

Council approved the annual budget for Leisure and Development and delegated authority to officers to utilise this budget in the provision of services to the rate payers. The L&D budget for 2024/25 was £11,220,745.

Financial Position at Period 11

Table 1, Illustrates a Period 11 Net Expenditure Position of £7,039,994, which is favourable by £2,033,456 against budgeted net expenditure to this point. The individual service area financial positions are also shown in Table 1.

Service Area Budgets tables were circulated within the report.

Analysis by Service Area was circulated within the report as follows:

- Community & Culture
- Prosperity & Place
- Sport & Wellbeing
- Tourism & Recreation
- Funding Unit
- Strategic Projects

Committee NOTED the report.

11. THE 153RD OPEN PLANNING UPDATE

Copy, previously circulated presented by The Project Manager.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to update Elected Members on Council's role in the continuing planning in advance of the 153rd Open Championship in Portrush in July 2025.

Background

At its meeting in April 2025, Council's Leisure and Development Committee received an update report which outlined Council's involvement in the planning and delivery of the 153rd Open Championship.

Following the April 2025 report, Council Officers have committed to bring further updates to Committee on a monthly basis.

The following paragraphs were presented within the report:

General Update of progress towards the 153rd Open Championship

- Headline Updates on Council Led Activity
- Business and Community Engagement
- Tourism and Promotion
- Service Continuity and Town Presentation
- Traffic and Transport
- Temporary Transfer of Council Owned Lands to R&A
- Budget
- Other Key Areas of Work

Recommendation

Elected Members are asked to note the content of this update report.

In response to Councillor Wisener, The Project Manager described the Ulster University Camp Site which was open to ticket holders, he stated the take up was high.

Alderman Stewart stated Council should not underestimate the size and scale of this legacy, he put on record his thanks for all the work the Project Manager was doing.

Committee NOTED the report.

12. GUIDE TO DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY

Copy, previously circulated.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to make Members aware of the launch of NILGA's Guide to Digital Connectivity for Councillors in Northern Ireland.

Background

Developed by NILGA, in partnership with the NI Barrier Busting Taskforce which consists of NI councils, NICS Departments, Ofcom, Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) and Mobile UK, the guide highlights how connectivity can help create the conditions for economic prosperity, innovation and job creation, especially in rural or previously underserved areas.

Without good connectivity people are locked out of opportunity, especially older residents, low-income households, or those in remote areas.

Digital Guide

The "Guide to Digital Connectivity for NI Councillors" (Annex A) launched on 1st May 2025 provides a clear and accessible overview of the key challenges and opportunities in expanding high-quality broadband and mobile infrastructure.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Members note the information in this report and Annex A.

AGREED – to recommend that Council note the information in this report and Annex A.

In response to Councillor Stirling, the Head of Prosperity and Place clarified he was Council's Digital Champion. Councillor Stirling asked if it would be helpful if an Elected Member worked alongside and indicated she would be interested in this. Councillor Stirling referred to black spots within the Borough where there was a lot of work to do.

The Head of Prosperity and Place referred to digital within the Business Plan, and clarified they sit on a number of Forums and would be content for Councillor Stirling to assist in that approach.

The Chair enquired whether the Gigabite Scheme was starting again and that it would be useful to receive connectivity figures, particularly for Benbradagh.

The Head of Prosperity and Place referred to the Digital Transformation Scheme fund entering its 5th phase targeting businesses and was very bespoke. The update was very low for the Gigabite Scheme and in response to the Chair agreed to find out the current position.

Councillor Wisener sought information on 5G Standalone. The Head of Prosperity and Place detailed Council plans to introduce 5G districts, to identify 3 districts across the Borough where 5G was hard to reach, to look at alternative ways of getting it there eg Full Fibre.

The Head of Prosperity and Place advised he would bring back a report with statistics and information and proposed elements Council were working on.

Committee NOTED the report.

13. NEW YORK TIMES SUPPLEMENT

Copy, previously circulated.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to make Members aware of the publication of a Northern Ireland feature within The New York Times.

Background

Officers have been working alongside the Brussels Research Group on an article highlighting the Causeway Coast and Glens area within their 'Spotlight on Northern Ireland' supplement which was featured within The New York Times.

Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council is joined in the article by a wide selection of Northern Ireland businesses, business support agencies and fellow Councils including:

- Invest NI
- NI Chamber of Commerce
- Confederation of British Industry Northern Ireland
- Ulster University
- KPMG
- Galgorm
- A&L Goodbody
- Norbrook
- Analytics Engines
- Axial3D
- Alchemy Technology Services
- Kiverco
- Belfast City Council
- Ards and North Down Borough Council
- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council
- Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

Supplement

The supplement (Annex A) was published on 24th April 2024 and the article 'Causeway Coast and Glens: Beyond the Scenery' can be found on page eight.

In addition, an online campaign (Annex B) was delivered to help promote the Northern Ireland profile within The New York Times.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Leisure & Development Committee notes the information in this report and Annex A.

AGREED – to recommend that Council notes the information in this report and Annex A.

Councillor Anderson stated the article was excellent especially with the 250th Anniversary of America. Councillor Anderson referred to the ad for the Atlantic Link Enterprise Zone and sought an update.

The Head of Prosperity and Place referred to the Business Plan plans for the site, which was being marketed and there was promotion of the site. He provided an update on the Growth Deal, and the Business Innovation Hub which proposed to take 2 acres. The Head of Prosperity and Place advised they continue to receive informal EOI and offers but not in line with what was set out in the Development Brief or Planning.

The Director of Leisure and Development concurred with the Head of Prosperity and Place, advising of approaches from interested parties, stating it was a disappointing none of these had progressed to date.

Councillor Anderson asked for a report to be brought back with an update.

MOTION TO PROCEED 'IN COMMITTEE'

Proposed by Councillor Anderson

Seconded by Councillor Stirling and

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

*

Public and Press were disconnected from the meeting at 8.26pm

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.

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

14. GROWTH DEAL EXECUTIVE PROGRAMME BOARD MINUTES

Confidential copy, previously circulated.

Proposed by The Chair, Councillor McGurk
Seconded by Councillor Wisener and

AGREED – to recommend that the Minutes of the Growth Deal Executive Programme Board Minutes of the meetings held 5th December 2024 and 9th April 2025 are noted.

15. STATION SQUARE SKATE PARK

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

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval to tender for new skateboarding ramps for the designated space at Station Square, Portrush to provide a safe, controlled and inviting environment for skateboarders, whilst maintaining public access to the surrounding businesses.

The confidential report set out the background and next steps.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the above and approve the progression of this project to Tender stage (allocation from the Play Action Plan capital budget).

The Head of Sport and Wellbeing drew Committees attention to paragraphs 2.4, 3 and 3.2 within the report.

Alderman Stewart thanked the Head of Sport and Wellbeing and Director of Leisure and Development.

Councillor McCully praised the Head of Sport and Wellbeing and Director of Leisure and Development for their role with the co-design approach for a much-needed facility for Portrush and the positive exercise between the skaters and Council.

In response to questions from Councillor Anderson, the Head of Sport and Wellbeing confirmed there were 4 ramps, outlined the specification and confirmed the pre-tender estimate. The Head of Sport and Wellbeing confirmed the ramps could be relocated, they were working with the skateboarding community on the understanding the Metropole Project was their key focus and an update report would be brought in June on how the Group would like to progress with that. Councillor Anderson stated the skaters need something and it was good to see them able to use this.

Proposed by Alderman Stewart
Seconded by Councillor McCully and

AGREED -to recommend that Council note the above and approve the progression of this project to Tender stage (allocation from the Play Action Plan capital budget).

16. GREEN SUPPORT SCHEME

Copy, previously circulated.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the outcome of the Invite to Tender (ITT) for technical support to deliver Carbon Reduction Action Plans (CRPs) for SMEs & Social Enterprises.

The following paragraphs were circulated within the confidential report.

- Background
- Tender

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Leisure & Development Committee notes the appointment of B9 Solutions Limited to provide the technical support to deliver Carbon Reduction Action Plans (CRPs) for SMEs & Social Enterprises.

There were no questions posed.

Proposed by Councillor McCully
Seconded by Councillor N Archibald and

AGREED – to recommend that Council notes the appointment of B9 Solutions Limited to provide the technical support to deliver Carbon Reduction Action Plans (CRPs) for SMEs & Social Enterprises.

* **Councillor N Archibald left The Chamber.**

17. COLERAINE HARBOUR COMMISSIONERS

Confidential report, by virtue of paragraph(s) 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 was previously circulated and presented by The Director of Leisure and Development.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Council Under the terms of Section 4(a) of The River Bann Navigation Order (N.I.) 2002, where the “Council shall designate a Commissioner as Chairman of the Commissioners and may designate another Commissioner as Deputy Chairman”.

Background and current position was circulated within the confidential report.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Leisure and Development Committee approve the recommendation of the Harbour Commissioners Board to appoint Mr Richard Connor as Vice Chairman of the Coleraine Harbour Commissioners.

There were no questions posed.

Proposed by Councillor Stirling
Seconded by Councillor McCully and

AGREED – to recommend that Council approve the recommendation of the Harbour Commissioners Board to appoint Mr Richard Connor as Vice Chairman of the Coleraine Harbour Commissioners.

18. CORRESPONDENCE

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

(i) Correspondence from the University of Ulster regarding the future of the Riverside Theatre (Dated 13 May 2025).

The Director of Leisure and Development outlined a timeline of events of correspondence with Ulster University and Council’s recent Notice of Motion. The Director of Leisure and Development advised she would contact Ulster University and set up a meeting as a matter of urgency. The Director noted Ulster University

wished to receive a response to their correspondence the day before the Committee meeting.

Committee NOTED the correspondence.

MOTION TO PROCEED ‘IN PUBLIC’

Proposed by Councillor Anderson

Seconded by Councillor McCully and

AGREED – to recommend that Council move ‘In Public’.

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

(i) Replanting Trees (Councillor Kane)

To ask what plans are in place, or are being developed, to plant trees to replace those felled by recent storms, most notably Storm Éowyn, in Ballymoney

The Head of Tourism and Recreation provided an update for the Leisure and Development Department.

The Head of Tourism and Recreation referred to the Coast and Countryside Team and Biodiversity Officer, a key objective to improve the quality of the natural environment for the benefit of citizens and visitors to the area. Any opportunity for land to potentially use for tree planting was looked out for but there was not a lot suitable within Council’s portfolio. The Head of Tourism and Recreation agreed to liaise with Estates to replace trees in parks such as Elms or Oak.

Alderman Stewart spoke on behalf of Councillor Kane, he advised a number of mature trees were down within Riverside Park Ballymoney and across the Borough, it was important for health and wellbeing to replace those lost with the right trees in the right areas. Alderman Stewart referred to input from local biodiversity enthusiasts and the recent agreement to establish a Biodiversity Forum. Alderman Stewart suggested Council could work with Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust and the Council Tree Nursery.

The Head of Tourism and Recreation stated they were working on the Terms of Reference for the Forum and a meeting would be organised in the next couple of weeks.

The Chair thanked the Committee for their work during the year.

There being no further business, the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting concluded at 8.46pm.

Chair